



# Ligmincha Europe Magazine

*Special edition # 11 – # 20; Winter 2013-2014 – Spring 2016*



Meet the Ligmincha Sanghas

Lishu Institute

The Three Doors

Preparing to Die

The Teacher and the Dharma



## Dear Readers, Dear Practitioners of Bon,

In 2011, when Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche celebrated his 50th birthday in Nepal with sangha members from all over the world, we put the first Newsletter for the European sangha on the internet.

In the past seven years we have interviewed 25 sanghas, several teachers and sangha members who shared their beautiful stories. We have reported about the activities in Europe, Lishu, The 3 Doors Academy, published poems, and more. With the Ligmincha Europe Magazine we hope to contribute to Rinpoche's mission to 'Preserve Bon Buddhist Wisdom in the World.'

In 2013 we made a full color book of the first ten issues, and with the help of sponsors we gave that book to the great Bon Monasteries and Ligmincha centers.



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche receives the book of the first ten issues from Ton Bisscheroux in 2013.

And now, again thanks to the support of sponsors, we have been able to give a book of the second ten issues to Menri Monastery, Triten Norbutse Monastery, Serenity Ridge, Chamma Ling Poland, Chamma Ling Colorado, Chamma Ling Mexico, Ligmincha Texas, Lishu Institute, the future European Center, H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

Some sponsors only wanted to be mentioned by name, others sent a photo and a few shared a story. Here are the names of the sponsors who were so generous to give € 108:

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Michaela Plaga (Germany)  
Ton Bisscheroux (the Netherlands)  
Ulrike Wenzel-Abu (Germany)



In Bon,  
Ton Bisscheroux







Participants of a weekend seminar in Vienna, Austria. On the photo are also the members of the board of Ligmincha Österreich: Heide Mitsche, Hanna Stegmüller, Renate Cervik-Kremminger.



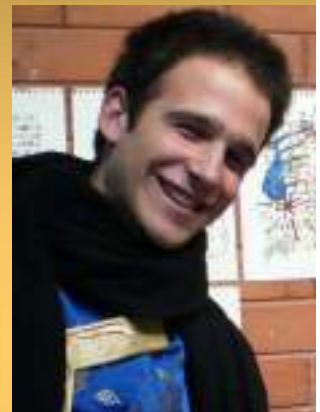
Birgit Bastholm Bune



Gernot Sommer



Christian Bruppacher



Maximilian Möslers



Ulrike Wenzel-Abu



Matti Tuliharju



Gabriele Penders-Heider



Margot Bähr



At the end of the 90s I took refuge with the Karma Kagyü lineage. But it was only in 2012, when I met Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in Frankfurt, Germany, that the feeling grew inside me that I found my Teacher.

The Bon practice helped me in the past few years in my difficult situation in my life, where my husband was severely ill.

And during the Summer Retreat in 2017 in Buchenau, Germany, I realized again how close to life Rinpoche's teachings are, and how they can be integrated into daily life. And last but not least, the sangha is also important for me. Being part of it makes me stronger to be on the same path with others. For all this I am grateful.

*Margot Bähr*

I am very happy to be a sponsor of this book. This way I want to show my gratitude that I encountered Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, and have been following the Dzogchen teachings for 27 years now. My heart opened a deep connection to Rinpoche, my life changed and I could allow happiness to enter.

*Ulrike Wenzel-Abu*





### How the Bon teachings changed my life

Several years ago I said to a sangha member that with making the Ligmincha Europe Magazine I wanted to support Rinpoche. She said: "You're not supporting Rinpoche, but Rinpoche is supporting you." Reflecting on her words, I realized that she was right. Rinpoche gave me a chance to grow, to discover qualities I was not aware of before. I was not a journalist or an editor. I didn't know much about Bon, and I didn't know much people in the (international) sangha. I preferred to work alone, and didn't know that I was creative. Many things changed during the past years. First of all I learned I needed a team to work with, and I didn't need to know or do everything myself, but could rely on the support of others, to make something together that is appreciated by Rinpoche and sangha members. During the past years I have

met a lot of people – many online – and it was beautiful to hear their stories, and share them with others. Most of all I appreciate that Rinpoche gave me the Space and Trust to create the Ligmincha Europe Magazine.

There are still parts of the teachings I don't understand intellectually, but I can feel they touch something on a deeper level. The Summer Retreats in Buchenau, Germany were important for me, because there I had a chance to express myself in performances, to show something that was not allowed in the family where I grew up. The sangha became my family where I learned to relate to people.

I am happy that I have met Rinpoche in this life, and I feel grateful to be part of the Ligmincha sangha.

*Ton Bisscheroux*



The teachings have shown me the path and experience that within, there is a place where nothing happens, and within, there is a place where everything happens. It is one and the same place, and routine makes this place available freely. It is the routine that helps penetrating and transferring the benefits of this place to the outer world. These benefits are presence, openness, authenticity, and fearless simplicity. May it happen for the benefits of all beings.

*Christian Bruppacher*

In 2002 at the age of 15 I met Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche for the first time. In Buchenau Germany I received the *Bardo* teachings and the *Five Sentences of Dawa Gyaltsen* with my father Thomm. Those teachings impressed me a lot and Rinpoche gained my full trust from the first minute we had met. I felt a strong connection to him and the Bon Teachings and so I took refuge on that retreat.

It shook my world in a gentle manner and from that day on the Bon teachings, practices and the advice and guidance of Rinpoche are still today the most reliable and crucial element in my life.

I am very lucky that in the following years after that first encounter I had the possibility to travel to India and Nepal many times. Over there I spent months in

our Bon Monasteries in the presence of the older honored Lamas of our Lineage. Many encounters with H.E. Yongdzin Rinpoche and H.H. Menri Trizin gave me a deeper understanding in what is the most important thing in life, that is to rest in our inner refuge.

Fortunately I can travel on that path with my family, mainly with my father, my sister Lilli and my dear friend Sandra. And of course our wonderful Sanghas!

The way Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche teaches, his true interest in us, his wisdom, kindness, realization and knowledge about our Western way of life make this great Lama the most important treasure in my life. Thank you Rinpoche.

*Maximilian Möslar*





As long as I remember I have searched for deeper meaning about big and small things in my life. I felt attracted to medicine from nature, shamanic rituals, therapeutic skills and spiritual connections. When I was in my first fifties I had a longing for finding "my teacher." I never heard about Bon or Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, but one day a friend gave me the book *Tibetan Sound Healing*. When I heard Rinpoche's voice I felt deeply touched and called to go to Serenity Ridge Retreat Center, which I did a few months later.

Many things have changed for me since then. Following Rinpoche the last eight

years has given me the feeling of coming home. I learned so many meditation skills and methods for transforming difficult and painful issues in my life. I always feel connected and protected by the lineage and the Sangha friends I have; it feels like friends for life.

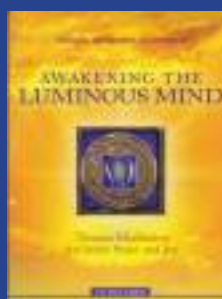
From my heart I send my greatest respect and thankfulness to Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and all the masters and students of the Bon lineage.

*Birgit Bastholm Bune*



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

There are several ways Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche shares the precious Bon teachings with us:







# Ligmincha Europe Magazine

*Special edition: Consecration of the Gompa in Wilga, Poland — October 2013*



The Bonpo Masters

Rituals

Impressions

International gathering



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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,**

The inauguration of the *Gompa* in Wilga, Poland, was a historical event for the European sangha. Our lineage holder H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche came to lead the ceremonies, Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche joined him, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche cancelled all his appointments in the US to be with us, and other lamas were present. Sangha members from twenty-four different countries came to this great happening.

For those who could not be there we want to give an impression of this happening. And for those who were there, this document will keep the memories alive.

The idea to make a special Magazine originated in Wilga. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche announced that he wanted to organize a bonfire and party on the last evening we were together in Wilga. The next morning Anja Benesch, Jitka Polanská and I were sitting together at a table for the first time ever, having breakfast. Was it a coincidence? We had worked together for a long time to create the Ligmincha Europe Magazine, and we always had contact through the Cyber Space (Skype and e-mail). Now, we talked about a contribution to the party, and the idea was born to announce a special edition of the Magazine. In the evening Jitka showed the audience the



Ligmincha Europe Magazine # 10, asking what it was. This was not a difficult question to answer... But when Anja showed a blank piece of paper, people did not recognize the Space this paper represented. It was Geshe Thupten Negi who gave the right answer. The Space represents innumerable possibilities, and some of them will materialize, and others not, depending on what people do, or contribute. Every Magazine is an interesting process from *A* to *DZA*, starting with the

Space (*A*), connecting with Creativity (*OM*), connecting with the Heart (*HUNG*), let it ripen (*RAM*), and finally there is the Manifestation in the form a publication (*DZA*).

Personally, I have great faith in the Space, in all the possibilities of which some will find a form. It seemed to me a nice idea to have a Magazine with contributions from all twenty-four countries and articles written in their own language. But that did not work out. The next idea was to make it bilingual, but since we got a lot of contributions, we decided to make an English and a Polish edition.

Creating this Magazine, I got a lot of support from the Polish sangha. My special thanks go to Joanna Sroka, who offered her skills as editor; Leszek Guzek, who functioned as a liaison between me and the Polish sangha; Aleksandra Dobkowska, Jarek Kotas and Jacek Trzebuniak who translated the texts. And I want to thank all the others who contributed, because together we created this.

My gratitude goes to all the Teachers who were present in Wilga, and to all the volunteers who made this event such a wonderful happening.

In Bon,  
**Ton Bisscheroux,**  
Chief Editor



# GREETINGS AND NEWS FROM LIGMINCHA POLSKA

**Dear Friends,**

An event that was unique in all respects is already behind us. His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, in his immeasurable kindness accepted our invitation, came to Chamma Ling Poland and conducted the consecration ceremony of our Gompa.

On behalf of Ligmincha Poland, we want to thank all who came to Wilga and participated in that unique ceremony. This event could not have taken place without our precious guests and it also could not have taken place without YOU. Our joint practice, our commitment and work strengthen and deepen our connection to the teachings and teachers.

Once again, we thank YOU ALL from the depth of our hearts!!!

We would like the emotions felt during these extraordinary moments to remain for as long as possible; this is why we decided to devote a calendar for 2014 entirely to the visit of His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and other venerable guests. The calendar is bilingual (Polish and English) and when you want to buy it, send an e-mail to: [dharmashop.garuda@gmail.com](mailto:dharmashop.garuda@gmail.com). For more information, not only about the calendar, visit our website [ligmincha.pl](http://ligmincha.pl).

**The Management Board**





**Teacher and Student:  
His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche  
and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche**

**during the Blessing and Consecration Ceremonies of the new Gompa  
at Chamma Ling Poland, Wilga  
24-27th October 2013**



**New Gompa at  
Chamma Ling Poland**

During a special four day celebration the new Gompa at Chamma Ling Poland in Wilga was inaugurated and blessed in a ritual performed by H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and other monks. Sanghas from 24 countries gathered, at times more than 440 people, and celebrated the joy of fulfillment. E Ma Ho!



## Hommage to His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche!



His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche gave teachings from the text *The Seven Mirrors of Dzogchen* with Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.





## Rituals for the Inauguration Ceremony



Supported by the monks Largen Lama, Geshe Thupten, Geshe Samten and Geshe Nyima, the Rinpoches performed the Inauguration Ceremony.







## Connected and growing: our European Bonpo sangha





## Ponse Lama – Divine Protector



Khenpo Gelek Jinpa was recently appointed Khenpo at Shenten Dargye Ling in France. These days he is also engaging as Camera Operator at EFD's film-project 'Ponse Lama', a documentary being shot these days to pay homage to H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche. The team is currently shooting in Nepal, Europe and Mexico and also visited Wilga to report from the inauguration.



## Sparking the fire







## Impressions full of gratitude and joy!

Pictures taken by Maria Aurelia Kulik, Sarah Edgehill and Anja Benesch



# FOR A CLEAN AND HARMONIOUS ENVIRONMENT

During the consecration of the *Gompa* of Chamma Ling Poland in Wilga, rituals were performed without much explanation. Ton Bisscheroux asked Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche to tell more about the rituals.

For me, like many people here, I don't know much about the rituals you have performed during these days. Can you explain a little about them, what you have done, what it means, and the purpose of them?

## *The history*

The name of this ritual is *Dü gyi Korlo*, which means 'Wheel of Time', or *kalachakra*. You can say it is like a kind of Bonpo *kalachakra*. In general in the Bon tradition, we have four different kinds of cycles of *kalachakra*: external, internal, secret and most secret. This *kalachakra* is the external *kalachakra*. This was first performed by Buddha Tonpa Shenrab when he was invited by the goddess of earth. We call her Sa'i Lhamo. They built a kind of temple and for the consecration they invited Buddha Tonpa Shenrab. On that occasion, he performed this kind of ritual. So this is how, according to our historical account, this ritual began. Therefore, since then we perform this ritual as a form of consecration.

## *The basic idea of consecration*

The idea of consecration of temples, statues, stupas and the land has many different kinds of meanings. There are multiple kinds of explanations. The basic idea is, for example, when we consecrate a statue, the idea is that a statue is the support of the Buddha's Body. We have to regard the statue as a real kind of Buddha. In order for this to be more alive, in this ritual we invite the divinities, the Buddhas. And then through the visualisations, mantras, mudras, and symbolic kinds of support, like mandalas, we invite and dissolve the energy into the object of consecration. According to the texts, we dissolve the divinities into the object, for example a temple. So that you can feel the energy, that the temple, statue or stupa is more alive. That is the basic idea of making consecration.



## *Mantras*

For example, in the statues and stupas we first put mantras inside. You may have seen the stick that is rolled with mantras. On the stick, we write "A OM HUNG RAM DZA", the seed syllables of the Body, Speech, Mind, Qualities and Activities of the Buddha. Then, on each syllable, we write the mantra related with each of those aspects of the Buddha. So that is the essence. Then after building it, we do this ritual of consecration to further enhance the consecration.

Also in the temple here at Chamma Ling Poland, first there was the invitation of the divinities and then we made offerings and did the consecration with the mantras. We repeated many mantras and then we blew onto the grains and threw them everywhere. The grains support the energy of the divinities. And Yongdzin Rinpoche was saying some words, prayers and riches that we have to imagine.

## **Can you tell us more about those cards that were put beneath the windows?**

Yes, we put many different pictures like garudas and elephants around. Some go to the foundation





and some to the roof top of the temple. Each of them has a specific symbolic meaning, like stabilizing the place. The roof top is about high realization of the spiritual knowledge.

All the cards that are around the windows are auspicious symbols for the earth like horses, cows and deer, natural richness. In order for people to live on the earth, first they have to have basic elements to be more rich, more enhanced, more clean, and more pure. Then, we need to have different kinds of species of beings. So everybody is dependent upon each other. So it is for everybody

**Did you prepare some *tormas* before the rituals started?**

Yes. We have two different kinds of *torma*. One *torma* we call *ten tor* that is the main *torma* which represents the actual divinity. Then, there is another *torma* which we call *cho tor*, the offering. Mainly, we have five different kinds of offerings: butter lamp, pure water, flower, incense and food offering.

**Was it a *tsok*?**

No, it's not *tsok*. It's a general kind of food offering.



The *Kalachakra Bon* mandala.

to live and to be more peaceful in an auspicious way. It is like a great mandala. In the mandala offering, we visualize the whole universe and then we visualize all kinds of good things, all the kinds of jewels and natural elements.

**When we talk of the beings, do you mean the beings of the six realms, like the god realm, the hell realm, the human realm?**

Yes. Normally as humans we use horses and cows to live. We are dependent on them in many ways. So, they represent the world of the richness of the universe. If we don't have this variety of species, we cannot live. We pray together to enrich the earth, our environment.

**This is a good impression of what was happening, because many people really enjoyed being here, but they did not know what it was all about.**

Yes, this was mainly to bring auspiciousness, harmony on the earth and among people.

**Also that the *Gompa* will stay here for a long time and that many people will come here?**

In our tradition, from time to time we have to do these kinds of rituals. Also in the monastery when a statue was built a long time ago, from time to time it is good to do a consecration. Consecration in another way is purification. We have many impurities. We can get many different pollutions and these can cause obscurations, external and



eventually internal. The container and the content depend on each other. When our environment is good, this can help us beings who inhabit the environment. We can be more healthy, more clear, prosperous. So in our tradition, it is very important to take care of the external container,

keep it as clean and harmonious as possible. So in that way it can help who lives in there, even in one's spiritual realization.

**Interview by Ton Bisscheroux**

Photos by Marek Górny and Maria Aurelia Kulik



The Kalachakra Bon thangka





# LINEAGE OF TRANSMISSION

**Przemyslaw Debowski is since 1997 a practitioner and student of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. He was Chair of Garuda Poland from 2004 to 2009. At present he is *umze* in Chamma Ling Poland in Wilga, where he stays for a retreat since July 2012.**

In 2006, after the visit of His Holiness Lungtok Tenpa Nyima in Chamma Ling Poland in Wilga, we initiated the construction of a Gompa in the place indicated by Menri's Abbot.

We were aware that this great undertaking would require from our sangha a lot of trust, persistence and cooperation. And this was also the transmission to practice for us at that time.

We have been working for seven years without looking at any difficulties or finances. We also received a great support from our Teachers – Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche, Menri Lopon Rinpoche and many other Bonpo Geshe.

Step by step, we got closer to the wonderful day when we could ask Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche to assist us with invitation of H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche for the consecration ceremony.

Of course, having into consideration the age of Yongdzin Rinpoche, Tenzin Wangyal wouldn't share our enthusiasm about this wish coming true. But he supported this idea though with a lot of prayers and finally this dream could become reality – Yongdzin Rinpoche accepted the invitation.

Moreover, during the consecration ceremony of our

Gompa (where more than four hundred people could participate in this event) we were also meant to receive the *Kalachakra Initiation*, which we all are so grateful for.

The preparations for this event lasted the whole year 2013. When we finally managed to finish the construction, our *Sherab Chamma Center* was ready to receive many great Teachers and practitioners from all over the world.

The end of October is mostly cold, windy and rainy in Poland, but not this time. Nice and warm weather was a pleasant fulfillment of this extraordinary event.

For the first time in history of our sangha (it's been eighteen years now), we could practice together with our greatest Teachers, Yongdzin Rinpoche and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, the Representatives of Transmission Lineage of Yungdrung Bon tradition. Our Teacher was praying next to his Teacher for the prosperity of us, practitioners, and the whole world.

E MA HO

**Text by Przemyslaw Debowski**

Photo: courtesy of Przemyslaw Debowski



# WHEN THE TEACHERS COME...

Once upon a time in Wilga

## Place:

The new Gompa Chamma Ling Poland.  
The Bon Centre in Poland among the pine forests  
of a Mazovian Plain.



## Costume:

Very colourful outfit and extraordinary head coverings.



## Ceremonies:

The ceremonies are the greatest.  
Smoke, fire and incense;  
Drums and bells, exotic smells and sounds.



## Procession:

Teachers inducted to the Gompa by the procession with the greatest respect.



## Altar:

Gold, azure, scarlet-deep saturated colours;  
Thangkas and images, talismans and malas.  
Filled vases and dishes with food dedicated to the  
gods.



These are certain only facile impressions and feelings of the eyes, ears and nose. What is deeper, in heart, mind and soul are much more drifting feelings leading to spiritual searches.

It's the unity of everything with all. You can feel this ubiquitous power. It's a powerful and glorious feeling of a deep connection.

I wish to thank H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, my own Teacher, for everything.

**Text by Małgorzata Stachowicz**

Photos by Maria Kulik and Ton Bisscheroux





# WHEN DHARMAKAYA SPEAKS TO YOU

**During the teachings Jarek Kotas was one of the translators. He shares some of his experiences with us.**

The last retreat in Wilga was my fifth encounter with H.E. Yongdzin Rinpoche. It was very meaningful every time. My first ever retreat in life took place many years ago and the Teacher was Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche but the second one two months later was the *Experiential Transmission of the twenty-four Masters of Zhang Zhung* with Yongdzin Rinpoche. At the beginning I was not aware enough about the power of these teachings but soon I realized how lucky I am, I met such precious Teachers in my life. That was a beginning of my Path, which slowly became the meaning of my life.

Anyway, until 2007 I was not able to develop Dzogchen practice. The breaking point appeared to be the *Initiation of Drenpa Namkha* which I received at Shenten, in France from Yongdzin Rinpoche. From that time I am really on the Dzogchen Path. My main guidance is the *Practice of Inner Refuge* transmitted to us by my root lama Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. He is the one who caused that I can rest in that State with the stability and then try to make it a part or even a whole of my everyday life. Great experience. I am free both from doubts and intellectual endeavors. I am better for others and for myself also, and as an instructor in the Polish Sangha of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche I am trying to share my experience with others.

During the second day of the teachings in Wilga while Yongdzin Rinpoche was giving the precise instruction for meditation I experienced alive beauty of the moment. First, when I was looking at all these lamas who appeared before me, I realized that right now in this Gompa, I am experiencing the manifestation of the Lineage Masters alive in our times in so called twenty-first century. Not on the thangkas or in the texts but living people who possess this treasure of knowledge and experience. The knowledge showing these teachings as they are beyond

limitations of time just appeared in me instantly. I realized all the forms are changing constantly but truth about our existence and ability to liberate is out of any time and space.

Instantly I experienced unusual clarity of mind. I was resting in my inner silence while Yongdzin Rinpoche who embodies *Three Kayas* was speaking. There were not any obstacles for his words and all the distractions went away. Clear purity of the blissful moment. And I am thankful for these teachings, I pay homage and I trust. My trust is now free from any doubts.



H.E. Yongdzin Rinpoche and Jarek Kotas.

**Text by Jarek Kotas**

Photo: courtesy of Jarek Kotas



# THE WHITE PAGE

**Katarzyna Kjeta gives a short account of the *Sur Chöd* ritual.**

A huge flame striving to the sky. An ancient *Sur Chöd* ritual dedicated to those who died. On the burning pages were written names of our relatives who already passed away. Some of those cards burned in a moment, but some were still spinning in the wind for a while. I remember one of them, untouched by the fire, flying like a kite here and there to finally find a place to land on the roof of one of the houses.

I could only imagine how powerful this person's karma must have been and how strong the attachment to the illusion and material world must have kept him or her in this place, that even in the presence of such great Teachers (H.E. Yongdzin Rinpoche and other lama's), and despite of all our



prayers, this soul could not let go and feel the peace. This memory was sticking in my mind for many days after the retreat.

**Text by Katarzyna Kieta**

Photos: courtesy of Katarzyna Kieta, and Ton Bisscheroux





# THE TRUST

**Leszek Guzek, member of the Polish sangha, shares his gratitude towards the Teachers with us.**

This was my first retreat with Yongdzin Rinpoche and the second one with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. I still consider myself a beginner in meditation for the reason of my little knowledge and small experience.

Nevertheless, during this short period of time I felt clearly what it means to place trust in the Teacher and Teachings. I could also feel the great power of Dzogchen practice. And all that thanks to Yongdzin Rinpoche.

During the lectures, especially in the moments of translation into Polish, I kept watching Yongdzin Rinpoche, who was mostly looking up where he could see the hanging image of the twenty-four Masters of Zhang Zhung. I could share then Yongdzin's peace, suavity and I felt deep connection to our Lineage.

Keeping all that in my heart, knowing, that Yongdzin Rinpoche connects all the time with the Lineage in the name of all of us (also mine), my refuge practice (transmitted earlier by Tenzin Wangyal) became much more stable and blissful. Even the knee pain and my ignorance wouldn't distract me, because I had the support of a Teacher and a great trust in the full realization.

For me, despite the fact that it was a very short retreat and we didn't have enough time for Teachings, the transfer hit not only my intellect,

but, above all, my mind and my heart.

While Rinpoche was speaking about the suffering and when he kept emphasizing the importance of trust to the Teacher and significance of our attitude towards those ancient Teachings, I could feel the sense of authenticity of those simple words.

I am very grateful to Yongdzin Rinpoche for this 'short' transfer, which got direct into my heart and mind. I wish to thank him with those words of a Prayer for His Long Life:



*E MA HO  
LAB SUM TEN PAI DAG NYI DRO WAI GON  
KUN CHEN NYI WANG NAM ROL GONG TSEL DZOG  
DO DE NGAG KYI NE LUG DZOG PA CHE  
TEN PA DZIN CHONG TRIN LE NAM PAR DAK  
YONG DZIN MA WAI WANG POR SOL WA DEB*

**Text by Leszek Guzek**

Photo by Maria Aurelia Kulik



# COINCIDENCE IS A PLAN WHICH WE DON'T KNOW YET

In the Polish sangha, Joanna Sroka works together with a small team of translators, proofreaders and designers, to make books based on teachings from retreats. All members of editorial team work for free. The team has been working long on Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche's teaching from *The Seven Mirrors Dzogchen* (2006). The editorial and graphic preparations of this book took a lot of time, but selling didn't take long – the whole edition was sold in one hour!

What (or rather who) brought me to Bon, was beyond doubt one of the Bon's Guardians. I think it was Yeshe Walmo. I used to practice Vipassana meditation before (tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin), but I needed a group, a real sangha. That's why I kept searching for a place where I could meditate with other people, which was my great need and part of my nature.

One day I got to a place, where the *umze* of the sangha in Krakow, Wojtek Pluciński, was leading the practice (by the way, thank you Wojtek for being with us!). At that moment I sat down on a pillow and just... felt at home. It became certain for me that my search was over, because I have finally found what was missing in my life – Bon.

I am a publisher by profession. I edit, design and frame books and leaflets etc. I decided to engage myself in the sangha's activity also in a professional way because a well drafted book would help us all to understand better the Teachings transmitted during the retreats.

The retreat with Yongdzin Rinpoche and all the circumstances related to this event amazed me a few times. For a longer time we had no information about the subject of the Teachings that were supposed to be lectured in October. What we knew was that Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche would let us know about that some time before.

In the meantime, our publication section for several years 'couldn't muster up' to publish the book about the *Seven Mirrors of Dzogchen*. Those Teachings were transmitted by Khenpo Rinpoche in 2006. But accidentally, in the spring 2013 I said: "It lasts just too long. Let's finally publish this book!" Isn't it a great coincidence? Shortly after that we got the signal that Yongdzin Rinpoche would transmit in Wilga exactly those Teachings.



In this situation, all we had to do was to speed up with publishing. Ania Wasińska hastened the correction works, I did the same with redaction, and Maja Niedbał, who was responsible for graphic framework, also had to act in a hurry.

During the retreat it turned out that we were a bit lack of time and Rinpoche couldn't precisely talk over the *Seven Mirrors of Dzogchen*. Khenpo Rinpoche said: "I won't make it in detail, because we have only ten minutes left!", and... then he laughed. "I will transmit to you the *Dzogchen Teachings of the Seven Mirrors* in ten minutes" – he said.

People in the audience were also laughing (but at the same time everyone became a bit stressed out), because it sounded like a good joke – full Dzogchen Teachings in only ten minutes...

But in a moment all the tension was gone when one of the administrators informed us that there was a very interesting book to buy in our shop. It was a book which involved a wide explanation of the *Seven Mirrors Teachings*. "This transmission was lectured in 2006 by Khenpo Rinpoche and we just published it," he said.

After that, during the break, I saw a very long queue in our dharma shop (by the way, I have never seen there any queue at all) and everyone was holding the same book. In a moment we sold out the whole edition!

I felt so happy, because all our effort turned out to be very fruitful, but I also felt a bit deficient at the same time - we should have printed much more books! But... there's always an option of extra edition, isn't it?

**Text by Joanna Sroka**

Photo: courtesy of Joanna Sroka





# WHAT'S NEEDED FOR THE PREPARATIONS

**Marek Górny, student of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche since his first visit in Poland in 1995, tells us something of the preparations the Polish sangha had to do.**

In May I got information from Lama Sangye Monlam that H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche was going to lead the *Magyu* initiation in Shenten Dargye Ling in France.

Dagna and I decided to go there, not only for the sake of this initiation, but above all to get some hints from Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, concerning preparations that we needed to carry out before his arrival in Poland.

Our journey didn't start very fortunately. My car which was being prepared for weeks for this long trip, had broken down, and the spare one was not the certain alternative for such a long drive.

Moreover, in the region of Switzerland we drove into a horrible hailstorm, which was breaking the trees and windows on cars. Luckily, our windows were saved, but the hail damaged the car body. This day a very destructive hailstorm was raging also in Germany and France. But the next day the atmospheric front changed and finally we got to sunny France.

Shenten is a great place with very friendly people and energy of peace and power. Darek Sawczuk and Sophie Frisch took us on wonderfully so we could feel at home.

During our first meeting, Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche told us the rituals that he was about to lead in Poland were very important and that they should be prepared and carried out very carefully. Rinpoche also said that he would draw up a list of needed things and the last day we were also meant to come for some other specific hints.

The next two days were filled with intensive practice (*pujas*, initiations, and teachings) connected to *Magyu* initiation. In the end we heard from Yongdzin Rinpoche what kind of signs we can expect in our dreams. The next morning I woke up a bit disappointed because I was fast asleep and

couldn't remember anything.

After breakfast we went to see Yongdzin Rinpoche again. Rinpoche gave us the promised hints for preparations for the rituals in Poland. Rinpoche told us to make cards with images of specific animals, in certain places and situations. We also received data on the required dimensions of those pictures and some other tips. After that we hit the road to Poland. But we suddenly realized that we were quite close to the ocean and we decided to change our initial plan a little bit. Instead of East, we went to Brittany to see the open and clear space upon the ocean.

During the trip we discussed the question of images of animals that we were meant to get. It's not that simple to make a photo of a camel or yak in front of specific building in Poland...



In the meantime we needed to do some shopping so we went off the road and somewhat chaotically started to search for any store. Finally we found InterMarche (a group of shops) and... it turned out that on the parking place were standing (almost) all animals listed by Yongdzin Rinpoche: buffalos, camels, lamas, horses, lions and some others.

This was a clear sign, but not in a dream.

The cards for rituals were made by itself. No doubt, somewhere there must also have been a dragon and Garuda, but we didn't manage to make a photo of them so we had to use someone else's illustrations.

**Text and photo by Marek Górny**



# EGO AND I

**Here is a short account and some reflections by Ton Bisscheroux of his visit to Wilga, Poland.**

During the Summer Retreat in Buchenau, Germany, August 2013, I saw a flyer announcing the inauguration of the *Gompa* in Wilga, Poland. When Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche told me we should write about it in the *Ligmincha Europe Magazine*, I did not have the intention to go. But, at home it kept going through my mind, so I did some research on the internet, and found out that it would not be too expensive to go there. And of course, it was an opportunity for me to meet His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche for the first time.

October 23 in the early morning I got on the plane with three Dutch Sangha members, and two hours later we arrived at the airport near Warsaw. Although the instructions on the website how to get to Wilga were very clear, it still was quite an adventure to get there by public transport. The journey from the airport to Chamma Ling in Wilga is about one-hundred kilometers, and took us eight hours.

We arrived just in time to welcome H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. On the path the eight auspicious symbols were drawn. The first evening there was

no program, so while drinking a cup of tea I met several people personally, who I met before in the Cyber Space.

The first day I had some problems with adjusting to the place I was sleeping. It was one of the worn cottages being the remnants of the communist times, and they require an overhaul. Very high investments are needed for that purpose, and the building of the *Gompa* had the first priority. I've travelled through China, Tibet, Nepal and India, but this was a new challenge for me. It really helped when Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche said the next morning that "some people will have to overcome inner obstacles while staying here." But the service of the volunteers was great: I didn't bring a meditation cushion and I asked Ryszard Adamiak where I could find one, and he gave me his cushion. It was not high enough for me, so I went to the reception, and they got me a blanket, so I could adjust the height.

On Thursday, while Yongdzin Rinpoche and Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche were making preparations for the rituals, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche told how important his relation to his teacher Yongdzin Rinpoche is, and started with the teachings and practice. Rinpoche also asked from which countries people came to this ceremony, and we got to twenty-four different countries: Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, India, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, New





Zealand, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, Tibet, Ukraine and the United States of America.

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche said that the ritual performed during these days is called *Rabne*. And that it is very important for the Bon tradition, for Yongdzin Rinpoche, the people present and the place, especially the *Gompa*. The purpose of the ritual is that the teachings of the Buddha will remain a long time. Throughout the consecration the Rinpoches and lamas invoked the assembly of enlightened beings, worshipped them to the highest level of bliss and happiness and then requested them to bless us and the place. Most rituals were done in the *Gompa*, but some outside. There was a special ceremony for people who died. We could write the names on paper, and they were collected. The papers were burnt in a great fire, while guidance was done for the dead people. On Saturday and Sunday there were teachings by Yongdzin Rinpoche and Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche. Yongdzin Rinpoche started his teachings in English, and it took me a great effort to understand him. So I was happy when he taught in Tibetan and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche translated into English. Then I could relax when listening to Yongdzin Rinpoche, and feel a connection from heart to heart.

The auction on Saturday afternoon in the *Gompa* was very exciting, especially when two or three people wanted to have the same object, the price goes up and up. There were lots of interesting items. For several small photos of Yongdzin Rinpoche people paid from € 150 to € 300 each. The total revenues were about € 18.000. A very good result, but not enough for all the necessary investments.

On Saturday evening there was a party outside. Although we had only one day for preparations, it was a great success. Fifteen minutes before the party would start the performers would meet somewhere. I went there, but nobody else was there. So when the Rinpoches and lamas were sitting at the campfire I inquired about the order of appearance. The organization told me: "we have no plan," and one minute later they announced: "here is from the Netherlands a group that will sing a song." In the end we were happy that we had to start, because after us came better singers. But it was fun. Later I asked about the

performance of the Ligmincha Europe Magazine team, and two minutes later we were on stage. Although, to me there seemed to be no organization, everything went very smoothly that evening. Many people showed their talents. And I will never forget the performance of the 'Ego and I'. Two performers came on stage, one with a big 'EGO' written on his shirt, and the other showed that he really loved 'EGO'. They were walking hand in hand, he jumped on 'EGO', and the more he showed his love, the harder 'EGO' hit him with a bat on his head. When 'EGO' knocked him out, a doctor came with a bottle of A-drink (not the sports drink, but a bottle with a Tibetan A). After drinking this, 'EGO' became weaker and weaker, till 'EGO' stopped hitting him. During the party there were many talented singers, and there was a wonderful musical performance with tubes, sinks, kitchen and garden equipment.



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche gave also attention to the Ligmincha Europe Magazine. From the first ten issues we had made a book to give to the Bon Monasteries and the Chamma Ling Centers. The day before I went to Wilga the books were ready, so I carried ten kilogram of books in my luggage to give to Yongdzin Rinpoche, Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, Geshe Thupten Negi and last but not least Chamma Ling Poland.

Going home on Monday it took us only two hours by taxi to get to the airport. We heard a warning for heavy storms in the Netherlands, but it was ok when we landed; and when we arrived we saw four rainbows. Could our journey end any better?

**Text by Ton Bisscheroux**

Photos by Andrea Fraundorfer and Maria Aurelia Kulik



# HATRED BURNS LIKE FIRE

In some beings hatred burns like fire,  
In others, lust circulates like water,  
In some, ignorance rages like darkness,  
In others, envy grows as if [planted in the] soil,  
In some pride whirls like the wind.



Text from: *gZER-MYIG — Rays from the Eyes of the Svastika, a Precious Summary of the World*  
Translated from the Tibetan by A.H. Francke  
© Instytut THIGLE, Poland, 2013, pre release version, page 17

Photo by Marek Górny: detail from 'khor lo bzhi sbrags thangka





# TEACHINGS ARE LIKE MEDICINE

**Here are some excerpts from H.E. Yongdzin Rinpoche teachings in Wilga, Poland, October 2013, made by Jarek Kotas.**

The recognition of sufferings is very important. Both kinds of it – the external and visible and one hidden in you. The texts of the teachings shall be treated the same as medical texts.

If somebody wants to be liberated from sufferings, one must place these teachings deeply in one's heart. All the details should be understood and one must practice. Keep these teachings in your heart.

Be always satisfied with your possessions and situation in your life. Don't expect anything great will happen to you.

Buddha means three bodies but one Nature.

You must follow the Teacher with whom you feel connection. Treat him as a Buddha. Maintain devotion for the teachings and be happy with the conditions you are living in. Feel that always is enough. If you don't feel like this, you will always follow, or search for something more.

These teachings are important also for your next future life. In the moment of your death, you will have something you trust. It happens if you keep devotion for the teachings and you already gained some experience. This experience in Dzogchen comes from what is as it is and there is no need for use of any substances to create the visions.

You must ask yourself if you are a proper vessel for these teachings. Your attitude is decisive here because you are still not perfect while there is no doubt the teachings are precious.

When thoughts disappears, or dissolves back to where it came from, the unspeakable state arises.

The clear presence is something that remains. Don't try to explain it to yourself. This presence is completely pure and it is impossible to explain it. Don't tell the stories to yourself but check out your state. This state has not any connection with thinking. It is clear in itself and there is no possibility to interfere it. You may be obscured but this state is never obscured.

The feeling of connection between the inner and outer space appears while you open your eyes.

When subject and object are disappearing, at that moment you have to leave everything as it is. The Nature arises. And the meditation and the concept of meditator are disappearing. Innate awareness is the same as the ability 'to see' this state. This awareness itself is not different from the Natural State. Nothing comes from outside. Each form comes from Nature and is empty in its essence. There is not any sense in your journey after the form. If you follow forms, then everything becomes more solid around you. Our task is a different one – we are supposed to look at the source, which is the Nature.



Be in what is and trust it. Once you recognize the Natural State, don't mind about the thoughts.

**Text by Jarek Kotas**

Photo by Maria Aurelia Kulik



# THE SEVEN MIRRORS OF DZOGCHEN

During a retreat in Wilga, Poland, from September 5–9, 2006, Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche gave teachings from the text *The Seven Mirrors of Dzogchen*. A transcript of these teachings was published as a book in Polish. Three parts of the book have been translated: the pages 28–29, 52–54 and 71.

## Three ways of perceiving the lama

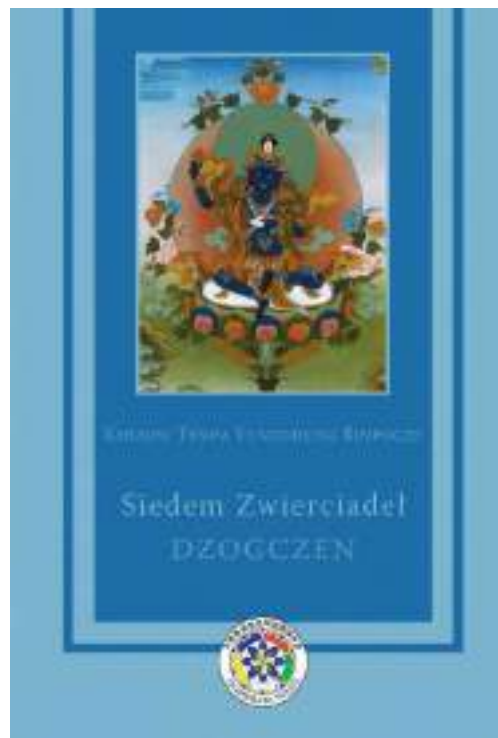
So generally when we are speaking about lama, there are three divisions we can classify. External lama, internal lama and secret lama. External refers to metaphorical lama or external appearances. All the appearances that we can see, hear: rocks, mountains, trees, waters, seasons. All kinds of elements. Everything if we carefully examine and carefully study, then this phenomenal existence can give innermost amount of advice and teachings. We can receive and learn so many things from this phenomenal existence. If we don't have any understanding of the nature of phenomenal existence, we wouldn't believe what the text and lama say. For example, it is said in the text, if we put a finger to the fire, it will burn. That is true. If we eat poisonous food or plant, it would make us sick or die. It is also true. No doubt. Immediately there is no question, nobody asks a question whether fire burns finger or not. Nobody has a question whether poisonous food makes you sick or not. It is sure, because it is proved. It is evident. Through these kinds of truths, one can learn, believe and follow the teachings and lamas. If there is no truth that you can experience directly, then whatever somebody says he can't convince you. External phenomenal experiences are regarded as lama, the metaphorical lama. We can know the impermanent condition of nature, through this phenomenal existence like the changing of seasons. Every day flowers,

trees, leaves all the time are changing, nothing is permanent. One can reflect and can examine it very closely. If one does this, one can get really strongly understanding of this subtle impermanent. One can know how the law of cause and effect works. It is very clear from our garden, for example flower or vegetable garden. When we put any seed then this gives that kind of fruit, if we put tomato seed it gives only tomato as a fruit. If we put potato seed it gives potato fruit. Then it is not enough to put tomato or potato seed in the garden, we must always take care of it. It first needs sufficient water, sunlight, heat and also good timing. If you plant in winter it doesn't grow. All these things. If all these conditions are gathered together then you can get real result. If you miss one of those causes or even one of those conditions, for example if there is not sufficient

sunlight then it can't grow, the result, fruit. Even if it grows a little bit it could be very little or not good in quality. Therefore, the causality, the cause and effect is very important. Even if we speak about cause we must think about the gathering of causes. Cause and condition. Firstly we need cause, the seed is a cause, conditions are water, fertilizer, heat, your effort. Everything should be right and on the time. This we can see very clearly. So the same way our karmic cause can also work that way. That is how external phenomenal existence is regarded as lama.

The internal lama is one's real lama and all the lineage masters, who gives you clear guidance to the liberation.

Secret lama refers to one's Natural State of mind. This is secret lama and most important thing, which we have to realize and we have to cherish. When we cherish the lama we can think about these three things and particularly in this case this is referring mainly to the lama as our spiritual guide.





(...)

### **Samsara and nirvana**

Samsara and nirvana are without base or root. The nature of great wisdom is naturally clear and never changes, therefore samsara and nirvana are without root. That means it has been all the time clear, empty and never been obscured, never been influenced by any obscurations. All the samsara and nirvana just appear spontaneously from this state. When this state is very clear and empty, therefore there is no root of samsara and nirvana. When we say samsara, we perceive samsara as something very miserable. A miserable place, or realm. Something very concrete. But in fact if you check the reality of samsara, our mind which is just empty, it is primordially clear and empty. So where is the base of samsara? There is no base of samsara. Now we are talking from the point of view of Natural State. It is not the point of view of ourselves. These two have big differences, therefore because of these kinds of words, some people immediately think different fantasies that now there is no samsara and nirvana and we can do whatever we want. It doesn't mean that. For us we have samsara and nirvana, that is the point of view of ourselves. In reality, in real nature there is no samsara and nirvana separately. Both equally are liberated into that state. Until we get into that state, until we fully realize this state, we have samsara and nirvana. We call it relative truth. We can't deny, we can't reject believe in samsara and nirvana. Therefore we mustn't make any mistake and have misunderstanding of this. When we consider our individual person, normally we say that this is base of delusion and liberation. How does delusion come? Since we don't realize this nature, this Natural State of mind, then we get all that delusions. We don't realize. We are not able to maintain ourselves in that state. Instead of keeping ourselves without following after the thoughts or without knowing the thoughts as a self-originated from this state, we just follow after the thoughts. We make judgments and we create more and more. As much as we are involved in our conceptual thoughts, we are more deluded. This is how our samsara starts. All our negative emotions, negative actions, negative thoughts, everything starts from there. They become more and more concrete. If we are able to realize this Natural State of mind and we are able to stabilize ourselves within that state, then immediately it is the

beginning of liberation. As long as we maintain in that state then we get more and more wisdom. That is starting of nirvana. When we are speaking about samsara and nirvana, it is our point of view. We think about two things. This is still a dualistic way of thinking and understanding. But in fact, if you are absolutely in that state there is no conception of samsara or nirvana. Because you are beyond any conception. You are completely in great bliss and great wisdom. Even in that state you don't have discrimination about being in this Natural State or being in great wisdom. We don't have that discrimination. There is not any discrimination or judgment.

(...)

### **The story of a beggar**

We have the story of a poor man with golden rock, sleeping near the golden rock. This poor man doesn't realize what gold is. He doesn't know how the gold looks like. He was wandering all the time, street by street, begging all the time. One day a prince came to his place and this prince saw a big piece of gold, just beside his bed. Then he was surprised and said: "You are not a poor man. You don't need to wander around the street and beg." Then this poor person was very shocked and said: "You are kidding me. I am a poor man. I have nothing. You are teasing with me". He didn't believe. Then prince insisted: "You are rich. Even in my palace we don't have so much gold." This person was not convinced. The prince cut a piece of golden rock and went with this man to a town. They sold this piece of rock and got a lot of money. Then he was convinced that it wasn't a rock but a valuable thing. Since then he didn't need go on the street to beg. Not because he got something new, but he realized what he already had. He just recognized the value of what he had. In the same way the view of Dzogchen or Natural State of mind is that the most precious, valuable thing is in us. Buddha nature is within us. All the time when we are circulating in samsara: hell, *preta*, anyway, we are circulating within that state. But we haven't realized it until now, we haven't realized it and experienced by ourselves. Even if we experienced it in some cases, we never noticed or recognized this. This meditation is a method to recognize, experience that state.

**Text selected and translated by Marek Górný**



## BON TEACHINGS IN POLAND IN 2013 AND 2014

| When             | Where                                   | What  | Who   |
|------------------|---|---|---|
| <b>2013</b>      |   |   |   |
| March            | Sopot, Warsaw, Poznań and Kraków        | Chöd, Trul Khor, Ngondro  | Geshe Yungdrung Gyatso  |
| May 11 – 12      | Chamma Ling Center, Wilga (near Warsaw) | Teachings about Rushen from the text Heart Drops of Dharmakaya                  | Lama Sangye Monlam  |
| July 23 – 28     | Chamma Ling Center, Wilga (near Warsaw) | The Twenty-One Nails, Part 1  | Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche   |
| September        | Poznań, Warsaw                          | Teachings about Dzogchen and Practice of Sherap Chamma                          | Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche (invitation of his organization – Śardza Ling Institute)   |
| October 24 – 27  | Chamma Ling Center, Wilga (near Warsaw) | Teachings from text The Seven Mirrors of Dzogchen and Blessing of the new Gompa | H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak, Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche |
| November 23 – 24 | Warsaw                                  | Empowerment of Long Life  | Menri Lopon Trinley Nyima Rinpoche  |
|                  |   |   |   |
| <b>2014</b>      |   |   |   |
| May 24 – 25      | Chamma Ling Center, Wilga (near Warsaw) | Practice of Sherap Chamma (Mother of Love and Wisdom)                           | Marcy Vaughn  |
| May              | Chamma Ling Center, Wilga (near Warsaw) | Trul Khor – Teachings about the Magical Movements                               | Alejandro Chaoul  |
| July 15 – 20     | Chamma Ling Center, Wilga (near Warsaw) | The Twenty-One Nails, Part 2  | Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche   |
| September        | Chamma Ling Center, Wilga (near Warsaw) | To be announced   | Khenpo Tenpa Yundrung Rinpoche  |







# Ligmincha Europe Magazine

**# 11 – Winter 2013-2014**



Historical events

Meet the Spanish Sangha

Dream Yoga

Trul Khor



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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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# SERVING AND COMING FORWARD

**In October 2013 Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche talked twice about “serving and coming forward.” He spoke first in Maria Alm (Austria) and again in Wilga (Poland). For those who have been in neither of these two places, we have made a transcript of the invitation Rinpoche extended in Poland.**

But when we reflect on the larger sense of service to others, I think we can do more. It's a beautiful experience to be of service, especially when you give without having to be the central figure, when you let others be in charge or in the spotlight, and you are there just to serve without ego, without title and acknowledgment, without expecting anything in return. Imagine that. That is service



I would like to invite all the people who have been in the sangha for some time now to come forward and engage and participate more for the benefit of others and in service to others. We hold a core belief that if we study and learn and practice and feel the practice is working that we manifest the benefit we have received. If you feel your heart is opening through your practice, as you recognize the space for others is there, the space for spontaneous creative fire is there, and a joyful fire is present in you, I think the center and the community is a good place to share and manifest this in the name of service. Otherwise, I don't see any particular meaning in practicing.

Everybody works and earns money to take care of their families — everybody does that. Birds and insects care for their families. A mouse does that.

we all can do, and it's a beautiful experience. There is a lot of space for us to do that here, and I invite everybody to come forward in this way.

I heard that here in Poland you can work in an ‘interesting’ team. We all know that when you work in a group there are challenges. It's part of being a human being, a normal phase of being human. Do not get stuck in the recent challenges you have experienced; just be playful. You can laugh about it, joke about it, and go on. As long as you are connected to yourself through the inner refuge, you will be fine. Just go ahead and you will be fine.

Thank you very much.

**Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche**



# LONG LIFE MANTRA ACCUMULATIONS REQUESTED FOR H.E. YONGDZIN TENZIN NAMDAK RINPOCHE

Here is a request from Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche that sangha and friends world-wide accumulate the Long Life Mantra for His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche:

I request that all of our Ligmincha international sanghas accumulate 1.000.000 *Long Life Mantras* for H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche as soon as possible. Yongdzin Rinpoche is the most senior teacher in the Bon tradition and founder of Triten Norbutse Monastery in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Shen Rinpoche, the direct lineage holder and descendent from Tonpa Shenrab, the founding Buddha of the Bon tradition, has suggested that a number of rituals and prayers be done for Yongdzin Rinpoche. These rituals and prayers are being done at the Bon monasteries in India, Nepal and Tibet.

Individually, or gathering together for practice, recite this long life mantra as much as possible: **SO DRUM A KAR MU LA TING NAM Ö DU MU YE TSE NI DZA**. Please send the total number of accumulations to the contact person for your country listed below. Each coordinator will then send the number of accumulations to [office@ligmincha.org](mailto:office@ligmincha.org). I will let Yongdzin Rinpoche know the total number accumulated.

With my blessings,  
Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche



Please send the number of your mantra accumulations to the appropriate email address listed below at the end of each week.

## EUROPE:

Ligmincha Austria: [info@ligmincha.at](mailto:info@ligmincha.at)

Ligmincha Belgium: [gounaropoulos@gmail.com](mailto:gounaropoulos@gmail.com)

Ligmincha Czech Republic: [team@ligmincha.cz](mailto:team@ligmincha.cz)

Ligmincha Denmark: [johan@bonpo.dk](mailto:johan@bonpo.dk)

Ligmincha Finland: [lena.kunelius@elisanet.fi](mailto:lena.kunelius@elisanet.fi)

Ligmincha France: [info@ligmincha.fr](mailto:info@ligmincha.fr)

Ligmincha Germany: [oliver.wirtz@ligmincha.de](mailto:oliver.wirtz@ligmincha.de)

Ligmincha Hungary: [ktlnjkb21@gmail.com](mailto:ktlnjkb21@gmail.com)

Ligmincha Netherlands: [bestuur@ligmincha.nl](mailto:bestuur@ligmincha.nl)

Ligmincha Russia: [pavel.kuzmin@hochland.com](mailto:pavel.kuzmin@hochland.com)

Ligmincha Spain: [info@ligmincha.es](mailto:info@ligmincha.es)

Long Life Mantra

བསྐྱེད་ལྔ་མ་དཀར་མུ་ལ་ཉིང་ནམ་འོད་འདུ་མུ་ཡེ་ཚེ་ནི་ངེ།

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

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





# GREETINGS AND NEWS FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Readers, Dear Practitioners of Bon,

In this Magazine we report from two historical events. In the US for the first time Bonpo lamas who live and teach in the West met to share their experiences. The inauguration of the new *Gompa* in Wilga, Poland, was a unique event, with many Teachers and sanghamembers from twenty-four different countries. We share only a few photos because earlier we issued a special Magazine in English ([special edition](#)) and in Polish ([specjalne wydanie](#)) covering this happening.

We introduce the Spanish sangha, and we have articles about Dream Yoga, poetry, and more.

In the past few months there have been many online teachings from Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and from Menri Lopon Trinley Nyima Rinpoche. If you missed them, there is a chance to watch the videos online. You will find the links in this Magazine.

In 2014 there will be many activities in Europe: Tenzin Wangyal is teaching, several senior students come to Europe and authorized European instructors are organizing workshops. You can choose where you want to go, and we will keep you informed.

There is a request from Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche to accumulate the *Long Life Mantra* for H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche. On the website [www.shenten.org](http://www.shenten.org) Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche explains in a letter why this request was made, and tells that we don't have to worry about Yongdzin Rinpoche's health. In early December 2013 Yongdzin Rinpoche was hospitalized for three days to bring his blood sugar down. Now, the end of January 2014, he feels much better and does his regular work and practices and takes a walk every day.

In October 2013 we printed the book with the first ten issues of the *Ligmincha Europe Magazine*. For this book we also made a special edition to thank our Masters and the sponsors, you can find on the website: [special edition # 1-10](#).



In Wilga, Poland, we had the opportunity to give the book to H.E. Yongdzin Rinpoche, Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche (Triten Norbutse Monastery), Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, Geshe Thupten Negi (Lishu Institute) and Justyna Przondo (Chamma Ling Poland). In London, UK, we gave the book to H.E. Menri Lopon Trinley Nyima Rinpoche (Menri Monastery).



In Bon,  
**Ton Bisscheroux,**  
Chief Editor



# HISTORIC HOMECOMING

**The First Meeting of Bon Lamas Who Live and Teach in the West was hosted by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. Geshe YongDong and Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche were interviewed by Polly Turner. This article first appeared in Voice of Clear Light, the e-newsletter of Ligmincha Institute at Serenity Ridge.**

To a casual observer, it might have been no more than a comfortable gathering of Tibetan monks and other countrymen, laughing and chatting like the old friends they were. For those knowledgeable, however, the two days of meetings in October 2013 in central Virginia were truly historic. For, this was the first time since the Bon teachings were brought to the West that

was Geshe YongDong, who first began teaching in Paris and then British Columbia in 1999 and who, four years later, founded Sherab Chamma Ling, a Tibetan Bon Buddhist center in Courtenay B.C., Vancouver Island, Canada.

“It’s very difficult when you come to a different culture, different language, different people,” explained Geshe YongDong. “Most of my life was in a monastery as a monk. Suddenly, I came to the West and everything was different. Even going to restaurants, I had never before used a fork and knife.”

“As soon as I heard about the lama meeting planned for Serenity Ridge, I thought it was a wonderful idea,” Geshe YongDong added. “Many Bon lamas have come to the West to share the



these nine Tibetan Bon lamas had an opportunity to meet, support each other, and share their years of experience and knowledge related to teaching Western students.

Some had been teaching in the West for decades with little support from their peers. Among them

sacred Bon teachings. But we all have busy Western lifestyles, and even if we have had the intention to get together, until then we had not had the opportunity.”

The indigenous spiritual tradition of Tibet, Bon is among the world’s most ancient, unbroken







spiritual lineages, tracing its oral history back 18,000 years. During the Chinese Cultural Revolution this rich heritage was gravely threatened. Countless monasteries in Tibet were destroyed and many monks lost their lives. During the conflict only three senior lamas managed to flee the country; and under great hardship they bore the responsibility for founding new monasteries in India and Nepal in hopes of preserving the sacred traditions. There, they taught new generations of monks — some of whom, like Geshe YongDong, chose to bring their knowledge and training to Western students.

Another of these young monks was Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, who first arrived in Italy in 1988 and soon went on to teach in the United States. In 1992 Tenzin Rinpoche founded Ligmincha Institute; and in 1998 he established Ligmincha Institute at Serenity Ridge, the retreat center in central Virginia where — fully twenty-five years after his initial arrival in the West — the historic meetings took place.

“I had been feeling a need to gather all the other lamas who teach in the West to do something collective and collaborative,” Tenzin Rinpoche said of his recent efforts to pull together the meetings. According to Rinpoche, his 2012 attendance at the Second North American Nonsectarian Conference of Tibetan Religious Schools in California [finding common ground \(VOCL Aug. 2013\)](#) reinforced the need for all Bon lamas teaching in the West to meet for a similar purpose. H.E. Menri Lopon Trinley Nyima Rinpoche and Latri Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche were instrumental in supporting the

effort.

Most of the assembled teachers had already met each other, most of them at Menri Monastery near Dolanji, India, one of two main Bon monasteries outside of Tibet. “But really getting to know someone requires spending time with each other, sharing and exchanging,” said Geshe YongDong, who added that almost all their waking hours at Serenity Ridge were spent chatting and sharing.

“Having this whole weekend to connect was extraordinary. There was no ego involved. We were meeting heart to heart, not head to head. I could sense this was everyone's feeling. Sometimes it was very emotional, and sometimes we couldn't stop laughing. I have never seen anything like this.”

According to YongDong, all the lamas expressed the same intention: to develop the sacred Bon teachings and benefit the students. “When we talked about how our Tibetan culture and spirituality were destroyed, and how difficult the challenges were for the masters we learned from, tears came.”

“When the lamas can connect like this, our students can also connect better with each other. These meetings have given me a lot of energy and strength that I will carry on my return to (my center on) Vancouver Island.”

The meetings' agenda covered five primary topics:

- 1) How to maintain future connections between the various spiritual teachers, as well as between their centers in the West.
- 2) Ideas for standardizing all the Bon chants used by Western students, including adopting the same language and melody across all the Bon centers. As a result of the meetings, three different chanting booklets are being planned—one short form, one medium, one long. “The Bon teachings and Bon lineage are the same, carried to the West and the world,” said YongDong. “If you are in Canada, you should feel confident to know that you can come to my center and receive the same





Says Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, “It was very important to me to have this kind of exchange and mutual support. Most important was the ability to sit, laugh, share, and eat together, and to share our thoughts about what we can all pursue collectively in the future. I am looking forward to our meeting next year at Gyalshen Institute”

Present at the October meetings at Serenity Ridge were:

- **H.E. Menri Lopon Trinley Nyima Rinpoche**, the head instructor (Lopon) of Menri

Bon teachings within the same Bon lineage as you would receive anywhere else in the West.”

3) How to support Tibetan Bonpos who come to the West, whether through financial, spiritual, or other means.

4) How to adapt the Bon teachings for the modern Western mind. “People are people, no matter where they are from,” says YongDong. “But once you have a better understanding of the culture and way of life in the West, then you can better understand individuals and their personalities and adjust the teachings in relation to Western needs.”

5) Plans for future meetings. The Serenity Ridge participants agreed to meet annually. Next year's meeting will be at Gyalshen Institute, Geshe Lhundup Chaphur Rinpoche's center in El Cerrito, California.

“Sometimes lamas need to just be lamas together, laughing and connecting with each other,” Geshe YongDong added. “There is a natural distance between students and teachers, and the teachers don't have much opportunity to show who they truly are. It's very important to rejuvenate. In my opinion, it is important for people in the East, as well, to know the importance of lamas meeting together to support each other. In the world today, the Bon sacred teachings offer much benefit for the mind and for one's health.”

Monastery in Dolanji, India.

- **Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche**, the Abbot (Khenpo) of Triten Norbutse Monastery in Kathmandu, Nepal, [www.triten.org](http://www.triten.org).
- **Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche**, founder and spiritual director of Ligmincha Institute, Shipman, Virginia, [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org).
- **Latri Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche**, founder and spiritual director of the Yeru Bön Center, Los Angeles, [www.yeruboncenter.net](http://www.yeruboncenter.net), and Abbot of La Tri Monastery in Kham, Tibet.
- **Khenpo Geshe Tenzin Dargye** (Tamding Gurung), Abbot of Dhorpatan Monastery, Nepal.
- **Geshe YongDong**, founder and resident lama of Sherab Chamma Ling, Tibetan Bon Buddhist Centre, Courtenay B.C., Vancouver Island, Canada, [www.sherabchammaling.com](http://www.sherabchammaling.com).
- **Geshe Tenzin Yangton**, assistant to H.E. Menri Lopon Trinley Nyima Rinpoche.
- **Geshe Lhundup Chaphur Rinpoche**, founder and spiritual director of Gyalshen Institute, El Cerrito, California, [gyalshen.org](http://gyalshen.org).
- **Lama Khemsar Rinpoche**, founder and spiritual director of The Tibetan Yungdrung Bon Study Centre, UK, [www.yungdrungbon.com](http://www.yungdrungbon.com); the Tibetan Yungdrung Bön Institute, Miami, Florida; and Kunzhi-Ling Lugano, Switzerland.
- **Amchi Thupten Tsering**, a doctor of Tibetan medicine.

**Text by Polly Turner**

Photos by John Jackson and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche





# MEDITATION AFFECTS HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

**Vickie Walter reports from the Buddhism and Science Conference at Serenity Ridge Retreat Center. This article originally appeared in the December 2013 issue of Voice of Clear Light.**

Ligmincha Institute's third annual Buddhism and Science Conference was a great success, according to both presenters and participants at the event, held October 9–10 at Serenity Ridge Retreat Center in Nelson County, Virginia. And part of what made the conference so special was not only the quality of the presenters but also that intangible 'human quality' — the connection among the presenters, their interaction with participants, and the welcoming atmosphere of Serenity Ridge and Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, founder and spiritual director of Ligmincha.

"We are very pleased with the results," says conference organizer and presenter Alejandro Chaoul-Reich, director of research for Ligmincha Institute and a faculty member at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. "I knew we had really top presenters, but it went way beyond what I expected, both in terms of the quality of presenters and the way they connected with each other and their audience. They were really en-

gaged — their smiles said it all." The presenters donated their own time to attend the conference, even paying for their own transportation.

This year's conference theme was *New Dialogs Between Buddhism and Science: Researching the Effects of Meditation and Compassion on Health and Well-Being*. The two-day event had a more intensive research focus than did the two past conferences, the first focused on the paranormal and the second on both scholarship and research. This third conference not only built on the other two but also expanded the research content.

In addition to Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, nine other presenters from throughout the United States shared their research in areas ranging from the benefits of Tibetan sound healing on breast cancer patients' cognitive function, to mindfulness and behavior change, to compassion-based training for clinicians, to a longitudinal self-report on the effects of intensive meditation practice, and even to the effects of meditation at the cellular level. Making use of modern technology, participants viewed presenter Catherine Kerr's presentation via Skype when she became unable to attend in person.

Presenters and their topics included:





- **Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche**, director, Ligmincha Institute: *Tibetan Sound Meditation*
- **Susan Bauer-Wu, Ph.D., R.N.**, Tussi and John Kluge Professor in Contemplative End-of Life Care and Adjunct Faculty, Department of Religious Studies, University of Virginia; President of the Society for Integrative Oncology: *Compassion-Based Training for Clinicians: Heart and Science*
- **Leslie Blackhall, M.D.**, Associate Professor and Director, Palliative Care Research Program, University of Virginia: *Tibetan Buddhist Medicine and Science*
- **Willoughby Britton, Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor (Research), Department of Psychiatry and Human Behavior, Brown University: *Promises and Perils of Buddhist Meditation in the West*
- **Alejandro Chaoul-Reich, Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor, Integrative Medicine Program, Department of General Oncology, Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, Tex.; Director of Research, Ligmincha Institute: *Tibetan Sound Meditation Can Improve Cognitive Function in Breast Cancer Survivors After Chemotherapy Treatment*
- **Elissa Epel, Ph.D.**, Associate Professor in Residence, University of California San Francisco Department of Psychiatry: *Meditation, Stress and Cell Aging*
- **Catherine Kerr, Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor, Department of Family Medicine and Director of Translational Neuroscience, Contemplative Studies Initiative, Brown University: *Regulating the "Sense Doors": Clinically Relevant Neural Mechanisms Underlying Body Awareness and Sensory Perceptual Processing in Mindfulness*
- **Clifford Saron, Ph.D.**, Associate Research Scientist, University of California Davis Center for Mind and Brain, M.I.N.D. Institute: *Training the Mind and Opening the Heart: Longitudinal Self-Report — Cognitive, Affective and Physiological Effects of Intensive Meditation Practice*
- **David R. Vago, Ph.D.**, Associate Psychologist, Brigham & Women's Hospital; Instructor, Department of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School: *Modalities of Awareness: Mapping the Neurobiological Substrates of the Meditative Mind*
- **Ruth Quillian Wolever, Ph.D.**, Research Director, Duke Integrative Medicine; Advisor, Duke





Diet and Fitness Center; Clinical Health Psychologist and Assistant Professor, Duke University Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences: *Mindfulness: What Does It Contribute to the Science of Behavior Change?*



The presenters' visit was enhanced by the presence of a group of lamas who had just prior to the conference attended the first meeting of Bon lamas in the West, organized by Tenzin Rinpoche at Ligmincha Institute. Presenters were able to interact with the lamas during tea breaks and at other times. Many of the presenters also knew each other personally and professionally, which contributed to the collegial and friendly interaction, which was palpable to the audience. During the retreat, they engaged with each other and participants, and enjoyed an informal dinner with Tenzin Rinpoche.

More than half of the presenters remained after the conference to attend the annual fall retreat that followed, whose topic was *The Open Heart: Healing in the Dzogchen Tradition*. And almost thirty of the research conference's eighty participants also extended their stay at Serenity Ridge to attend the fall retreat.

In addition to his presentation on Tibetan Sound Healing (the basis for Chaoul-Reich's research study), Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche also welcomed the group, answered questions, led meditation sessions and gave a beautiful closure.

"Our intent at these conferences is to share, learn from each other and explore new ideas for future dialog and research," Rinpoche says. "I believe that in the future, the kinds of practices we do in the Tibetan Bon and Buddhist traditions will be widely seen as a potent medicine for preventing and healing many forms of illness. For centuries, meditation practitioners have directly experienced these beneficial effects, and Western research is increasingly exploring and confirming the benefits."

The next Buddhism and Science Conference, *Pathways to a Healthy Mind*, is scheduled for October 7–9, 2014 (beginning on Tuesday evening and ending Thursday around noon). It will be followed by the fall retreat October 10–12, whose topic is *The Healing Power of Primordial Awareness*.

In the meantime, conference organizers and presenters are working to establish more relationships with other institutions, and possible new research projects may arise. Presentations from this conference are being transcribed to put in a volume that will be made available to the public. In addition, a new book based on Ligmincha's first annual Buddhism and Science Conference is in the works, edited by Berkeley physicist David Presti with chapters authored by each of the conference's presenters plus Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

Stay tuned for more!

**Text by Vickie Walter**

Photos by Rob Dorsey




# BON'S 24 HOUR GLOBAL PRAYER



YERU BÖN CENTER  
གཡས་རུ་བོན་གྱི་སྒྲུབ་མེ


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*Bon's 24 Hour  
Global Prayer*

*The harmony of prayer,  
The sound of meditation,  
The peace of Bon!*

Yeru Bon Center and Latri Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche invite Bon practitioners and friends of Bon to participate in our first annual Global Prayer and Meditation event. We are inviting Bon practitioners to join us on March 5, 2014. This date has been chosen as it is the anniversary of the birthday of Nyamed Shenrab Gyaltsen, the founder of sMenri Monastery, the main monastery of Bon.



On this auspicious day, every prayer we pray is multiplied by 100,000. On that day, we ask all practitioners to pray and meditate for a minimum of one hour anytime between 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. within their time zone.

Visit our website - [yeruboncenter.org](http://yeruboncenter.org) for more information and to register.  
Please research the menu tabs above for more information on this incredible Global Prayer Event.

**What a wonderful 24 hours this will be for Bonpos to  
be united by meditation and prayer!**





## CONTEMPORARY & TRADITIONAL ART IN YUNGDRUNG BON

**Sarah Edgehill is planning an art exhibition formed around three themes: heaven, earth and human. In the *Ligmincha Europe Magazine # 10* she called artists to submit. Here is an update.**

Can meditation motivate art? Can art motivate meditation? How does art influence the way you think today? Does it change the way you think about yourself or your culture? With the current state of the world, can art be a tool to achieve peace, happiness, health and wellbeing? These questions among others are the realms we'll be exploring in 2014 and beyond. An international exhibition of contemporary and traditional art is planned, where we'll explore intercultural perception of gratitude through art, and see how this impacts the local and global community.

With the collaboration and guidance of leading scholars and spiritual masters of the Bon tradition, we want to investigate ancient motivations of

gratitude and creativity, as well as taking on the challenge to discover where traditional Tibetan buddhist art and artists, and twenty-first century artists merge and ideas synchronise. Contemporary artists from diverse international locations, whose artwork aims to focus on new trends in Contemplative Science and Art, will be featured here among traditional Buddhist artists.

A distinctive feature of the project is to invite artists who are deeply connected to the Bon tradition or similar forms of meditation practice. Diverse contemporary views of contemplation on gratitude will share space with ancient traditional art. An excerpt from the New York Times on Bon art: "Even if you know little about Bon art and religion it will be obvious that Bon paintings are not just for entertainment or aesthetic delectation. What may be less clear is that they are based on an elaborate system of meditative practices intended to lead to psychic liberation from the continual pains, pleasures, desires and frustrations of human existence."

# heaven earth human rediscovering gratitude



“Art in the traditional Tibetan buddhist context is developed as a foretaste of the blessed state of full enlightenment, opening a normally inconceivable experience – at least to the imagination, of exalted beings in a delightful world.” Robert Thurman.

Ligmincha has more than twenty years experience in collaborative social projects in the clinical and societal fields, and we, the arts project, are opening the doors to the visual exploration of contemplative science in the arts field. To promote the idea of a connecting link of motivation towards enlightenment to the audience, Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche analyses buddhist perception:

“By training ourselves in meditation ... we learn how to look and begin to discover how to see, learning how to listen we discover how to hear and by learning how to feel, we discover how to experience.” From *True Perception: The path of Dharma Art*.

#### **Why art as a solution to global devastation? From intuition to strategy...**

More and more with increasing availability of information, we are encountering dynamic new ways to re-vision our roles as responsible humans. With the teachings of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, we are learning to look deeply within ourselves, and at our own pain, personal and global, connect to our personal transformations and stimulate processes of stability and integrity in life. Meditation is being creatively applied at all levels of society – education, economics and neuroscience are exchanging mantras, and multinationals are waking up to realize the powerful impact that mindfulness is creating as a beautiful solution to many problems of the world. At the 2014 World Economic Forum, artists shared stories on how their art projects are improving the lifestyles of thousands of communities and children at an enormous tempo.

“In some sense everybody is engaged in creativity in some form or another. Art can be a pure expression of inner realization, of your true self. Creativity allows you to realize what you are in the process of realizing, by expressing it in form, sound or images,” says Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in the

*Ligmincha Europe Magazine # 3.*

“We all go back so far. And in this present moment on this day, all the people you meet, all that life from generations and from so many places all over the world flows together and meets you here like a life giving water – if you only open your heart and drink – let the gratefulness overflow into blessing all around you ... and then it will be a really good day.” From Brother David Steindl-Rast's film on YouTube *A Good Day*:

[www.gratefulness.org](http://www.gratefulness.org).

#### **Who are we?**

We are a collective of international artists from New Zealand, Abu Dhabi and Germany. We are developing this project with a focus on stimulating the development of interdisciplinary fields of contemplative sciences in an artistic atmosphere. Beyond borders, where the conceptual meets the nonconceptual, mind meets matter. The exhibition is planned to take place in Berlin, 2015. For more information, or if you are interested in supporting the project, contact: Sarah Edgehill in Berlin, Germany, at: [sarahedgehill@gmail.com](mailto:sarahedgehill@gmail.com).

All of your generous donations will be greatly appreciated. Proceeds from the project will be used to support children's school projects in Dolpo.

Updates will be posted, on the website which is still under construction:

[www.heavenearthhuman.eu](http://www.heavenearthhuman.eu).

**Text and photos by Sarah Edgehill**







Ligmincha España

Conservar el patrimonio de Bön Budismo en el mundo

TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE

## BON IS A GIFT FOR HUMANITY

Discover the activities of the Spanish sangha. Ton Bisscheroux interviewed Enric Camps.

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

In 2012, I met Rinpoche when he came for a second visit to Barcelona. I already had done a lot of therapy, and I was looking for something with a different dimension. So I asked a friend if he knew somebody who could guide me. He told me: "This weekend two people will come to Barcelona: a Zen master and a master from the Bon tradition. I recommend you go to the Bon tradition." So I

went to see Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

**There was something in you that wanted to meet a master. What was that?**

In difficult times in my life I have always asked angels, energy, or whatever, to support me. When I discovered that there are people who have the capacity to guide, and that they are ready to give a light in your life, I felt the desire for that. When I saw Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche he was very natural and I felt a connection with him. I love Rinpoche because he gives beautiful teachings, and he also monitors the whole structure of Ligmincha on a company management level.



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche with Thubten Wangchen, the director of Tibet House in Barcelona, in 2012.





Bardo seminar in Madrid in 2010.

**Did you have any experience with Buddhism before?**

No, but I was always connected with certain fundamental good things in life. That could be from the Sufism or the Gnostics, but I never met a Tibetan lama.

**How long has Rinpoche been coming to Spain?**

Rinpoche has been coming to Spain since 2008, once every year, except in 2013. He visited Malaga, Toledo, Madrid and Barcelona. In May 2014 he will come to Malaga and teach *Tibetan Sound Healing*.

**Can you tell us about the structure of Ligmincha Spain?**

The papers for an association are ready, but we are waiting for the final approval from Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. Now we are a group of five people working together:

**Alejandro Torrealba** is the heart of the Ligmincha Spain organization, because he offers meditation and teachings in his center, called Milarepa, on the Canary Islands. He wants to invite Alejandro Chaoul to Spain, and he hopes to bring The Three Doors in Spanish for the Mexican and Spanish sangha.

**Begoña García** lives in Talavera de la Reina, near Madrid, and she is responsible for the secretarial tasks in addition to taking care of the information on the Spanish website.

**Jose Ignacio García Acosta** is a 'regular' and homeopathic doctor, who lives in Malaga. His patients are open to the Bon teachings. There are about fifty to sixty people who practice together with him on a regular basis.

**Lutz Dausend** is an experienced practitioner. He is responsible for the Spanish and international Ligmincha website.

**I [Enric Camps]** live in Barcelona and am responsible for the organization, its legal and financial matters, and its international relations.

**Do you have practice groups in Spain?**

We have practice groups in Malaga and on the Canary Islands, where people meet once a week. In Malaga, we have about sixty to seventy practitioners who practice together regularly. The last time Rinpoche visited Barcelona there were two hundred people at the evening talk, and one-hundred-twenty on the seminar. After the seminar, I tried to organize a practice group in Barcelona, but it didn't work out. All over Spain we have about two-hundred sangha members who we regularly inform by e-mail.

**What are your plans for the future?**

We would like to have a place in Spain where we can meet as a sangha and give regular teachings. I also want to help the sangha to grow. For that, I think we have to present ourselves in a way the 'normal' people understand what we do. I think







we should put our experiences on the website, telling people how practice has changed our life, and also how it changes the lives of the people in our environment. We should communicate more in the way Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche is talking. When we talk about a *Dakini* or the Bon religion in general most people don't have a clue what we want to tell them. In daily life people are confronted with panic and fear, and they are not used to looking at themselves. They do not see how practice could benefit them. We should explain this. During the next seminar, I would like to present a DVD to introduce the Ligmincha organization because many participants don't know what is going on in other countries. We have to share what we believe, and not what we are doing. By that energy people will be touched and the sangha will grow. We talk too much about how we do things, and not why we do it.

We would like to invite sangha members from all over Europe when Rinpoche comes to Malaga from May 9-11, 2014 and we are happy to offer everybody from abroad food and accommodation.

**To reach people it is not enough to make a website, people also have to find the website. What can we do to encourage people to find us?**

It is beautiful when Rinpoche gives teachings. We need to organize events, so people can experience what it is. We have to create the conditions: being close to the people and offer regular practice. We have to think outside of the box. Sharing and discussions in the sangha will give us more room to find ways that our sangha can grow. On the website we could have discussion with the sangha members. The Ligmincha Europe Magazine is also really important because it is an opportunity to share and connect with people in the sangha and give them a chance to join us.

**How about books translated in Spanish?**

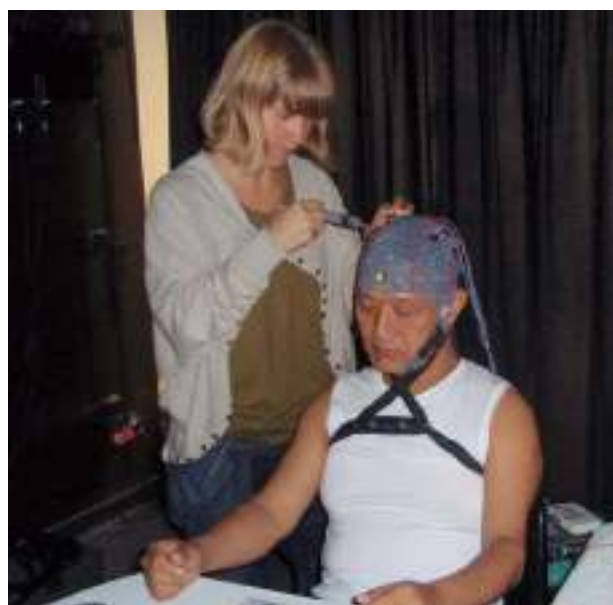
We have a lot of books which have been translated by the Mexican sangha. In the main bookshops in Barcelona, one can now buy Tenzin Wangyal's books. I also considered how we can sell books from Rinpoche through the internet. And I went to places where people come who travel to Tibet, Nepal and India, to see if we can sell books there.

### **Is there something you want to share?**

I firmly believe that in this era, healing of physical ailments will come through an understanding of energy. I have seen what Alejandro Chaoul does in the Cancer center in Houston and that is something quite amazing. Deepak Chopra talks about how energy has influence upon the cells in our body, and how our immune system reacts to this energy. I am sure it works and I would love to help medical universities to begin discussions of new ways of healing people, which is not about giving people pills but to treat the consequences of inner illness. In Bon, we learn how to integrate this energy, and we should share that with all human beings. We should make it more popular, because it works for our body, our life and relationships. It is a huge and amazing experience. That is the way we need to progress in our life and society. This is a gift for humanity.

### **Interview by Ton Bisscheroux**

Photos by Begoña Garcia



The University of Barcelona *Pompeu Fabra* did a study on the brain's response to different stimuli and images (normal and other violent) and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche participated in the study as a person practicing meditation.



# INNER REFUGE: SO EASY TO BE EXPERIENCED

**Ulrike Bross-Kurat, psychotherapist and chair of Ligmincha Berlin, shares with us her experience with from a weekend of the Taste of The Three Doors with Marcy Vaughn in September 2013, in Berlin, Germany.**

During this Taste weekend seventeen people, mostly women (fifteen), were present. Although it was only two weekends after a rich weekend with Alejandro Chaoul on *Tsa Lung* and *Trul Khor* and we would have liked to spend a quiet weekend at home, my friend Carmen and I did not want to miss Marcy. We felt it would be a great opportunity to see and experience how somebody who has grown up in our own culture would transfer Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's teachings into her own language, her own being and her own way of instructing meditation within a group structure.

The experience of following Marcy's instructions and listening to her answers on peoples questions and sharing was very much then like being in a retreat with Rinpoche, finding oneself in an uplifted mental and energetic state of consciousness without losing the contact to one's own pain and habitual patterns.

It was amazing how quickly Marcy guided us into deep areas of our being and how easy it was under her guidance to dive into and stay in the Inner Refuge for really nourishing periods of time. Bringing in the sacred syllables of *A*, *OM* and *HUNG* for each refuge helped a lot to deepen and



expand the experience of space, light or awareness and warmth. Especially the three seed syllables chanted together in a group seemed to make the access to and the state of Inner Refuge easy to be experienced also for somebody who had not meditated much before.

The atmosphere in the group quickly became quite intimate and all of us were open to share whatever came up in the state of Inner Refuge no matter if the issue has been conscious before or just had popped up from a hidden layer in the subconscious. It seemed that knowing about and abiding in the state of Inner Refuge gave enough momentum for the shadow parts of ourselves to show up and encouragement for them to be acknowledged in a loving and tender way.

The therapy-like self-reflection we experienced, put together with the essence of the dharma teachings, was really exciting for me as a therapist since I had been longing for a personalized access to the dharma teachings for a long time. I now

feel that the practice of Inner Refuge and The Three Doors embedded in a group process like the one we have tasted provides a big chance for a stable spiritual growth and transformation of even difficult psychological issues.

**Text by Ulrike Bross-Kurat**

Photos by Anja Benesch and Ulla Riewer





# TASTE OF THE THREE DOORS IN DORTMUND



## Tastes of the Three Doors flourish in Europe

**March 14-16, 2014  
Dortmund, Germany  
with John Jackson**



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's gift of The Three Doors is spreading over Europe. The first European Academy will end in spring 2014. One of the wonderful outcomes is the bouquet of 3D Tastes organized by the students of the academy with devoted enthusiasm. There were already 3D Tastes in Helsinki, Copenhagen, Exloerveen, Berlin and Frankfurt with Marcy Vaughn and Kallon Basquin. They gave the chance to many people to learn what it is all about and how it can transform your life.



The straight, direct approach and the formless essence of all the teachings helped me a lot to keep on transforming and watering the good seeds without losing myself in details and finding excuses. The whole time through the academy I had a big memo in my kitchen with a quotation of Rinpoche: "Stop planning! Just do it!" And it is still hanging there to guide me.

Having gone through the same intensive process of deeper personal shifts, the 3D teachers can incredibly help people make their changes and so I am very happy to announce that John Jackson is going to give a 3D seminar in Dortmund. Everybody who wants to join and to taste is warmly welcome. The seminar is as well for experienced as for beginning practitioners.

**Text and drawing by Angelika Krone**

March 14 2014 19:30 Public Talk  
March 15 + 16 2014 Weekend Seminar  
English with translation to German

Registration, information, help for  
accommodation: [Angelika.Krone@gmx.net](mailto:Angelika.Krone@gmx.net)



# DREAM YOGA

**In 2014 you will get three chances to go to a seminar of *Dream Yoga* with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche: in Austria, Germany and in Belgium. Here is an introduction.**

We spend a third of our life sleeping and all of us dream whether we remember dreaming or not. At the end of every day we shut our eyes and dissolve into darkness and everything we know as 'me' disappears. After a brief period, images arise and our sense of self arises with them and we exist again in the apparently limitless world of dream. We wake in the morning and continue in 'real' life, but in a sense we are still asleep and dreaming.

The teachings of the Bon-Buddhist tradition tell us that we can continue in this deluded, dreamy state, day and night, or wake up to the truth. The practice of *Dream Yoga* is a powerful tool of awakening, used for hundreds of years in Tibet by the great masters and many ordinary people.

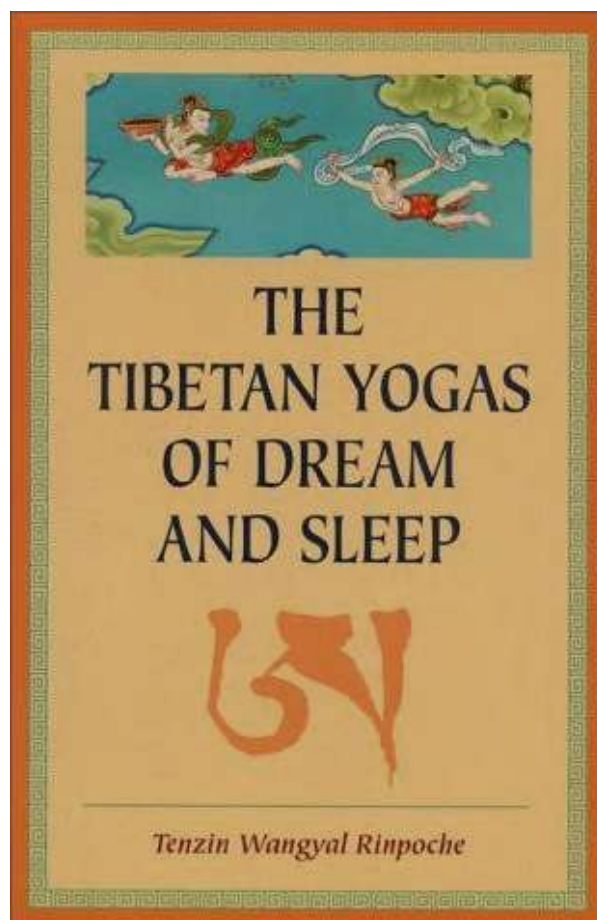
Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will introduce us into the practice of *Dream Yoga* in an effective and simple way, suited for beginners as well as for experienced practitioners. It is a method, which helps us to overcome stress and fears and which deepens our spiritual development. The practice shows us how we can use dreams to cultivate awareness and presence in our everyday life. A path, that will bring more lightness and clarity in our life and ultimately will lead to liberation.

**We selected text from the book *Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep* by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche (pages 19-21):**

## The Nature of Dream

### 1. Dream and Reality

All of us dream whether we remember dreaming or not. We dream as infants and continue dreaming until we die. Every night we enter an unknown world. We may seem to be our ordinary selves or someone completely different. We meet people whom we know or don't know, who are living or dead. We fly, encounter non-human beings, have blissful experiences, laugh, weep, and are terrified, exalted, or transformed. Yet we



generally pay these extraordinary experiences little attention. Many Westerners who approach the teachings do so with ideas about dream based in psychological theory; subsequently, when they become more interested in using dream in their spiritual life, they usually focus on the content and meaning of dreams. Rarely is the nature of dreaming itself investigated. When it is, the investigation leads to the mysterious processes that underlie the whole of our existence, not only our dreaming life.

The first step in dream practice is quite simple: one must recognize the great potential that dream holds for the spiritual journey. Normally the dream is thought to be "unreal," as opposed to 'real' waking life. But there is nothing more real than dream. This statement only makes sense once it is understood that normal waking life is as unreal as dream, and in exactly the same way. Then it can be understood that *Dream Yoga* applies to all experience, to the dreams of the day as well as the dreams of the night.





## 2. How Experience Arises

### IGNORANCE

All of our experience, including dream, arises from ignorance. This is a rather startling statement to make in the West, so first let us understand what is meant by ignorance (*ma-rigpa*). The Tibetan tradition distinguishes between two kinds of ignorance: innate ignorance and cultural ignorance. Innate ignorance is the basis of samsara, and the defining characteristic of ordinary beings. It is ignorance of our true nature and the true nature of the world, and it results in entanglement with the delusions of the dualistic mind.

Dualism reifies polarities and dichotomies. It divides the seamless unity of experience into this and that, right and wrong, you and me. Based on these conceptual divisions, we develop preferences that manifest as grasping and aversion, the habitual responses that make up most of what we identify as ourselves. We want this, not that; believe in this, not that; respect this and disdain that. We want pleasure, comfort, wealth, and fame, and try to escape from pain, poverty, shame, and discomfort. We want these things for ourselves and those we love, and do not care about others. We want an experience different from the one we are having, or we want to hold on to an experience and avoid the inevitable changes that will lead to its cessation.

There is a second kind of ignorance that is culturally conditioned. It comes about as desires and aversions become institutionalized in a culture and codified into value systems. For example, in India, Hindus believe that it is wrong to eat cows but proper to eat pigs. Moslems believe that it is

appropriate to eat beef but they are prohibited from eating pork. Tibetans eat both. Who is right? The Hindu thinks the Hindus are right, the Moslem thinks the Moslems are right, and the Tibetan thinks the Tibetans are right. The differing beliefs arise from the biases and beliefs that are part of the culture – not from fundamental wisdom.

Another example can be found in the internal conflicts of philosophy. There are many philosophical systems that are defined by their disagreement with one another on fine points. Even though the systems themselves are developed with the intention to lead beings to wisdom, they produce ignorance in that their followers cling to a dualistic understanding of reality. This is unavoidable in any conceptual system because the conceptual mind itself is a manifestation of ignorance.

Cultural ignorance is developed and preserved in traditions. It pervades every custom, opinion, set of values, and body of knowledge. Both individuals and cultures accept these preferences as so fundamental that they are taken to be common sense or divine law. We grow up attaching ourselves to various beliefs, to a political party, a medical system, a religion, an opinion about how things should be. We pass through elementary school, high school, and maybe college, and in one

sense every diploma is an award for developing a more sophisticated ignorance. Education reinforces the habit of seeing the world through a certain lens. We can become an expert in an erroneous view, become very precise in our understanding, and relate to other experts. This can be the case also in philosophy, in which one learns detailed intellectual systems and develops the



mind into a sharp instrument of inquiry. But until innate ignorance is penetrated, one is merely developing an acquired bias, not fundamental wisdom.

We become attached to even the smallest things: a particular brand of soap or our hair being cut in a certain fashion. On a grand scale, we develop religions, political systems, philosophies, psychologies, and sciences. But no one is born with the belief that it is wrong to eat beef or pork or that one philosophical system is right and the other in error or that this religion is true and that religion is false. These must be learned. The allegiance to particular values is the result of cultural ignorance, but the propensity to accept limited views originates in the dualism that is the manifestation of innate ignorance.



Gyuma Chenmo, Dakini of the Dream Practice

This is not bad. It is just what is. Our attachments can lead to war but they also manifest as helpful technologies and different arts that are of great benefit to the world. As long as we are unenlightened we participate in dualism, and that is all right. In Tibetan there is a saying, “When in the body of a donkey, enjoy the taste of grass.” In other words, we should appreciate and enjoy this life because it is meaningful and valuable in itself, and because it is the life we are living.

If we are not careful, the teachings can be used to support our ignorance. One can say that it is bad for someone to get an advanced degree, or wrong

to have dietary restrictions, but this is not the point at all. Or one might say that ignorance is bad or normal life is only samsaric stupidity. But ignorance is simply an obscuration of consciousness. Being attached to it or repelled by it is just the same old game of dualism, played out in the realm of ignorance. We can see how pervasive it is. Even the teachings must work with dualism –

by encouraging attachment to virtue, for example, and aversion to non-virtue paradoxically using the dualism of ignorance to overcome ignorance. How subtle our understanding must become and how easily we can get lost! This is why practice is necessary, in order to have direct experience rather than just developing another conceptual system to elaborate and defend. When things are seen from a higher perspective they tend to level out. From the perspective

of non-dual wisdom there is no important and unimportant.

#### Text selected by Ton Bisscheroux

Photos from the *Dream Yoga Visualization Card Set*

#### More information about the seminars on *Dream Yoga*:

March 21-23: Vienna, Austria [www.ligmincha.at](http://www.ligmincha.at)

March 28-30: Berlin, Germany [www.ligmincha.de](http://www.ligmincha.de)

October 25-27: Brussels, Belgium [www.bongaruda.be](http://www.bongaruda.be)

You can also watch a video by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche on YouTube: [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com).







# DREAMYOGA

Seminar with TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE

from 21 – 23 March 2014 in Vienna

Location: seminar centre "Am Spiegeln"  
Johann-Hörbiger-Gasse 30, 1230 Vienna

Fees: € 150,- for public talk and seminar  
10 % reduction for registration before 10th February 2014  
and further 10 % for members of Ligmincha Austria

Registration and further information:

[www.ligmincha.at](http://www.ligmincha.at)

[info@ligmincha.at](mailto:info@ligmincha.at)

Tel.: +43-650/3156557

Ligmincha Österreich

Argentinierstrasse 60/13

1040 Vienna





# A HAPPY NEW YEAR 2014

We wish all readers of the Ligmincha Europe Magazine a Happy New Year 2014. All the best, health, happiness and space, light and warmth.



At the very end of the year we had once again the opportunity to attend a live webcast with a precious teaching from Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. In this webcast, which can be accessed using this [link](#) as a reception, Rinpoche talked about how meditation practitioners relate with each other as a community, or sangha, can play an essential role in their spiritual growth. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche discussed the role of sangha from the perspective of the Bon Buddhist teachings.



Although the Western New Year has passed, the Tibetan New Year Festival 'Losar' comes after the new moon on March 2, 2014.

**The practice weekend on February 21-23, 2014 is before Losar.**

For many years we have organized the annual practice weekend in Germany. At the request of Rinpoche, this meeting takes place independently of him and is led by experienced students. This year our practice weekend will take place on the Beuerhof ([www.beuerhof.de](http://www.beuerhof.de)) in the volcanic Eifel area. The upcoming meeting has been held around Losar since 2012 and focuses on last year's topic on the Summer Retreat 2013 in Buchenau: *Twenty-four Masters of the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud*.



We start the weekend on Friday, February 21 at 18.00 h. with setting up the Gumpa together and an initial meditation session. On Saturday, February 22 we welcome the day with a *Sang Chö*, followed by a planned Skype-meeting with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. On Sunday, February 23 we will finish our weekend around 13.00 h with lunch.

For more information including directions and registration, please visit the website of [Ligmincha Deutschland](#).

**European sangha of Ligmincha**





# Awakening the Sacred Feminine

A Meditation Retreat on Sherap Chamma: Mother of Wisdom and Love

with Marcy Vaughn

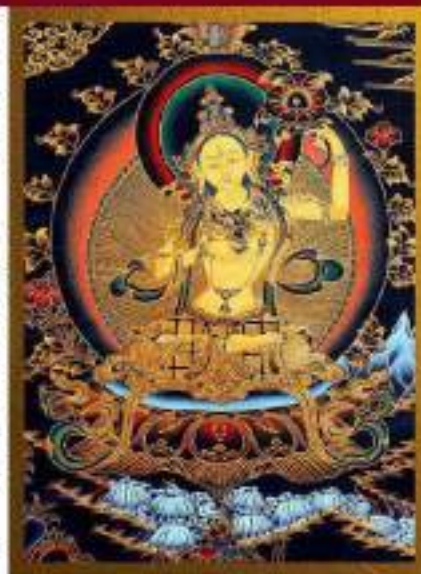
April 23rd - 27th 2014, Pauenhof / Germany

## Sherap Chamma: Mother of Wisdom and Love

In many cultures the primordial female energy is seen as the origin of existence and the source of all positive qualities. As such, Sherap Chamma, Mother of Wisdom and Love, is the source of wisdom, and her medicine is love and compassion. The teachings of Sherap Chamma comprise one of the most important tantric cycles of the ancient Bön tradition.

In this retreat, participants will learn a beautiful and simple meditation practice enabling each to directly connect with the divine feminine energy. Within the support of the group, we create an environment to promote profound healing of physical, energetic/emotional, and spiritual dimensions of life. With visualization, the sound of mantra, and deep contemplation, we make a personal connection to this sacred form of the universal mother, Sherap Chamma, and are guided through this connection to our innate wisdom and the love and compassion that naturally radiate from that wisdom.

Those experienced in meditation as well as those who are beginning are warmly welcomed.



## About Marcy Vaughn



Marcy Vaughn has been a practitioner of Tibetan Buddhism for more than 35 years and is a senior student of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. She graduated in the first class of the master's program in contemplative psychotherapy at Naropa University. Currently a therapist in private practice in Pennsylvania, USA. Marcy teaches meditation classes and also leads retreats that explore imagery and voice in the healing process. She edited the books Tibetan Sound Healing, Awakening the Sacred Body, and Awakening the Luminous Mind all by Tenzin Wangyal. She helped design and teaches in the The Three Doors Academy, a three-year training program bringing contemplative practices to a secular world.

## Event Details

Dates: April 23rd - 27th 2014 (arrival 22nd in the afternoon, departure 27th after lunch)

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

Participation fee (including meals): € 315,- early bird registration fee (before April 1st)  
€ 350,- registration fee (after April 1st)

Accommodation fee: single (€90), double (€70), triple (€60), 4 persons (€50), 6 persons (€40).

Availability of the rooms is limited, so we cannot guarantee your preference will be available.

Registration: [dakiniretreats@gmail.com](mailto:dakiniretreats@gmail.com)

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

## Information on Facebook:

„Awakening the Sacred Feminine“

supported by

Ligmincha Netherlands



Ligmincha Deutschland



# A SPECIAL OCCASION IN AMSTERDAM

**In May 2014 Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will teach *A-tri* Dzogchen, and Alejandro Chaoul will teach *Tsa Lung Trul Khor* in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.**

The *A-tri* ('Instructions on A') is a well-known Bon Dzogchen cycle that was first compiled in the eleventh century. The teachings are concise and to the point, and are arranged in fifteen stages. Through these stages we are guided towards a full understanding of the nature of mind and an integration of our meditation into everything we do with our body, speech and mind. The *A-tri* teachings are a wonderful support for those of us who follow the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* cycle in Austria.

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche is currently teaching a three-year cycle on the *A-tri* Dzogchen tradition in the Netherlands. Last year he explained the *Ngondro* practices, the foundational practices that accompany any major teaching cycle. This year, from May 23 to 25, Rinpoche will be teaching the second part, on the practice of *Zhine* or calm abiding: the practice of stabilizing our mind and attention.

This year we are especially fortunate, as Alejandro Chaoul-Reich will be teaching the practices of *Tsa Lung* and the *A-tri Trul Khor*

following the seminar by Rinpoche. From Monday, May 26 to Wednesday, May 28 he will teach these wonderful practices that are a great support for our meditation. In the *Tsa Lung Trul Khor*, 'the magical movements of channels and vital breath', we combine our attention, breath and movement to balance the energies in our body, which affects our meditative state of mind. The *Tsa Lung* is the foundation for the *Trul Khor*. The *A-tri Trul Khor* exercises are connected to the *A-tri* Dzogchen cycle. At many retreats, for example the summer retreat in Buchenau, we do these practices every morning.

The *A-tri Trul Khor* is based on the same five *lung* that we work with in the *Tsa Lung*. They are more vigorous, but not difficult, and help us to release patterns of energy that are a hindrance to our meditation and well-being. As Alejandro put it: "The 'magic' of *Trul Khor* is not esoteric, but it is actually opening your heart. Being seated, emotionally, mentally and spiritually, not just physically."

You can find more information on: [ligmincha.nl](http://ligmincha.nl)  
Registration and information: [seminar@ligmincha.nl](mailto:seminar@ligmincha.nl)

**Text by Erik Robbemont**

Photo by Joop van Spronsen





# UPCOMING TRUL KHOR ACTIVITIES IN EUROPE

**The next few years will provide great opportunities for all interested to learn *Trul Khor* in Europe! Practices from both *A-tri* and *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* cycles of *Trul Khor* will be taught in different countries.**

In 2014, *Trul Khor* part 1 preparatory courses will be instructed in Finland and in Poland. These courses include ten movements from *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud Trul Khor* cycle and the *Ngondro* movement from the *A-tri Trul Khor*.

As continuation, *Trul Khor* part 2 teachings by Alejandro Chaoul will be held in Poland, Chamma Ling retreat center in 2015. Teachings include more movements from *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud Trul Khor* and *A-tri Trul Khor* cycles.

Also, Alejandro will teach *A-tri Trul Khor* in Amsterdam in May 2014, in the days following Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's second *A-tri* teachings. Here are the places and dates:

## **Poland:**

*Trul Khor* part 1

February 14-16: Warsaw

Instructor: Darek Orwat

Darek has been authorized to instruct the *Trul Khor* part 1 by Alejandro Chaoul and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

*Trul Khor* part 2 — beginning the training Chamma Ling Retreat Center, 2015, dates are to be confirmed.

Teacher: Alejandro Chaoul

For more information please contact:

[www.ligmincha.pl](http://www.ligmincha.pl)

[darekorwat@gmail.com](mailto:darekorwat@gmail.com)

## **Finland:**

*Trul Khor* part 1

March 7-9: Kuopio

March 14-16: Helsinki

Instructor: Anna-Kaisa Hirvanen

Anna-Kaisa has been authorized to instruct the *Trul Khor* part 1 by Alejandro Chaoul and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

For more information please contact:

[www.ligmincha.fi](http://www.ligmincha.fi)

[anna-kaisa@ligmincha.fi](mailto:anna-kaisa@ligmincha.fi)

## **Netherlands:**

*A-tri Trul Khor*

May 26-28: Amsterdam

Teacher: Alejandro Chaoul

For more information please contact:

[ligmincha.nl](http://ligmincha.nl)

[seminar@ligmincha.nl](mailto:seminar@ligmincha.nl)

**Text by Anna-Kaisa Hirvanen**



# WHAT'S HAPPENED IN EUROPE

We want to share the events of the European sangha with you. The greatest event in 2013 was the inauguration of the *Gompa* in Poland with H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak, Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and other lamas. H.E. Menri Lopon Trinley Nyima Rinpoche taught in Great Britain and in Poland. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche visited Austria and gave several webcasts. And we had other webcasts. Here is an impression of the events.



**October 24 – 27:** The inauguration of the Gompa in Wilga, Poland. More than four hundred people were present during the ceremony and teachings from the *Seven Mirrors of Dzogchen*.

In a special edition of the *Ligmincha Europe Magazine* you can read more about this historic event:

[special edition](#) (English)

[specjalne wydanie](#) (Polish)





**Free Live Webcast**  
Live dzogchen teachings from the Tibetan Bon Buddhist tradition

**THE OPEN HEART:**  
Healing in the Dzogchen Tradition

**October 12, 2013**  
3–4:30 p.m. New York time

*Translations in multiple languages available*





H.E. Menri Lopon Trinley Nyima Rinpoche  
and  
Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

**www.ligmincha.org**

**You can watch the recording here:**

[The Open Heart, with Menri Lopon & Tenzin Rinpoche \(12-10-2013\)](#)

**Free Full-Day Live Webcast**  
Live dzogchen teachings from the Tibetan Bon Buddhist tradition

**Purifying Your Karma Through Mantra**  
with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

**December 14, 2013**  
9 a.m.–3:30 p.m. New York time

*Translations in multiple languages available*




**www.ligmincha.org**

**You can watch the recordings here:**

[Purifying Your Karma Through Mantra, Part 1: Teaching \(14-12-2013\)](#)

[Purifying Your Karma Through Mantra, Part 2: Practice \(14-12-2013\)](#)

[Purifying Your Karma Through Mantra, Part 3: Teaching \(14-12-2013\)](#)



[Purifying Your Karma Through Mantra, Part 4: Practice \(14-12-2013\)](#)

**Free Live Webcast**  
Live teachings from the Tibetan Bon Buddhist Tradition

**Dream Yoga**  
with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

**December 19, 2013**  
12–1:30 p.m. New York time

*Translations in some languages may be available*

**www.ligmincha.org**

**You can watch the recording here:**

[Dream Yoga \(19-12-2013\)](#)



**Free Live Webcast**  
 Live teachings from the Tibetan Bon Buddhist Tradition  
**Nurturing Sacred Community**  
 with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche  
**December 29, 2013**  
 3—4:30 p.m. New York time




*Translations in multiple languages available*  
[www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)

**You can watch the recording here:**

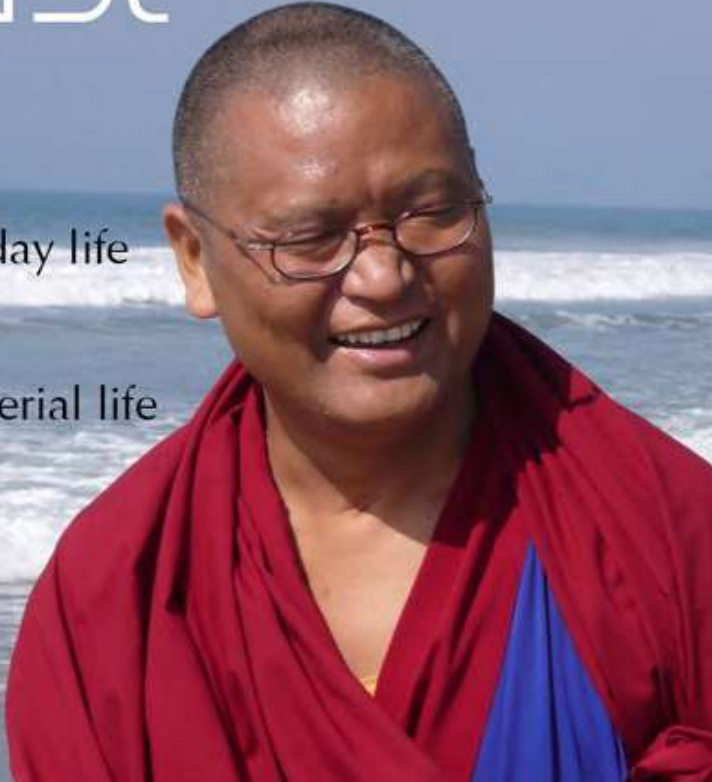

[Nurturing Sacred Community with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche \(29-12-2013\)](#)

**Lopon Trinley Nyima Rinpoche**  
**Webcast**

Precious human life  
 19th November 2013  
 8:00-8:40 p.m.

Spiritual practice in everyday life  
 20th November 2013  
 8:00-8:40 p.m.

The spiritual path and material life  
 21st November 2013  
 8:00-8:40 p.m.

[www.ligmincha.pl](http://www.ligmincha.pl)

**You can watch the recordings here:**

[Webcast with Menri Lopon Trinley Nyima Rinpoche \(19/21-11-2013\)](#)







**November 10 – 17:** H.E. Menri Lopon Trinley Nyima Rinpoche, the Head Teacher at the Monastic College of Menri Monastery in India, was invited to London, UK, by Lama Khemsar Rinpoche to give *The Zhang Zhung Me-ri Empowerment* in November 2013. Lama Khemsar recently founded Ku-soom Lhun-drub Ling there, a cozy authentic Gompa and Bonpo Study Center in the former Rehoboth Chapel located in New Barnet. Menri Lopon was assisted by Geshe Thupten Negi from Lishu Institute in India.

As the venue had just been opened, it was auspicious and special that the Menri Lopon had accepted the invitation. His presence showered blessings upon the former chapel, and his charm,

Lama Khemsar Rinpoche's intriguing laugh and Geshe Thupten's everlasting smile created a warm and colorful atmosphere. In a tender and precise way Menri Lopon gave explanations about *Zhang Zhung Me-ri*, the important protector, and performed the empowerment which is essential as per the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* cycle. Lama Khemsar's UK sangha gathered for the event, and in addition some guests as far as from Poland and Germany made their way up to London's North. When you travel to the UK, make sure to pay a visit to this freshly developing Bonpo Center.

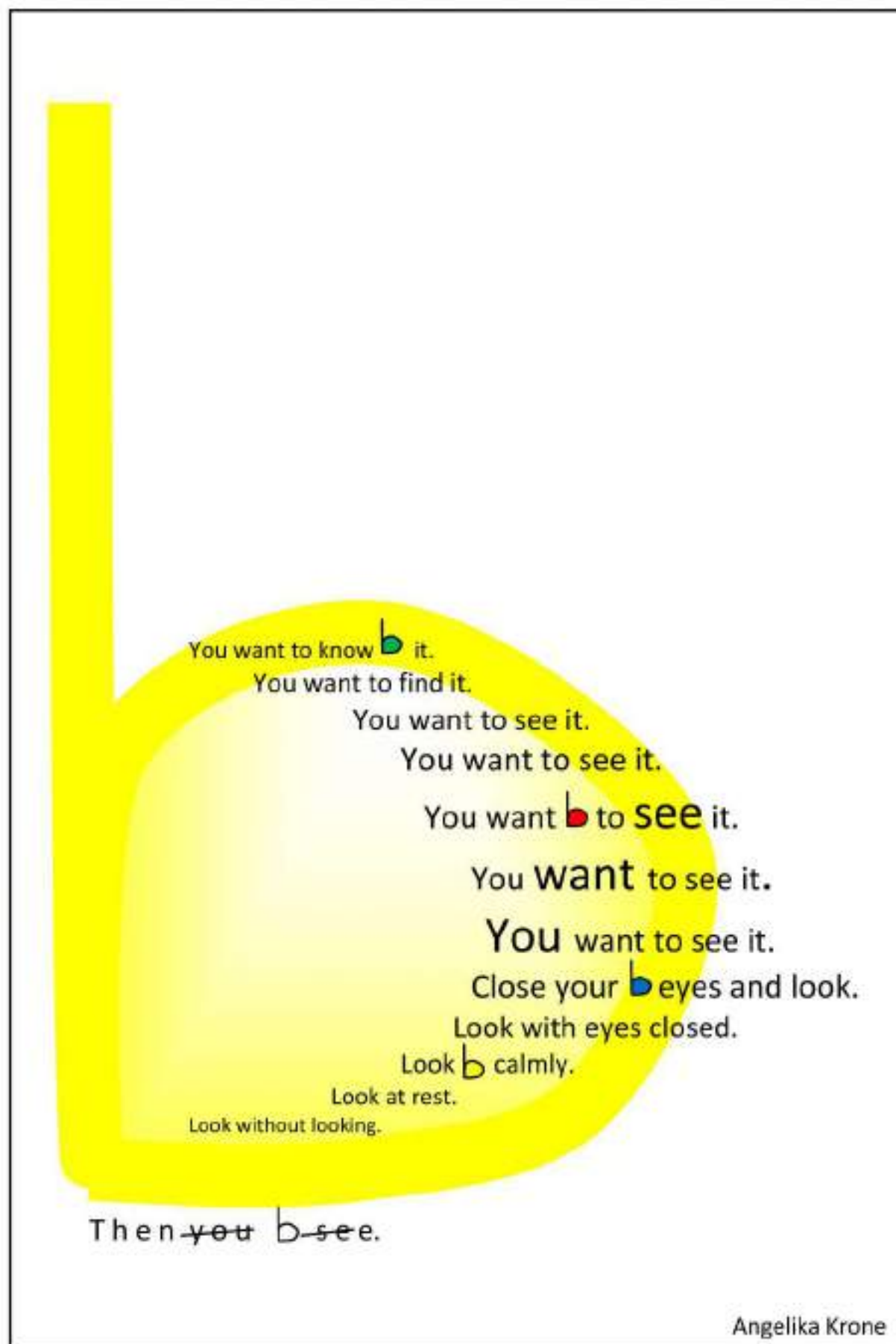
Here you can find the first News Letter of The Tibetan Yung Drung Bon Study Centre, UK:  
[www.yungdrungbon.com](http://www.yungdrungbon.com)



**November 23 – 24:** H.E. Menri Lopon Trinley Nyima Rinpoche gave in Warsaw, Poland, *Teachings and Empowerment of Long Life*.



BE





# LITTLE BUDDHA



*Everybody has  
since the  
beginning*

*natural mind /  
buddhanature*

*Normally  
only a mahasidha  
could see  
pure dimension*

*but all our  
bon teachers  
are connected  
with the lineage*

*and they help us  
to discover our  
natural mind*



Bridget de Claire



# DREAMING: ILLUSION, BARDO, RIGPA

Dreams are greatly valued in Tibetan culture and in the Bon religion. Information from the unconscious is often of greater value than the information the conscious mind can provide. Frits de Vries has studied several books, and also writes about his own experience concerning dreams.

## Introduction

When I talk with friends about dreaming they generally talk about a recent dream. Dreaming seems to not influence their daily life. For me the situation is much different. In Buddhist teachings dreaming is strongly connected to daily life and also to the intermediate state, the *bardo*.

I was involved in learning to dream lucidly, i.e. to be aware that you are dreaming while you are dreaming, without much success, before I met Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. Lucidity was just a bridge I was not ready to cross. I started with the *Dream Yoga* of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in 2003, when he gave a seminar on *Dream Yoga* from the *Ma Gyu (Mother Tantra)* in Amsterdam, Netherlands. When I read Rinpoche's book on dreaming (1), concepts such as 'lucidity' were already familiar to me however, the teachings on dreaming in Tibetan Buddhism were new to me. In Western books on lucid dreaming, such as Stephen LaBerge's *Exploring the World of Lucid Dreaming* (2), being lucid is an exciting experience with more possibilities than you can imagine. However, Rinpoche gave me the right context for a more meaningful experience and context than just excitement: the relationship of dreams to the *bardo*, the intermediate state between death and the next life.

In the Western world one can start learning to dream lucidly and then to carry one's dream experiences into daily life. A person can train in an area of difficulty in waking life, take what is learned into the lucid dream state and then have less trouble in the waking state. In the Tibetan *Dream Yoga* it is the other way around: you start with developing more awareness in your daily life instead of in your dreams. In less than three pages Rinpoche explains four important key concepts,

which have served me for years as a red ribbon in my meditation practices and study of Dzogchen. The concepts – vision, action, dream, and death – are from the *Bon Mother Tantra*.

## Dreaming and illusion

In the learning process of the Dzogchen practice, dreaming is a stepping stone to liberation in the *bardo*. The relation between dreaming and the *bardo* is clearly explained by Rinpoche in the concept-quartet: vision - action - dream - death. This is not only the sequence of concepts, but also the sequence in the learning process. You cannot start in the middle.

"The awareness we have stabilized during waking experience and manifested in our behaviors naturally begins to arise in the dream. The primary practices use the understanding of the *prana*, chakras, and mind to support this strengthening of awareness in the dream. They are done before falling asleep and in three waking periods during the night. Once lucidity is developed there are further practices engaged during the dream itself in order to develop flexibility of mind, to break the limitations and misunderstandings that bind us to *samsara*. Just as the lucidity and presence cultivated in waking life is carried into the dream, the lucidity and presence in dream is carried into death." (3)

Becoming more aware in vision (view) and action (conduct) looks like an easy pursuit. The expression 'clarity of view' is used in everyday language.



Tapihritsa

But when used as a part of the Nangzer Lopo's invocation prayer to Tapihritsa (4) it points straight to the path of liberation:

"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.”

There is a big gap between the meaning of ‘clarity of view’ as used in everyday language and the meaning in the Dzogchen scriptures. Ordinary awareness is driven by the eight worldly concerns, while Dzogchen practice leads to timeless awareness and the full realization of view and conduct. Even after you have recognized a glimpse of timeless self-awareness or *rigpa*, there is still more work to do. It starts with the training in composure, the calm state. The completed training in *zhiné* (*shamata*) is followed by training in contemplation and integration in daily life. In Dzogchen *zhiné* is a concentration practice considered as preparation for contemplation (5).

In this learning process we change, a logical development when you begin to see more clearly, instead of ‘contaminated’ by emotions and habitual patterns. Perhaps one gets the feeling of ‘opening the doors of perception.’ One’s view of the world might change, as Rinpoche describes (6): “Nothing changes but everything is different.”, in a meditation period this sentence was an eye opener for me as my ‘view’ of the world was drastically changing.

The transformation and training of view and behaviour in daily life is also expressed by the answer of master Padmasambhava to a question asked by Lady Tsogyal (7). In summary:

“Lady Tsogyal asked the master: What kind of daily activities should one undertake after rising from the state of composure? The master replied: After rising from the above-mentioned state of composure, there are two ways of training. First the training that accords with insight is to trust that everything you experience – you, yourself, as well as outer and inner things – are all illusory appearances, like in a dream. (...) The training that accords with method is to cultivate an illusory compassion for illusory sentient beings and, if it doesn’t hamper your meditation state, then perform various actions to help them.”

It says in the teachings that meditation training experience should not only transform your view of the world, but also your compassion is no longer the compassion for ‘real’ beings. It is a major change in your vision, but also in your

behaviour. There is no surprise if you know this is also like the first of *The Four Foundational Practices*, called ‘changing karmic traces’ in the *Dream Yoga* training by Rinpoche (8):

“A version of the first foundational practice is rather well known in the West, because dream researchers and others interested in dream have found that it helps to generate lucid dreaming. It is as follows: throughout the day, practice the recognition of the dream-like nature of life until the same recognition begins to manifest in dream.”

Background to these exercises is the realization that all phenomena are empty and that the apparent self-nature of beings and objects is illusory.

Padmasambhava (9) describes successive kinds of temporary and changing signs of progress when developing your Dzogchen view in the waking state. When you finally arrive at the ‘unchanging signs’ your lucid dreaming capacity helps you to enter a steady state:

“There is no longer any experience in which you cling to solid reality; instead, everything is sheer luminous display. Everything appears, but there is no solid reference point or clinging. To realize this is the sign of having established, through experience in training, that mind itself is empty. To experience this even while dreaming is to have reached to fullest degree of steadiness.”

When you have, after years of training, reached some clarity in daily life and some steadiness in your dreaming, you still have to come to the realization that it is all illusion. We learn from Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche the close connection between the waking state, illusion and dreaming.

Also, the contemporary Dzogchen master Tsoknyi Rinpoche (10) says:

“Dream state is like magical illusion, it is unreal, it doesn’t really exist. For some reason, we believe that during the waking state, that everything is real, strange enough. But honestly, who knows, maybe the dream state is real and the waking state is unreal! It’s not sure.”

In ordinary conversation dreaming is often seen as illusory activity, because when you dream of finding money on the street, upon awakening nothing was found. On the other hand, in a dream



you are threatened by a wild animal and you feel fear and upon awakening you still feel the fear in your body. In general people do not care about their dreams unless they have frequently nightmares. Then people seek professional help to resolve these 'illusions'.



Gyuma Chenmo khandro (dakini) of the *Dream Yoga*.

### Summary of transformation

| conscious-<br>ness level | experience:<br>illusion,<br>dreamlike?                                    | experience: aware-<br>ness, clarity?                                 |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| daily life               | no, we see it<br>all as real,<br>unless some-<br>thing special<br>happens | no, we have to de-<br>velop and use the<br>dream metaphor as<br>help |
| dreaming                 | yes, we see it<br>as illusion<br>most of the<br>time                      | no, we have to de-<br>velop clarity of lucid<br>dreaming             |

### Dreaming and *bardo*

“The *Mother Tantra* says that if one is not aware in vision, it is unlikely that one will be aware in behaviour. If one is not aware in behaviour, one is

unlikely to be aware in dream. And if one is not aware in dream, then one is unlikely to be aware in the *bardo* after death.” (11)

In Buddhist teachings clarity and awareness are important goals in waking and dreaming, but also in the *bardo*.

Lopon Tenzin Namdak says when you have arrived in the *bardo* after death (12): “What is the situation at that time? Don't think this next stage is an illusion or not true or something. It feels just as it does now in this present time. You can see evidence of this in dreams; they show you. Dreams are great evidence. So try to trust what dreams show you as this is evidence for what it will be like when you leave your body.”

By way of illustration he adds: “When we dream, whatever experiences we have seem just as real and tangible as our waking life; this is the same state after death, when the mind wakes up in the intermediate state between death and the next life (Tib. *bar do*).”



H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche.

Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche describes a strong relationship between dream and *bardo*, when he explains ‘The Vision of the Base’ (13): “In the *bardo* one has left the physical body but still has the *yilu* (*yid lus*), the vision body. It is just the same as the body of dreams, the mind body. Even though the physical body is dead there is so much attachment that one has the vision of the body. This body can feel like the ordinary body. (...) The time you are in the *bardo* depends on your condition – seven weeks is an average. But the situation is just the same as dream.”





## Dreaming and *rigpa*

*Rigpa* is the crucial experience of all Dzogchen practices. Bon Buddhism has the richness to have several roads or streams (14) leading to this experience. One is the *Zhang Zhung Nyan Gyud Dzogchen*, with the traditional *Ngondro* preliminary exercises, another is the *A-tri* (or *A-khrid*) Dzogchen, with *zhiné* concentration training in the preliminary exercises. We are fortunate these two streams are regularly taught in the West, both by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche.

The main goal of the preliminary exercises is to make yourself ready, stable and open for at least a glimpse of this spontaneous, timeless experience of utter clarity. You have to find a Dzogchen master for an introduction into this non-dual spacious state of timeless awareness; one who can confirm your experiences are genuine *rigpa*, and give further instructions (15):

“When the inner and outer signs start to manifest, the master introduces us to the natural state by explaining to us the nature of the experiences we have already had and of the knowledge we have already acquired by ourselves. (...) It is necessary to have this direct experience ourselves, and the surest way to do this is by practicing *zhiné*.”



Yogi in *zhiné* (“Guide of A”) concentration.

After this introduction you expand your first glimpse, by getting more confidence and certainty, familiarize with and integrate the *rigpa* experience in your daily life. A great support can also be hearing and reading the teachings of accomplished Dzogchen masters, and studying their texts.

When you are sure and you can open yourself more and more to this experience, more signs will come, like recognizing wisdoms. A description of signs of progress is found in Reynolds (16). When your experiences of *rigpa* become more stable and your dreams more clear, it is time to work more on your *Dream Yoga*. Recognizing your dreams as dreams gives you the opportunity to do the lucid dream practices Rinpoche describes (17), because simply recognizing that a dream is a dream is not that useful.

Also Tsoknyi (18) explains why:

“What is necessary is to be able to remember one's guru, to remember the instructions and to apply them, and especially remember how to mingle our mind with the guru's mind and remain in the state of *rigpa*. To be able to do that seven times in a row is described as having the assurance, the certainty of being liberated in the *bardo*. Tibetan masters don't really like to give such assurance, or such guarantee, but there is this one, that if during this life you can recognize and remain in *rigpa* seven times during the dream state, you can be sure of being free in the *bardo*.”

In all Dzogchen teachings it ends with developing awareness in the state of *rigpa* in daily life, carrying it over to the dream state, leading to liberation in the *bardo*.

To conclude, we end with Longchenpa (19), who presents dreaming in a special metaphor for understanding liberation:

“All the appearances of moving, staying, or dwelling that manifest in dreams do so within a single state of sleep, but it is not the sleep that moves, stays, or dwells. Similarly, nothing – neither the universe of appearances and possibilities, whether of *samsara* or nirvana, nor any of the myriad beings who manifest as moving, staying, or dwelling therein – strays from the sole state of awareness; rather, everything is clearly apparent without truly existing, the ground of being manifesting as sensory appearances. The essence of



awareness is such that it does not stray from the *dharmakaya* of the victorious ones.”



Fata morgana: clearly apparent without truly existing.

The paradox ‘clearly apparent, without truly existing’ can in my opinion best be understood as the two levels of truth, with the general Buddhist solution of the middle way between absolute and relative truth. In a short summary on the correct Dzogchen view, Longchenpa concludes (20): “To over-estimate reality is to interpolate that it is truly existent, when in fact it is not. Under-estimating it is to repudiate or deny its relative existence, for it nevertheless does appear. Therefore the understanding of ultimate and relative realities – the two levels of truth – is a middle path devoid of extremes.”

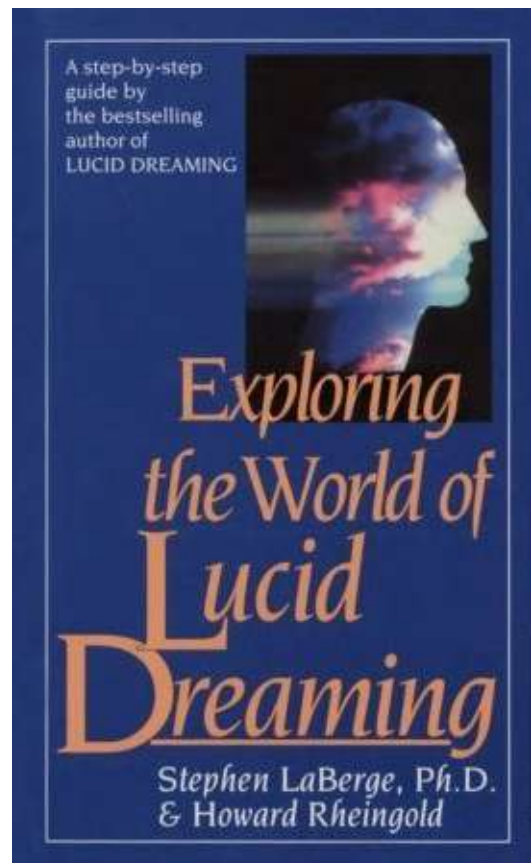
However, Namkhai Norbu (21) emphasizes the special quality of awareness while in the state of *rigpa*:

“But in Dzogchen, right from the beginning this concept of two truths does not exist, and the non-dual state is introduced as the foundation of both the way of seeing and the way of practicing.”

Thus, one truth in ordinary awareness; two truths in the phase of familiarization with *rigpa*; but in the conceptless non-dual unspeakable state of *dharmakaya*, concepts like two-truths, illusion, vision, action, dream or death, do not exist. Because we regularly pray in our practice for *dharmakaya*, the essence of awareness, we end here with the well-known sentence from our dedication prayer of the *Zhang Zhung Chak Tri* manual: “May we swiftly achieve the complete buddhahood of the three bodies: *dharmakaya*, *sambhogakaya* and *nirmanakaya*.”

## Notes

- (1) My first reading was the Dutch version, see Tenzin Wangyal, 1999 (further references will be made to the English edition, 1998), *De werkelijkheid van Slapen en Dromen een oude Tibetaanse Oefenweg*, published by Elmar, Rijswijk, Holland.
- (2) Stephen LaBerge is a famous American researcher on Lucid Dreaming, see: LaBerge, Stephen & Howard Rheingold, 1990, *Exploring the World of Lucid Dreaming*, Ballantine Books, New York.
- (3) Tenzin Wangyal, 1998, p. 81-83, *The Tibetan Yoga's of Dream and Sleep*, Snow Lion Pub.
- (4) Part of the *Invocation Prayer to Taphritsa*, from the Zhang Zhung Ngöndro text. See also Reynolds, 2005, p. 232-234, *Invocation to Taphritsa*.
- (5) See Chapters 6 and 7 on Zhiné and Contemplation in Tenzin Wangyal, 2000, p. 79-98 *Wonders of the Natural Mind*, The Essence of Dzogchen in the Native Bon Tradition of Tibet, Snow Lion Publications. (In 1993 first published).
- (6) Tenzin Wangyal, 2002, p. 129, *Healing with Form, Energy and Light*, The Five Elements in





Tibetan Shamanism, Tantra and Dzogchen, Snow Lion Publications.

- (7) See Padmasambhava, 2008, p. 70-71, *Treasures from Juniper Ridge*, The Profound Treasure Instructions of Padmasambhava to the Dakini Yeshe Tsogyal, Rangjung Yeshe Publications, Nepal.
- (8) *ibid.* Tenzin Wangyal, 1998, p. 90.
- (9) *ibid.* Padmasambhava, 2008, chapter Signs and Levels of Progress, p. 129-134.
- (10) Tsoknyi Rinpoche, 1998, p. 197, *Carefree Dignity*, Discourses on Training in the Nature of Mind, Rangjung Yeshe Publications, Nepal.
- (11) *ibid.* Tenzin Wangyal, 1998, p. 81.
- (12) Yongdzin Lopön Tenzin Namdak, 2010, p. 158, Teachings: *Masters of the Zhang Zhung Nyengyud*, Pith Instructions from the Experiential Transmission of Bönpo Dzogchen, Heritage Publishers, New Delhi.
- (13) Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen, 2002, footnote on p. 124-125, *Heart Drops of Dharmakaya*, Dzogchen Practice in the Bön Tradition, commentary by Lopon Tenzin Namdak, Snow Lion Publications.
- (14) *ibid.* Tenzin Wangyal, 2000, p. 54-55.
- (15) *ibid.* Tenzin Wangyal, 2000, p. 86-87.
- (16) *ibid.* Reynolds, 2005, p. 278 and p. 324, Signs

of Heat.

- (17) *ibid.* Tenzin Wangyal, 1998, main practices: p. 104-118, eleven lucidity practices: p. 119-126.
- (18) *ibid.* Tsoknyi Rinpoche, 1998, p. 196-197.
- (19) Longchen Rabjam (Longchenpa) 2001, p. 256-257, *A Treasure Trove of Scriptural Transmission*, A commentary on The Precious Treasury of the Basic Space of Phenomena, Padma Publishing, CA.
- (20) Longchen Rabjam (Longchenpa), 1978, p. 28, *The Four-Themed Precious Garland*, An Introduction to Dzogchen, the Great Completeness, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives.
- (21) Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, 1996, p. 93, *Dzogchen, the Self-perfected State*, Snow Lion Publications.

#### Text by Frits de Vries

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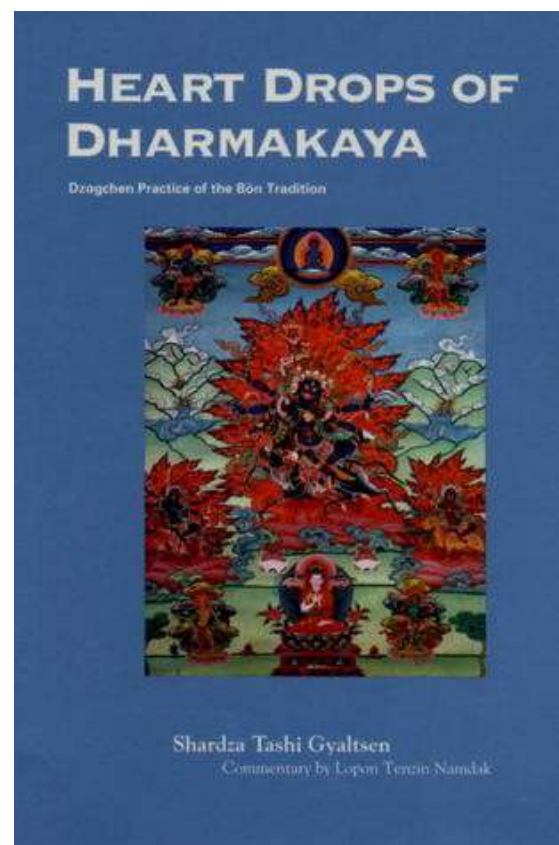
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# TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE'S EUROPEAN SEMINARS AND ON-LINE TEACHINGS IN 2014

| When                              | Where                  | What   | More information   |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|--|--|
| February 21 – 23                  | Beuerhof, Germany      | 8th International sangha practice-weekend of the European sangha                                     | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.de">www.ligmincha.de</a>   |
| March 2<br>19.00 – 20.30 h (CET)  | Your computer          | Free Live Webcast:<br>Raising your Windhorse – Good Fortune for the New Year                         | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a> |
| March 9<br>19.00 – 20.30 h (CET)  | Your computer          | Free Live Webcast:<br>Calming Your Mind With Meditation – the Practice of Calm Abiding, <i>Zhiné</i> | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a> |
| March 8 – April 6                 | Your computer          | Interactive online course:<br>Awakening the Sacred Arts  | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a> |
| March 14 – 16                     | Paris, France          | Weekend seminar:<br>Awakening the Luminous Mind  | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.fr">www.ligmincha.fr</a>   |
| March 21 – 23                     | Vienna, Austria        | Weekend seminar:<br>Dream Yoga   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.at">www.ligmincha.at</a>   |
| March 28 – 30                     | Berlin, Germany        | Weekend seminar:<br>Dream Yoga   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.de">www.ligmincha.de</a>   |
| April 12<br>21.00 – 22.30 h (CET) | Your computer          | Free Live Webcast:<br>Broadcast live from the annual Spring Retreat                                  | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a> |
| May 9 – 11                        | Malaga, Spain          | Weekend seminar:<br>Tibetan Sound Healing  | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.es">www.ligmincha.es</a>   |
| May 10 – June 1                   | Your computer          | Interactive online course: The Nature of Mind  | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a> |
| May 16 – 18                       | Helsinki, Finland      | Weekend seminar:<br>Awakening the Luminous Mind  | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.fi">www.ligmincha.fi</a>   |
| May 23 – 25                       | Amsterdam, Netherlands | Weekend seminar:<br>A-tri, Part 2 (of 3 Parts)   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.nl">www.ligmincha.nl</a>   |
| May 29 – June 1                   | Bulle, Switzerland     | Weekend seminar:<br>Soul Retrieval   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.fr">www.ligmincha.fr</a>   |
| July 12 – August 10               | Your computer          | Interactive online course:<br>Tibetan Dream Yoga   | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a> |
| July 15 – 20                      | Wilga, Poland          | The Twenty-One Nails, Part 2   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.pl">www.ligmincha.pl</a>   |
| August 25 – 31                    | Buchenau, Germany      | Summer Retreat:<br>The Six Lokas   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.de">www.ligmincha.de</a>   |
| September 12 – 14                 | Moscow, Russia         | The Practice of the Six Lamps, Part 2  | <a href="http://www.garuda-bon.ru">www.garuda-bon.ru</a> |
| October 14 – 19                   | Maria Alm, Austria     | The Experiential Transmission of Zhang Zhung, Part 5   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.at">www.ligmincha.at</a>   |
| October 25 – 27                   | Brussels, Belgium      | Weekend seminar:<br>Dream Yoga   | <a href="http://www.bongaruda.be">www.bongaruda.be</a>   |







# Ligmincha Europe Magazine

*# 12 – Spring 2014*



Awakening the Sacred Feminine

Meet the Russian Sangha

The 3Doors Graduates

Lishu Institute



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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).

**Chief editor:** Ton Bisscheroux

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**Technical assistance:** Lutz Dausend

**Cover layout:** Nathalie Arts





# GREETINGS AND NEWS FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Readers, Dear Practitioners of Bon,

The past few months have been a exciting time, with a lot of teachings and possibilities to practice with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, other Bon lamas, or together during the European sangha weekend, and with senior students of Rinpoche who visited Europe. We inform you about these activities in this edition. And of course, we had the graduates for the 3Doors Acadamy in the U.S. and in Europe.

An international team is developing the plans for the teachings that are going to start in Lishu Institute in India in 2015. The program will offer in-depth training to western students in these three areas: *The Nine Ways of Bon*, the *Ma Gyud* and the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud*. They have put together a survey to help them understand the inter-

ests and needs of those who may consider attending programs at Lishu Institute or participating in the online programs. For this they would like to ask you to fill in a survey at [lishu.questionpro.com](http://lishu.questionpro.com). You can read more on page 8 – 10.

Furthermore we have an article on the *Shamatha Project*, a long term study on the effect of meditation of lay people. Frits de Vries shares his understanding with us about resting in the Nature of the Mind and the practice of Guru Yoga. We bring you the story behind Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's internet webcasts, and

more.

We are happy to inform you that H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche is no longer having any health issues. Long Life Mantra accumulations for Yongdzin Rinpoche came to 6.000.000. We thank all that contributed to this effort for our most precious teacher of the teachers Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche (Lopon). But doing the Long Life Mantra for our Teachers does not have to be the result of a special request as was the recent case with Yongdzin Rinpoche. You can in-

clude singing the Long Life Mantra as part of your regular daily practice. On page 23 you can read parts of the letter Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche wrote to the sangha.

The website of Ligmincha Europe has been updated, and you can find information there about the Ligmincha Retreat Center in Europe. This

center will be a place where two resident lamas could live and support the European Sangha also in their alternative locations. When you want to support, financially or bring in your skills, go to the website [www.ligmincha.eu](http://www.ligmincha.eu).

If you like to contribute to this Magazine, as a writer of an article, or as editor, please let us know at: [magazine@ligmincha.eu](mailto:magazine@ligmincha.eu). We could use some support.

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



# FIRST 3DOORS ACADEMY GRADUATION

**In October 2013 there were the first graduates of the 3Doors Academy in the U.S. In March 2014 we had the first graduates in Europe. Here is a report from both ceremonies.**



A three-part rainbow appeared in the sky the evening prior to graduation.

## U.S. 3Doors Academy Graduates

On the mountaintop at Serenity Ridge, the misty morning of October 7, 2013 dawned. With great anticipation, we, the 28 members of the first U.S. 3Doors Academy, made final preparations for the ceremony that would mark the culmination of our journey over the last two and a half years together. Using the practices of the 3Doors we learned to stay with turbulent waves of emotion and gradually discover the refuge within. Together we'd celebrated the joy of birth and shared the sorrow of illness and death. We shared and shed outgrown pain identities, and opened and inspired

one another to experience our true natures.

In the months preceding our sixth and final Group Training Retreat, we collaborated virtually via email and phone to create this day of celebration and dedication. Stephen Ledyard writes of his experience of the graduation ceremony:

“Bathing in the luminous warmth and spaciousness in the presence of Rinpoche and my precious brothers and sisters — I can't imagine a fraternity or sorority bonding over three years at the depths to which we traveled — I felt that I was being blessed in the sacraments of the Five Elements, beyond time and space. Standing with my family and all my ancestors, and all who would travel this path after me, I was achieving for all of us something no grand letters on parchment, no degree traced in gold, not the most esteemed university, could ever confer as deeply in body, speech, and mind: a level of (self-arising) confidence that comes from receiving these keys to the doors of the nature of mind.”

As we accepted Rinpoche's invitation to bring our open hearts to the world, we were called to genuine service. As Academy teacher, Gabriel Rocco, explains, “In our willingness to show up with all our imperfections, first to ourselves and then to each other, we reengage authentically with the world.”

The graduation ceremony was followed by a celebratory luncheon in the (also miraculously transformed) Dining Room. With the gifted guidance of our director and fellow trainee, Juanita Rockwell, we presented as an appetizer a creative montage



Graduates of the first 3Doors Academy at Serenity Ridge.







At the Graduation Celebration Banquet, with profound gratitude to Rinpoche, our teachers Gabriel Rocco and Marcy Vaughn, and 3Doors director Kallon Basquin.

of song, poetry, prose, and collage representing our individual journeys of awakening. It was a poignant tour de force, profound and lighthearted at once. The culinary talents of the Serenity Ridge kitchen delighted us, and a grand time was had by all.

As a token of our deep appreciation, we presented Rinpoche with a donation to support scholarships for future Academy students.

### European 3Doors Academy Graduates

In March 2014, near Goldberg, Germany, twenty-two individuals from across the continent gathered for the final retreat of the first European 3Doors Academy. The week culminated with a beautiful graduation ceremony led by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Academy teachers Raven Lee and John Jackson that reflected the diverse, multicultural nature of the European group.

The ceremony was the fruition of an intense two-and-a-half

years of inner work supported by a series of secular meditations through the doorways of body, speech and mind. Academy participants used these practices to transform themselves in three dimensions: in relationship to themselves, their family, and their work.

In the words of Karolina Seltenheim from Austria: "Looking back two-and-a-half years on a path that sometimes felt like crossing a jungle — not knowing where I was going or the way I had to go... To overcome fear, I was provided with skills like the *Nine Breathings*, and *The Five Warrior Syllables*, and the *Tsa Lung*. I was able to clear winds which sometimes appeared as a storm, always finding my way to Inner Refuge, where there was space and rest..."

John Jackson writes, "It has been a wonderful experience to support and observe the growth of these amazing individuals. We have people from across Europe participating, so our gatherings are beautifully diverse and multicultural. Throughout I have enjoyed the strength, wisdom, and support of Raven Lee, who co-leads the Academy with me,



Honored Guests for the Graduation Ceremony: Tenzin Wangyal (middle) with Geshe Nyima Woser Choekhortshang from Prague, Geshe Lhundup from Ligmicha Paris, and Academy teachers Raven Lee and John Jackson (left to right).





Morning has broken for the first European 3Doors Academy Graduates. On March 28th they received blessings from Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Certificates from their Academy teachers Raven Lee and John Jackson in a beautiful Ceremony at Finkenwerder Hof. Welcome to our growing world-wide family!

and Kallon Basquin, ...director of the 3Doors (International) Program."

#### **New Academies Accepting Applications:**

**U.S. Academy begins April 2015**

**European Academy begins June 2015**

Headquartered in the United States, the 3Doors international organization currently offers classes and retreats throughout the United States, Mexico, and Europe. Applications are being accepted for the next U.S. and European Academies. The U.S. Academy, beginning April 2015, meets at Serenity Ridge, Shipman VA and is taught by [Marcy Vaughn](#) and [Gabriel Rocco](#). The European Academy, begins June 2015, (location to be determined) and is taught by [John Jackson](#) and [Raven Lee](#).

The 3Doors Academy supports personal transformation through meditation, self-reflection, and the power of collective support. The group meets for six 6-day retreats twice a year and is additionally supported by a relationship with a personal mentor, monthly group conference calls, and individual retreats.

For more information or to request an application:  
For the US Academy:

[US-3Coordinator@the3doors.org](mailto:US-3Coordinator@the3doors.org)

For the European Academy:

[EU-2Coordinator@the3doors.org](mailto:EU-2Coordinator@the3doors.org)



#### **The 3Doors Practitioners Association**

There is good news for anyone who is applying or is considering applying to participate in an upcoming 3Doors Academy. Once you complete your training, the 3Doors Practitioners Association (3PA) and its world-wide network of teachers, mentors and graduates, will

be there to support your continued personal growth, creative expression, and service to others.

The newly forming 3PA exists within the mandala of the 3Doors international organization and is guided by a council of its members. Its intention is to provide multiple avenues for graduates to connect with one another, access continuing education and training, and be supported to serve their communities and society at large. Out of the collective energy of ongoing connection will come the ideas, teachers, projects, service, and creative expressions that will sustain the ongoing heartbeat of Tenzin Wangyal's vision for the 3Doors.

#### **Text and photos from the 3Doors (International) Program**



3Doors Academy teachers John Jackson and Raven Lee on Graduation Day.





# DONATE FOR OUR 'NEW HOME': AUCTION IN BUCHENAU

**The European Summer Retreat in Buchenau, Germany, is slowly approaching (August 25 – 31) 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.' Oliver Wirtz, chair of Ligmincha Deutschland, gave also presentations about the European Center during retreats in Buchenau (Germany), Amsterdam (Netherlands) and Maria Alm (Austria).

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.

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. We hope to inform you in the next Magazine about the proceeds of finding a home.

Let us work together for the manifestation of the vision of our beloved teacher!

**Watch the video:**

***Ligmincha Europe: Finding a Home***

[www.home.ligmincha.eu](http://www.home.ligmincha.eu)



# THE LISHU INSTITUTE SURVEY



**Lishu Institute is the fulfillment of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's vision of providing a retreat center and study program for Western students to do long-term, in-depth study and practice of the Bon teachings. Bob Anger gives us an update.**

It took some time, effort and research for Rinpoche's aspiration to manifest and in January 2009 Lishu Institute became the owner of land in Kotra Kalyanpur outside of Dehradun, Uttarakhand, India. This significant step was possible due to the devotion and involvement of Geshe Thupten G. Negi, a Tibetan-Indian and a Bon Geshe. Because he is an Indian citizen he is entitled to purchase land in India and he did so on behalf of Lishu Institute.

Since that time the first building on the Lishu cam-

pus has been completed and will provide classrooms and housing for Lishu Institute's teachers and students. Ongoing improvements are being made to this beautiful four-story building as we design and equip the kitchen, increase the water supply and prepare for the teachers and students to live, study and practice in this gorgeous and spacious setting.

The Lishu curriculum is being developed by Professor Kurt Kuetzer of the University of California at Berkeley and will be based on the three main Bon texts. The program will offer in-depth training to western students in these three areas; *The Nine Ways of Bon*, the *Ma Gyud* and the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud*. As well, there will be courses of instruction in the Tibetan language. Lishu students are expected to be proficient in the English language since the teachings will be presented in English.





Lishu Institute's mission is to provide training to serious practitioners, future leaders and teachers to preserve and propagate the Bon tradition in the West. This unique educational program will be offered in three ways. A student may attend all three years to complete the three courses on site, at Lishu Institute in India or a student may attend remotely, online, or a student may combine these approaches and attend some of the training in India and some of it elsewhere.

These teachings will be offered in time-blocks of two and a half months and a student will have to complete three of these two and a half-month-time-blocks in order to finish one of the three areas of study.

In order to provide the best possible instruction, we are recruiting the most qualified lamas and they will teach the texts in the traditional manner with a line-by-line explanation of the meaning as is done in the monasteries. The teachers will speak in Tibetan and an English translation will be provided of both the oral explanation and the original Tibetan texts. This will support the daily study of the Tibetan language and provide the most thorough form of instruction. We plan to

video record all of the teachings and these recordings will be the core of the Lishu curriculum. There will also be a well-qualified teacher on site who will lead discussions, answer questions, demonstrate methods and rituals and lead practice sessions. Each day will include instructions on the texts, meditation practice, Tibetan language instruction and time for individual reading and study.

An international team is developing these plans with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. We still have much to do and we would very much appreciate your input on how to best structure our programs. We have put together a survey to help us understand the interests and needs of those who may consider attending programs at Lishu Institute or participating in our online programs. If you are interested in participating, please complete our survey at [lishu.questionpro.com](http://lishu.questionpro.com).

Please visit [www.lishu.org](http://www.lishu.org) for news from Lishu Institute.

#### **Text by the Committee**

Photos by Paco Albisua and Monika Cardenas



# THE STORY BEHIND THE LIVE WEBCASTS

**More and more we can enjoy the live webcasts by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche from our computers. Lourdes Hinojosa tells us how this project began and how you can help.**

In December 2012, while having dinner with a small group of students after teaching in Santiago, Chile, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche suddenly gave me a deep look and said: "Lourdes, I've been thinking about a new project, and I would like you to coordinate it. I want my live broadcasts to reach people all over the world, in their own languages. Many people cannot come to the teachings. They either do not have the resources or the spare time to do so, or are confined to their homes or perhaps to a hospital bed due to health issues. I want to bring the teachings to all of them, so they can receive the benefits also, just like those who are able to be present at the teachings during talks, seminars or retreats." I felt deep joy inside, and was moved to once again witness my teacher's infinite compassion and enlightened wisdom in full motion ... and of course I said: "Yes, Rinpoche! I will gladly do this."



That was the beginning of an exciting journey, contacting sangha coordinators in all the Ligmicha International centers and seeking volunteer translators — and now, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's live webcasts are being simultaneously translated into twelve different languages.

Long before I became involved, Rinpoche has



Sangha members in Malaga, Spain, watching the live webcast together.

been doing live webcasts for the sangha with the help of Polly Turner and other assistants. Since 2009, Polly has been producing and directing nearly all of his webcasts, an average of eight per year. Rinpoche's idea when he first spoke to me about this was to have someone coordinate all the international activity surrounding translation and promotions, to greatly increase access to the teachings. There has been good international participation from the very beginning, but it is twice as good now, with the help of talented translators and many other volunteers around the world!

On March 23, 2013, Rinpoche did his first broadcast from his home basement in California with live translation by translators around the world. It was a big success! From then on, Rinpoche has been broadcasting regularly from his home as well as from Serenity Ridge, with interpreters in twelve countries, for the benefit of many.

He has also featured special guests during his webcast teachings, such as His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche and Menri Lopon Trinley Nyima Rinpoche during their visits at Serenity Ridge. People from more than twenty-eight countries around the world have attended webcast teachings from their computers, including the cyber-sangha, as Rinpoche calls his devoted online students. We can feel the energy of Rinpoche's clear, loving guidance; his words touching our hearts and lives ... all of us together,







Watching the live webcast together inside of The Great Bon Stupa for World Peace in Valle de Bravo, Mexico.

as one, in the cyber-space. All webcasts are free and open to all.

All this can only be done with the help of many wonderful and talented volunteers: webcast producer, graphic designers, text editors, sangha coordinators, translators, promoters, group hosts, etc. Our deep gratitude to you all!

You can find information regarding past webcasts at: [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org).

Also, you can learn how to participate in live webcasts and access translations at: [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org).

We are in need of more volunteer translators. So far, webcasts are being translated live into Czech, Danish, Finnish, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Turkish. It would be wonderful to find skilled volunteer translators in Chinese, Japanese, and other languages; as well as skilled volunteer backup translators in Spanish and Italian, among other languages. All volunteer translators receive detailed instruction and guidance in broadcasting their live translations via free, easy-to-use Inter-

net channels. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Lourdes Hinojosa (webcast coordinator) at [webcast@ligmincha.org](mailto:webcast@ligmincha.org).

Also, we are always looking for ways to improve the quality and accessibility of the webcasts. Particularly welcome is informed advice regarding the ideal equipment and software to use, as well as recommendations for free or low-cost webcast service providers that can meet our needs. If you have both knowledge of and experience with doing live webcasts and are open to advising us, please write to Polly Turner (webcast producer) at [webcast@ligmincha.org](mailto:webcast@ligmincha.org).

May Rinpoche's heartfelt desire of bringing the precious teachings all over the world — reaching countless sentient beings, guiding us to our inner refuge, freeing us from suffering and helping us all lead happier, fuller lives — continue to manifest even further through the expansion of his webcast project!

#### **Text by Lourdes Hinojosa**

Photos by Dr. Jose Ignacio Garcia (Spain), Salvador Espinosa (México) and the computer



# WE HAVE TRANSLATED ALL THE WEBCASTS AND BOOKS

**This time we introduce the sangha in Europe largest country. Pavel Kuzmin informs us about the Russian sangha.**

**Traveling in the Netherlands from the southern border to the northern border is less than three hundred kilometers. I know that Russia is vast, because I once travelled from Moscow to Beijing, China, by train, and that took me one week. So, can you tell us where is the Russian sangha is located?**

The Russian sangha is spread all over Russia, but most of the sangha members live in Moscow and Saint Petersburg. When seminars with Rinpoche are organized people from far away come from all over the country. Some people have to travel thousands of kilometers to Moscow, and travel several days.

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

Before I met Rinpoche I read his book on *Dream Yoga*. I had been interested in *Dream Yoga* for twenty years, and it was amazing meeting Rinpoche the first time. His books were translated by people who invited him to Moscow for the first time in 1998. The books were published in the nineties in Russia. I met him in 2009 during a *Tumo* retreat in Saint Petersburg. The seminar was organized by Elena Rudoy, a very dedicated person, who organized many retreats with Rinpoche in Saint Petersburg. She had asked me to help her, and when I met Rinpoche he suggested that I would organize seminars in Moscow. Rinpoche was the first time in Moscow about sixteen years ago, when he taught *Dream Yoga* in a very beautiful museum of minerals in Moscow. During the retreat in 2009 I met the people who invited Rinpoche the first time to Moscow, and we started to work together. For Rinpoche this was a very good sign, so he decided to come to Russia twice a year since 2011: once to Saint Petersburg and once to Moscow.

**Are there many Buddhist people in Russia?**

Yes, and there are many schools represented. The most popular community in Moscow is dedicated to Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and they have about five thousand members. They have a group of about one thousand people who regularly meet,



Dream Yoga seminar in Moscow in 1998.

and have different trainings. And also the Karma Kagyu, Gelugpa and others are represented. In the east of Russia we have three traditional Buddhists regions.

**Was there always freedom of religion, or did it only come after 'Glasnost' in 1989?**

Even in the Soviet time there were many Buddhists spread over the country. In the West of Russia Christianity was the main religion. People have been practicing Buddhism for many years, but since the beginning of the nineties it starts to develop fast. Some teachers are invited, but for H.H. the Dalai Lama it has not been possible to come to Russia, because of the political connections between Russia and China. Many lamas are invited, and also the Bon lamas. Nowadays two Bon lamas, Rinchen Tenzin and Arta Lama, live in Moscow, and they teach and perform rituals.

**Did you feel religious suppression during the communist regime?**

I don't know how it is in the regions, but I think it is the same as in Moscow. From the government nobody is interested in things that are not connected with making money. In the regions there is







21 Nails in Saint Petersburg in a Buddhists datsan.

more tradition, and then it might be that the local customs lead to restriction, but not from the authorities. The people on the countryside, who grew up in the Soviet time, may not be so open for changes. I think this is the same all over the world.

### **Can you tell us about the structure of Ligmincha Russia?**

We actually have a poor structure. About five to seven people are always involved in the organization. We organize the retreats, translations of the books and webcasts. In Russia it is very difficult to have a legal religious organization, because you have to register and prove for fifteen years that your organization is active in the country. And they need facts of the daily activities of the organization. We have been thinking about how to realize it, but that is not easy.

### **Do you have practice groups?**

Some of us meet to do the *Ngöngdro* with a Bonpo lama quite regular. Many people practice alone at home, and they are very happy with the webcast. More than two hundred people listen to the webcast live. All of Rinpoche's webcast are translated into Russian, so we have a big library with YouTube videos.

Most of the times we organized the retreats with Rinpoche in a center outside of Moscow, and Rinpoche asked us the last time to organize it in Moscow. So, in September we expect more than three hundred people. During the *Dream Yoga* retreat in 2010 we had between from two-hundred-fifty to three hundred people. Rinpoche's books are very popular and some have been published in a third or fourth edition. Till five years ago it was easy to publish books for free on the internet, so many people read the books for free. Only one of Rinpoche's books, *Unbounded wholeness*, is not translated into Russian; the others are all translated. Also most books of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche are translated.

### **Do you have contact with other sanghas in Europe?**

We have close contact with Finland. Many Finnish people come to Rinpoche's seminars in Saint Petersburg, because it is very close to Helsinki. I also know members from the Polish sangha.

### **What are your plans for the future?**

We think about possibilities to meet more regularly, because the live connection is important. There for we need to find a place. And we discuss how to structure the sangha, and create an official organization.

### **Is there anything you want to share with the sangha?**

To the seminars many people come from Ukraine, Belorussia. We welcome everybody warmly, where ever they come from. So, maybe we'll see you in Moscow or Saint Petersburg...

### **Interview by Ton Bisscheroux**

Photos by Elena Trepalina and Alexander Smolovoy



# WHAT'S HAPPENED IN EUROPE

It is always inspiring to read what happens in our sangha in Europe. Rinpoche visited Austria, France and Germany, and gave internet teachings. John Jackson came to Germany, Denmark and Ireland,

Raven Lee visited the Netherlands. Geshe Nyima Woser Choekhortshang was invited to Hungary, we had a European sangha weekend in Germany, and Ryszard Adamiak taught *Thrul Khor* in Slovakia.



**March 28 – 30:**  
**Dream Yoga seminar**  
**with Tenzin Wangyal**  
**Rinpoche in Berlin,**  
**Germany.**

For the *Dream Yoga* Seminar in March 2014 we had booked a nice big place ahead of time, the *UfaFabrik*, which was a famous movie Factory in the old days and is a well known event place now. We all were a little bit anxious if enough people would be coming to fill the space. But everything worked out very well. At the beginning of the year we already had many registrations and realized there was a lot of interest in Rinpoches teachings. For the public talk we had two-hundred-sixty, for the seminar two-hundred-twenty participants, and we had to close the registration before the weekend started. The feedback of most of the new participants was very enthusiastic and they were inspired by Rinpoche's Dzogchen approach and presentation of the *Dream Yoga* practices. The feed-

back from students who have been coming for a longer time was the same. The presence of two Geshes helped a lot to sustain the high energy during the weekend: Geshe Nyima, already well known and highly appreciated in our Berlin Sangha, and Geshe Lhöndrup, the new resident Lama in France. And last but not least the teachers of the 3Doors Academy (Europe), John Jackson and Raven Lee, had come over just for the Sunday and also contributed to the overall success of this wonderful weekend with their genuine presence.

As a Sangha Team we all felt we were working together very well and respectful of every other persons contribution. We enjoyed the warmth and closeness which manifested throughout this weekend.







**March 14 – 16:**

*Awakening the Luminous Mind* seminar in Paris, France. There were about two-hundred participants, and it was a very joyful teaching and the Paris sangha is always very enthusiastic.



**March 21 – 23:**

*Dream Yoga* seminar with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in Vienna, Austria.



**March 21 – 22:**

John Jackson taught *Sang Chöd* and *Sur Chöd* in Skander-borg, Denmark. Around thirty people attended, and they all felt very blessed to be there.





#### **April 25 – 27:**

On Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's advice our College sangha invited Geshe Nyima Choerkortshang in 2013 to give a weekend course in Budapest, Hungary. He kindly accepted our invitation and visited us in April 2014. We had a public talk on Friday evening with the theme: *The*

*Nine Ways of Bon* and full day retreat on Saturday and Sunday with the topic: *The Eight Manifestations of Sherab Chamma*. It was a wonderful course with details explaining the practice. We had thirty-two people coming from different parts of Hungary also from abroad Transylvania (Romania) and Serbia.



#### **February 28 – March 2:**

Ryszard Adamiak gave a public lecture in Bratislava, Slovakia, on *Tsa Lung – disco-ver the deeper breath of life*; on Saturday a *Tsa Lung Workshop* and on Sunday a workshop on *The Five Warrior Syllables*.







**April 4 – 6:**

**A weekend workshop with John Jackson in Cork, Ireland, introducing the healing meditations of the five elements, and how they relate to our everyday lives. A testimony from two participants.**



There is an old saying that “all the best things in life are free”. Having received the teachings of *Five Elements Goddesses* recently with John Jackson, I am now more aware of what the five best things in life are: Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Space.

I have always felt drawn to the beach. Now I know it is because of the five element availability and connection there. I have identified it as a place where my balance is restored. While practicing informally and integrating it with mindfulness training, I am finding a new awareness and gratitude arising within.

Regarding my energy I am now more aware of when there is balance, excess, or lack of elements. With this information I informally invite the Mother of the correct element to balance, or use the combination practice. I experienced a beautiful balance when the teacher just by being earth

helped me to access that element – and now I am aware that I can do likewise (with practice) for myself, loved ones and friends, which brings a lot of compassion into my interactions. It gives me time to respond rather than react.

Doing the practice has meaningfully enriched my present moment awareness and gratitude. Walking this earth is transformed, and I know that the best things in life are really cost free, and accessing elemental awareness has shown me greater personal freedom, and given me a chance to retrieve lost vitality.

**Carmel Geary**

The setting was very helpful. It was great to go outdoors at break times and consume vast amounts of fresh air, enjoy green grass, feel comfortable in loads of space, appreciate quiet atmosphere, and of course, the soft rain.

John Jackson was on the final stop of his world tour, but still had time for everybody.

I returned to my routine with the warm glow from the weekend lasting for a week. Thanks to John and also to Mary.

**Jon Browne**





**February 21 – 23:  
European Losar Practice  
weekend at Beuerhof,  
Germany**

Since a few years it is a custom to organize the European Practice weekend near to the Tibetan New Year Festival *Losar*, and this year we met the last weekend of February, one week before *Losar*. The emphasis of the practice was the topic on the Summer Retreat 2013 in Buchenau: *The Twenty-*

*four Masters of the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud*. Florian Bruckmann led the practice. He did that in a very nice atmosphere, and also the sangha members who had not participated in the Summer retreats in Buchenau enjoyed the practice: connecting with the *Lineage of the Old Masters*, the *Invocation of Taphritsa*, the *Yeshe Walmo* ritual, and of course the *Nine Breathings of Purification* and *Tsa Lung*. And on Sunday morning we did the *Sang Chö* ritual. We started the weekend on Friday with twenty-one participants from Germany, the Netherlands, Austria and Belgium. On Saturday we had a Skype meeting with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.





**Maksuton suora verkkolähetys**  
 Opetuksia tibetin bön-buddhalaisesta perinteestä  
**Nosta tuulihevosesi—  
 Hyvää onnea uudelle vuodelle**  
 Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche  
**2. Maaliskuuta, 2014**  
 20:00-21:30 Suomen aikaa

 *Lähetys käännetään suomeksi*  
[www.ligmincha.fi](http://www.ligmincha.fi)



**You can watch the recording here:**

[Raising Your Windhorse — Good Fortune for the New Year \(02-03-2014\)](#)

**Live Webcast**  
 Live onderricht uit de Tibetaanse bön boeddhistische traditie  
**Je geest tot rust brengen met meditatie—  
 de oefening van het rustig verblijven, Zhiné**  
 met Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche  
**9 Maart 2014**  
 18.00–19.30 u

 *Log in via:*  
[www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)



**You can watch the recording here:**

[Calming Your Mind with Meditation — The Practice of Calm Abiding \(Zhiné\) \(09-03-2014\)](#)

**Webcast Gratuit**  
 En direct : Enseignements de la tradition Tibétaine Bön Bouddhiste  
**Eveil de l'Esprit Lumineux**  
 avec Guéshé Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoché  
**Le 10 avril 2014**  
 01h. - 2:30h. Heure de Paris

 [www.new.livestream.com/yogaville](http://www.new.livestream.com/yogaville)



**You can watch the recording here:**

[Awakening the Luminous Mind \(10-04-2014\)](#)



**Free Live Webcast**  
 Live teachings from the Tibetan Bon Buddhist tradition  
**Winds of Change: Discovering the Healing Power of Mind and Prana**  
 with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche  
**April 12, 2014**  
 21.00–22.30 h. Central European time  
 Translations in multiple languages available.  
[www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)




You can watch the recording here:

[Winds of Change: Discovering the Healing Power of Mind and Prana \(12-04-2014\)](#)

**Freier Live Webcast**  
 Live Belehrungen aus der Bön Buddhistischen Tradition Tibets  
**Die Schüler – Lehrer Beziehung**  
 mit Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche  
**4. Mai 2014**  
 19–20:30 Uhr Mitteleuropäische Sommerzeit  
 Simultanübersetzung ins Deutsche verfügbar  
[www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)  
[www.simultan.ligmincha.de](http://www.simultan.ligmincha.de)




You can watch the recording here:

[The Student-Teacher Relationship \(04-05-2014\)](#)

**FREE LIVE WEBCAST**  
 SHARDZA LING INSTITUTE  
 IS HONORED TO INVITE YOU TO A TWO-DAY WEBCAST  
 WITH A TEACHER OF YUNGDRUNG BON TRADITION  
**LATRI NYIMA DAKPA RINPOCHE**  
**18 APRIL AND 22 APRIL 2014**  
 18 APRIL 8-9 P.M. WARSAW TIME (GMT+1)  
 INTRODUCTION TO NINE CLEANSING BREATHS.  
 MEDITATION FOR PEACE AND MENTAL HARMONY  
 22 APRIL  
 INTRODUCTION TO FIVE INNER ELEMENTS OF  
 OUR BODY AND THEIR FUNCTION IN EVERY DAY LIFE.  
<http://yungdrungbon.streamonline.pl>



You can watch the recording here:

[yungdrungbon.streamonline.pl](http://yungdrungbon.streamonline.pl) (18-04-2014)





# ON THE WAY TO ENLIGHTENMENT

**From April 23 to 27 in Pauenhof, Germany, a retreat was organized on *Sherap Chamma*, The Mother of Wisdom and Love. Karolina Seltenheim shares with us some impressions of this special retreat.**

As a result of the transformations required in the 3Doors Academy, the spontaneous manifestation of a retreat with a female teacher and the topic *Awakening the Sacred Feminine* came together during the last week of April at Pauenhof. Twenty-seven women and men from the Netherlands, Finland, Germany, and Austria experienced an incredible retreat under the guidance of Marcy Vaughn, a long-time student of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and a teacher in the 3Doors Academy and programs.

I knew Marcy as the *umdze* from Ligmincha's retreats in the US, and had the dream that she would guide a *Yeshé Walmo* practice here in Europe. The dynamic and rhythm she brings to this practice attracted me, and most impressive on this five-day retreat was her embodiment of the teachings and practice.

We practiced Sherap Chamma from the early morning until late evening. The emphasis of the retreat was not so much about what was taught, but it was the power of Marcy's practice, experience, knowledge, and understanding that shone through. Like the natural flow of a river, these qualities came together and touched me very

deeply. During the retreat I had a series of dreams that deepened my practice and connected me with the inner refuge and the wisdom of *Sherap Chamma*. To have the opportunity to talk with Marcy personally about these dreams made this retreat an extraordinary experience.

Another aspect of this retreat that touched me was being with a Western teacher and a female

teacher as well. In my opinion, Rinpoche's tireless efforts to bring forth these precious teachings that are so close to our hearts is amazing, and we love him beyond measure for this. To experience how his teachings are embodied in one of us Westerners and in a female is beyond words for me. It's encouraging for my practice and encouraging for me to continue the path of transformation and to take the fruit of my transformations out into the world. Whether any of us does this in a traditional way as a Bon practitioner and/or through the 3Doors methods and programs, both ap-

proaches will support us to achieve our final goal — attaining liberation for the benefit of others.

For many of us it was a great experience, and we spontaneously and enthusiastically invited Marcy for another retreat next year. Save the date: March 10<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> 2015. Let's meet together to explore the path to enlightenment through the sacred feminine!

**Text by Karolina Seltenheim**



# HOSTING OUR PROBLEMS IN THE INNER REFUGE

**During the weekend from March 14 to 16 a 'Taste of the 3Doors' was organized in Dortmund, Germany. Hille Huigens reports from it.**

It really was a taste, because the participants not only got a good idea about the 3Doors Academy program, but they also experienced it. Angelika Krone organized it, assisted by Michaela Bittner. The taste was under the guidance of John Jackson, one of the 3Doors teachers from America. Angelika translated into German.

The introduction on Friday evening was attended by about thirty-five persons. They received a glimpse of the background of the 3Doors program. John guided us through the three doors. The first door is the stillness of the body. And the experience of the inner space, related to it. The second door is the door of listening. Listening to the silence behind all sounds. Even the silence behind the inner talk. And the experience of lightness and peacefulness, which accompany this. And the third, the door of the heart. The spaciousness of the heart, which can merge with the spaciousness of the room and space around us. In this space we experience awareness and light and peace.

We name this 'the inner refuge'. There we can always find hospitality. No matter what restlessness disturbs us, we always can find shelter there. And we can safely take the restlessness with us and give it a place as well. Doing so, its power diminishes, and the problem becomes lesser. Pondering about it increases the problem. Hosting it in the inner refuge lessens the problem. During

the whole Saturday and Sunday we work with this hosting in the inner refuge.

Besides that, we sing *A, Om, Hung*. We let these sounds resonate, respective in the head (the crown chakra) in the throat and in the heart. What a joy in doing this together. For most of us it immediately is a liberating experience. Just like by hosting, our burden becomes lighter. Sometimes it even vanishes. At the same time a strong feeling of mutual connection arises.

This is even strengthened by lunching together. On Saturday we walk together through the park to a restaurant, where we enjoy the meal in each other's company. The next day the meal is near the Phoenix-Lake. The park and the lake are developed on the spot of the former iron mills. This part of Dortmund is also going through a big transformation and so it is a good place for our transformation-work. The atmosphere of the yoga meditation room itself was very appropriate. Together with the clear explanations of John and the hospitality of Angelika and Michaela, this all contributed to create a wonderful taste.

**Text and photo by Hille Huigens**





# 6.000.000 LONG LIFE MANTRAS ACCUMULATED FOR H.E. YONGDZIN TENZIN NAMDAK RINPOCHE

In January Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche requested that all of our Ligmincha international sanghas would accumulate 1.000.000 Long Life Mantras for H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, the most senior teacher in the Bon tradition and founder of Tritten Norbutse Monastery in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Many sangha members engaged and on March 10, 2014, the total of the mantra accumulations: was **5.811.894**. We know that the sangha continues to accumulate the *Long Life Mantras*, but as far as keeping track in the office of Ligmincha, this is the total.

We are happy to let you know that the condition of H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche has improved since December last year.

Here are parts from the letter in which Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche informed the sangha on January 31, 2014:

**Dear Sangha members and friends,**

(...) I am writing this letter particularly to share some news about our beloved teacher H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche's health. Recently some notice requesting prayers for Rinpoche's health have been posted through various media such as wechat and email etc. I sincerely thank to those who made effort to send these information asking for the prayers around.

However, many of you start wondering if any urgency occurred in Rinpoche's health. So I just want say please don't worry. Rinpoche's health now is much-more better. In early last December, Rinpoche's blood glucose became quite high. Therefore we had to hospitalize him for three day to bring his sugar down and stable. His diabetic doctor prescribed insulin four times a day. But this has already been brought down to once in a day combining with the pills. At that time we asked advice from H.H. Menri Tridzin Rinpoche for any pujas/prayers for Yongdzin Rinpoche's health and long life. H.H. Menri Tridzin Rinpoche advised

thousand *gana puja offerings of Walse* and 100 times of *trowo* prayer recitation. These were performed both in Menri monastery and Tritten Norbutse as well.

Yongdzin Rinpoche now feels much better and does his regular works and practices and he takes walk every day.

Recently when we requested to Shense Rinpoche for divination and advice for any further practices/rituals for Rinpoche's long life, Shen Rinpoche advised us to perform hundred thousand *gana puja offerings to Red-Mule Sipa Gyalmo*, hundred thousand *gana puja offerings to Takla Mebar*, hundred million times of recitation of long life mantra that is:

**SO-DRUM A-KAR MU-LA TING-NAM OD-DU MU-YE TSE-NI DZA/**

So, the hundred thousand *gana puja offering* are being done at Tritten Norbutse monastery for one week starting from Feb. 2 while the practice of one hundred thousand *ganapuja offerings of Takla Mebar* will take place in Tritten Norbutse monastery sometime after Tibetan new year in March. And we will make sure you to be informed the precise date. We are appealing to all our monks and Bonpo practitioners to participate these important communal practice though their practices and prayers and particularly by reciting hundred thousand times or more of above mentioned long life mantra dedicating for Rinpoche. Therefore, your participation is welcome and highly appreciated. (...)


I would like to pay my respect and appreciation to your practices and good thoughts.

Thank you,

**Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche**  
(for Tritten Norbutse Monastery)




# DREAM YOGA IN BRUSSELS



**DREAM YOGA**


From the 24 th to the 26 th of October  
2014 in Brussels with

**TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE**



Teacher and internationally renowned author, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will teach for the first time in Belgium the dream yoga practice from the tibetan Bön tradition.

Ligmincha Belgium  
Nicolas Gounaropoulos  
0032/81/22.10.18  
gounaropoulos@gmail.com  
(reservation indispensable)



At La Maison Notre-Dame  
Du Chant d'Oiseau  
Avenue des Fransiscains, 3A  
1150 Bruxelles  
Price : 135 euros \*





# THE ESSENTIAL NATURE OF MIND

No words can describe it  
No example can point to it  
Samsara does not make it worse  
Nirvana does not make it better  
It has never been born  
It has never ceased  
It has never been liberated  
It has never been deluded  
It has never existed  
It has never been nonexistent  
It has no limits at all  
It does not fall into any kind of category.

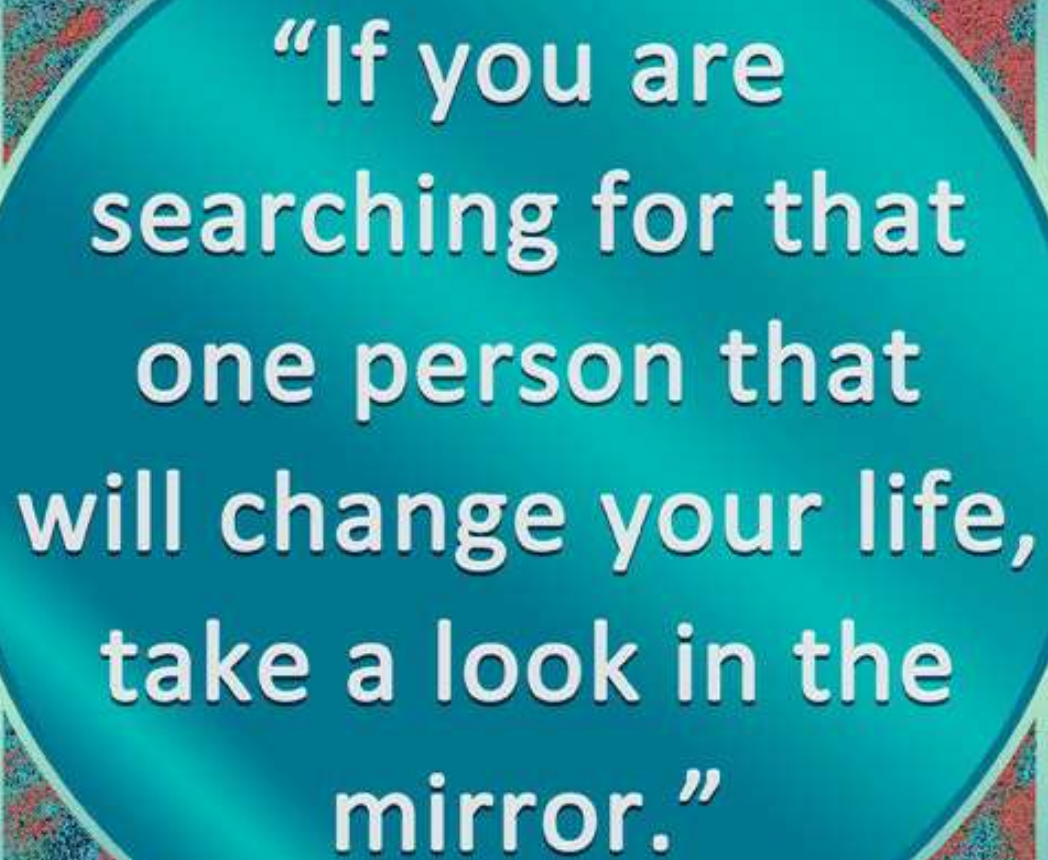
*Dudjom Rinpoche*



Photo by Martin Schroeder



## CHANGE



“If you are  
searching for that  
one person that  
will change your life,  
take a look in the  
mirror.”

<https://www.facebook.com/Institute of HeartMeth>





# WHAT IS REBORN OR REINCARNATED?

In the *Buddhadharma* Spring 2014 issue an interesting question was raised in the section 'Ask the Teacher'. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche gave an answer.

## QUESTION:

I was raised a Christian and taught that there is an eternal soul that leaves the body upon death and goes to heaven or hell. While I am now a Buddhist practitioner, my early religious upbringing has remained a problem. My logical brain tells me there must be something that animates a being and leaves the body when it dies; after all, one can tell the difference between a corpse and a living being.

In the Theravada tradition, we have the Jataka tales that describe Gautama's previous lives. In the Zen tradition, Jiyu-Kennett Roshi describes her former lives in her autobiography, *The Wild, White Goose*. In the Vajrayana tradition of Tibet, there is the tulku tradition with the intentional reincarnation of realized beings such as the Dalai Lama.

Please help me understand the Buddhist concept of what is reborn or reincarnated. What is it that is never born yet never dies? Is it consciousness? Awareness? Is it empty? It seems like an eternal soul to me.

## TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE:

In the Dzogchen teachings of my tradition, we make a distinction between mind and nature of mind. The mind is impure and can be obscured, but the nature of mind is primordially pure and cannot and cannot be obscured. The mind can be affected by causes and conditions, but the nature of mind cannot be affected. The mind is changeable. The nature of mind is not subject to birth or death.

So the essence or nature of mind is unchangeable and primordially pure. The teacher points out this

essence to the student, because awareness of this essence can be developed through meditation. Recognizing the nature of mind is wisdom; when one fully realizes the nature of mind, suffering is extinguished. Failing to realize the nature of mind is ignorance, the root of all suffering, and the mind that fails to recognize this nature is driven to take rebirth after rebirth.

What takes rebirth is *shé zhin*, or individual consciousness, the mind-stream driven by the reactivity that has not recognized the nature of mind. Separation of body and mind is the definition of death. When death happens, the mind continues, driven by the lack of recognition of the nature of mind. This mind endlessly takes rebirth in a variety of realms, and this is the definition of the suffering of cyclic existence.

Liberation from rebirth is the exhaustion of what obscures the nature of mind. Liberation is the dissolution of the veils of ignorance. When a buddha or higher bodhisattva reincarnates, they are not obscured by ignorance nor driven by the causes and conditions of karma but are born through the power of their compassionate prayer to benefit others who are suffering.

For the meditation practitioner, it is important to know that mind can evolve and purify its reactivity and karmic traces, transcend pain and conflict, and overcome duality. In any given moment, we can recognize the unbounded, primordially pure nature of mind. This recognition is like the sun shining in the clear, cloudless sky. The warmth of this realization gives birth spontaneously to qualities of immeasurable love, compassion, joy, and equanimity.

From the point of view of Dzogchen, there is no moment when we cannot recognize the nature of mind and liberate suffering, including the great moment of the separation of the body and mind we refer to as death.



# MEDITATION AND SCIENCE: *THE SHAMATHA PROJECT*

Adeline van Waning participated in *The Shamatha Project, Meditation and Science*. In her book *The Less Dust, the More Trust* she brings to bear her professional training and experience as a psychiatrist together with her knowledge and these experiences in meditation to explain the nature and significance of these practices from both Buddhist and scientific perspectives. Frits de Vries wrote a review.

## Introduction

There are two central meditation practices on the Buddhist path: *shamatha* or 'calm abiding' and *vipashyana* or 'clear seeing'. *Shamatha* is also translated as 'peacefully remaining' or 'tranquillity meditation'. In *shamatha* you get instructions for your ordinary, conceptual mind. In general you first train with one pointed concentration on a certain object, in order to stabilize your attention. When you are familiar with that, you fix your concentration on a point in the space before you and when familiar with that you train without a fixation point. In the Dzogchen training of *shamatha* you do not suppress or reject your thoughts, but when you see them arise you do not follow them. The result is that they resolve on their own and you remain peacefully. When you are able to experience long gaps between thoughts in your stream of consciousness you can go to the training in *vipashyana*, which is called 'insight meditation or contemplation. In Dzogchen it has the special meaning of training beyond your ordinary, conceptual mind on the central experience of Dzogchen called *rigpa*: the innermost nature of mind.

The attention in the *Shamatha Project* is fully on the preparatory *shamatha* practices. In the Bon Buddhist tradition *shamatha* is called *zhiné*. *Sha-*

*matha* and *zhiné* can have far reaching mind changes. In the *Wonders of the Natural Mind* Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche describes how his long-term practice of *zhiné* lead him to signs of experiencing the innermost nature of mind. Thereafter the confirmation of this experience by his teacher Lopon Sangye Tenzin was given through the 'direct introduction' to Dzogchen (1, p. 19).

## Mind and Science: the *Shamatha Project*

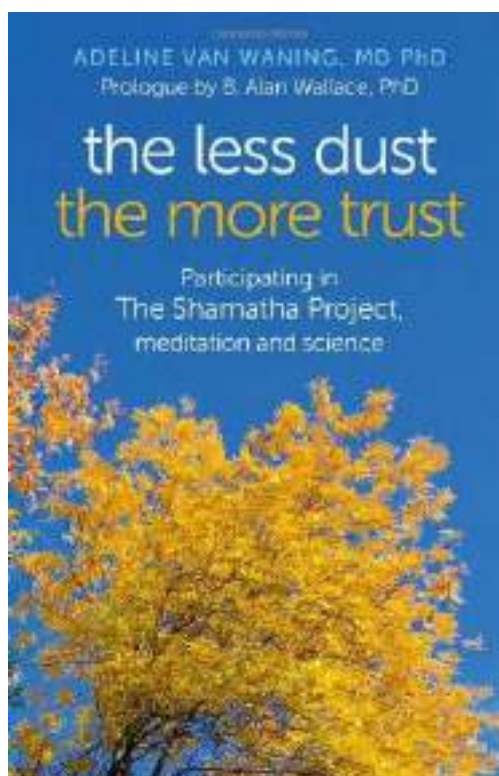
A group of dedicated scientific researchers, lead by Dr. Clifford Saron, did empirical measurements on Buddhist meditators. Years before, Dr. Saron was asked to give a presentation to the Dalai Lama, in the third series of *Mind and Life* dialogues between scientists and the Dalai Lama (2). This invitation lead to an encounter with Dr. Alan Wallace and the co-founder of the *Mind and Life* dialogues, Francisco Varela. From these meetings came the plan for a more comprehensive study on meditation, with full empirical measurements. As perhaps known, the Dalai Lama has a life long interest in western science which is why he fully endorses this project.

The overarching research questions for the Project

were:

- Can attention be trained through focused attention meditation practice?
- Can training in Loving Kindness, compassion and other beneficial aspirations support attention and improve emotion regulation?
- Are improvements in attention related to psychological function?
- What are the subjective, behavioral, neural, and physiological correlates of such training?

In this way we have a more quantitative view of the fruition of *shamatha*. The *Shamatha Project* was set up, based on a serious meditation program and also on a serious research hypothesis:





*“The research hypothesis was that three months of shamatha training, combined with cultivation of the four ‘qualities of the heart’ would result in improved attentional performance (vigilance, selectivity, and metacognitive control), as well as greater compassion, security, and ability to diminish the impact and duration of negative emotions.”(3)*

This research was done at Shambala Mountain Center in Colorado, with a selected group of sixty meditators in an intensive three-month meditation program with a longitudinal randomized waitlist control approach. The meditation was lead by Alan Wallace, an experienced *shamatha* and *vipashyana* trainer. The selected retreatants meditated mostly alone but also as a group. The whole project is long-term research, with publications and abstracts published in scientific journals and magazines. To get an impression of the full scope of the project, and the very exciting outcomes so far, see the project page of the University of California, Davis: [mindbrain.ucdavis.edu](http://mindbrain.ucdavis.edu). They include confirmation of the hypothesis, greater mindfulness, empathy and resilience, and groundbreaking findings of effects down to the chromosome level.

#### A personal account

As a participant in the project, the Dutch psychiatrist Adeline van Waning kept a diary during the three-month meditation period. She started writ-

ing in the context of preparing a thesis for an MA in Buddhist Studies about the *Shamatha Project*. This material, enriched with more elaborate studies on the *shamatha* and contemplation meditation fields, evolved into a larger text. The text was enriched with guided meditations from the pro-

ject. Also, in two chapters she discusses from a more psychological point of view on meditation experiences, not only from her first-hand experiences, but also from her psychological expertise as a psychiatrist. As a scientist herself (Ph.D.) she considers the current research outcomes of this unique project. (4)

The project started in 2007 and is ongoing. In her book she has some important recent news (4, p. 361):

*“The news came in fall 2012. This is the headline message of the news-release: The Shamatha Project has been awarded a grant of 2.3 million dollars over three years to continue and extend this most comprehensive investigation yet conducted into*

*the effects of intensive meditation training on mind and body. The Grant, titled “Quantifiable Constituents of Spiritual Growth” will support the latest phase of research that will address two questions. Question one: “After going through intensive meditation training, what differentiates people who develop their lives in ways that relieve suffering for themselves and others close to them from those who do not?” And question two: “How are measured changes in cognitive, psychological*



Shamatha Diagram





Dr. Saron from the University of California, Davis (UC Davis) talking with His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

*and physiological processes related to people's life experience years later?"*

In line with her meditation experiences Adeline also studied more advanced meditation practices like *Mahamudra* and *Dzogchen*. In her book, she explores the *shamatha* practices in this larger context. Although her meditation experiences are touching on the borders of the primordial state and *rigpa*, the *Shamatha Project* is not designed to go that far. A recapitulation of her experiences is presented in a review (5):

*"When increasingly she could let go of habitual attachment to self, she could feel that not she did things but that things happened through her, resulting in experiences of spaciousness and openness, with feelings of subtle lightness and joy. She noticed how sometimes there was the sense of transcending her physical senses and yet experiencing everything around her more clearly. She achieved a sense of freedom, of not being bound by beliefs, convictions and expectations. Also, she describes a heightened sense of presence in the world. The author addresses a sense of 'breaking the barriers of anxiety,' getting in touch with a deeper trust, beyond the 'dust' of attachments and conditionings."*

Because of these potential farreaching experiences, the basic meditation practice of *shamatha* is very fundamental in the Buddhist tradition. Alan Wallace, her *shamatha* teacher, designed the meditation side of the whole *Shamatha Project*, supervised it and wrote the prologue for Adelines book.

As previously stated, meditation practices like *shamatha* or *zhiné* can lead to far reaching mind changes. When done properly there is a smooth

connection with the contemplation practice that follows. You then need a teacher or master for guidance. Especially when you want to continue with *Dzogchen* contemplation you have to connect with a qualified *Dzogchen* master. When you are ready the teacher gives you the 'direct introduction' to the natural state. The *shamatha* or *zhiné* practices provide you with the indispensable mental stability to step into the more advanced meditation practices of contemplation.

### Conclusion

Based on her first-hand experiences and her study of meditation Adeline has written a very rich book for beginning and more experienced Buddhist practitioners alike. It is about concentration skills needed not only in this life, but also in other states, such as lucid dreaming, *Sleep Yoga* and finally the intermediate *Bardo* state.

**Text by Frits de Vries**

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- (2) *Gentle Bridges*, Conversations with the Dalai Lama on the Sciences of Mind, J.W. Hayward and F.J. Varela, Shambhala Publications, 2001.
- (3) See: *Shamatha Project* on: [www.fetzer.org](http://www.fetzer.org).
- (4) *The Less Dust, the More Trust*, Adeline van Waning, M.D. Ph.D., John Hunt Publishing, 2014.
- (5) See: [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), review J. Boekhoven.

Origin of photos:

*Shamatha* Diagram from: [www.rigpawiki.org](http://www.rigpawiki.org).

Dr. Saron with H.H. the Dalai Lama from: [mindbrain.ucdavis.edu](http://mindbrain.ucdavis.edu).





# DZOGCHEN, GURU YOGA AND CONTEMPLATION

Our teachers often say that *Guru Yoga* is the most important practice one can do, but when we rest in the Nature of the Mind we don't need to do any practice. It sounds simple, but is it that easy? Frits de Vries studied several books on this subject and shares his understanding with us.

## Introduction

*Guru Yoga* and contemplation are rather common concepts and practices, found in all schools of Tibetan Buddhism and can be found also in other Buddhist and non-Buddhist spiritual traditions.

We find the Dzogchen traditions only in the Nyingma and Bon schools of Tibetan Buddhism, whereby Bon is the fifth school of Tibetan Buddhism. In Bon and Nyingma the concepts of *Guru Yoga* and contemplation in Dzogchen have a very specific meaning and are connected with a specific practice.



The meanings and practices we study here are from the *Zhang-Zhung Nyan Gyud* (ZZNG), in the translations and commentaries of John Myrdhin Reynolds (4), who closely worked with H.E. Lopon Youngdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, who is the main living Bon Zhang Zhung teacher. The question I want to answer in this article is: How does the essential principle practice of Dzogchen, resting in the Nature of Mind, combine with the most important daily practice of *Guru Yoga*? While resting in the Nature of Mind, also called Contemplation, lies beyond all operations of the mind and *Guru Yoga* is a step-by-step practice within all the operations of the mind?

## Dzogchen and Contemplation

Contemplation is a practice in all spiritual schools, on all levels, but in the context of Dzogchen it has a very precise meaning. The Dzogchen learning process starts normally with preliminary exercises, which can be understood by your normal, ordinary awareness and then shifts, at a certain point, to a learning process outside your ordinary awareness. From then on any step-wise instructions fail. This shifting point is the 'direct introduction' to the Natural State by a qualified Dzogchen master to the practitioner.

Before this point you practice in general preliminary exercises, until your mind is stable and you are open and ready to receive this introduction. Usually these preliminary practices are from the *Ngöndro*, followed by supplementary exercises, on the advice of the Dzogchen master. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche describes his learning process, starting with the *Ngöndro* and *Powa* (2, p. 19):

*"After powa I did zhiné meditation on A with Lopon Sangye Tenzin for quite a long time, and through this meditation I received the direct introduction to Dzogchen."*



In the chapter on the Zhiné concentration practice, after describing the 'signs of spiritual progress', Rinpoche elaborates more on this introduction, explaining it is certainly not a magical act of the master on the practitioner (2, p. 86):

*"When the inner and outer signs start to manifest, the master introduces us to the natural state by explaining to us the nature of the experiences we have already had and of the knowledge we have already acquired by ourselves. In this way the practice becomes more calm and relaxed, less fixation and concentration practice and more like contemplation practice."*

You have had this direct introduction and you had, at least for a few moments, the experience of the inseparability of emptiness and awareness. To bring yourself to the state of this experience, again and again a different learning process is tak-



ing place, without any conceptual step-by-step instructions on what to do. It is only expressed as getting more confidence in or getting familiar with the clear state of awareness the master has introduced one to, the Natural State.

According to the Lupon there is no method we can use (5, p. 114):

*"There is no real method to use because it is unspeakable. If you follow what I am saying, words, then you won't find the natural state at all. You are listening to the outside, and you are just catching my words."*

This 'problem' of instructions is clearly described in an interview by Henry M. Vyner of Lupon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche (5, p. 110):

*"Interviewer:* How do you concentrate into the natural state? On what do you focus your awareness?

*Lupon:* There is nothing to do. Just leave it to itself. If you do something, if you try to do anything, then you are not in the natural state.

*Interviewer:* So there is no method.

*Lupon:* No. Just keep the natural state continuously.

*Interviewer:* How do you stabilize the natural state?

*Lupon:* Just do nothing.

*Interviewer:* Just sit there with my eyes open?

*Lupon:* No. That doesn't matter. It doesn't matter whether your eyes are open or closed or whether you lie down in your bed. If you are familiar with keeping the natural state, if you are quite advanced with this practice, then you can talk, or you can do everything without disturbing it."

The Interviewer then checks with the Lupon: his "Just do nothing" is not an instruction, but simply means "do nothing within your mind: you don't reject, accept or follow your thoughts." It means, when looking into your 'mind-stream' you do not follow arising thoughts, because following thoughts causes more thoughts to arise. Not rejecting or accepting means: thoughts are allowed, and should be left untouched.

So, after this very distinctive Dzogchen 'direct introduction', there is still a gradual learning process of becoming more and more familiar with this unspeakable state of awareness and to experi-

ence it again and again, until you are quite advanced. The concept of this practice is easy to understand, but the practice itself is very difficult, because we are conditioned to reacting to all kinds of stimuli around us in daily life. We are very easily distracted, in contrast: you should not be distracted from the natural state of mind, not even for an instant. As Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche puts it nicely (2, p. 96):

*"As Dzogchen practitioners, it is possible to get distracted while cooking, but not possible to get distracted from the natural state."*



Rinpoche and other Dzogchen masters warn us not to confuse meditation experiences or *nyams*: bliss, inner pleasure and emptiness, with the genuine experience of *rigpa* (2, p. 95):

*"However, these three nyams must not be confused with rigpa or with the primordial state. These are experiences that are comprehended by rigpa, the self-awareness of the state."*

Also the blank state of 'no thoughts' is a meditation experience (4, p. 248):

*"This Natural State, which one encounters in contemplation, is characterized by an intrinsic Awareness or Rigpa, whereas the condition of 'no thoughts' is just an experience (nyams) and in the absence of Rigpa, it does not constitute contemplation as such. It is not just emptiness that characterizes the state of Dzogchen, but equally this luminous clarity or Awareness."*

Dzogchen contemplation has a different meaning than the usual *Sutra* or *Tantra* oriented meaning of contemplation (4, p. 248):





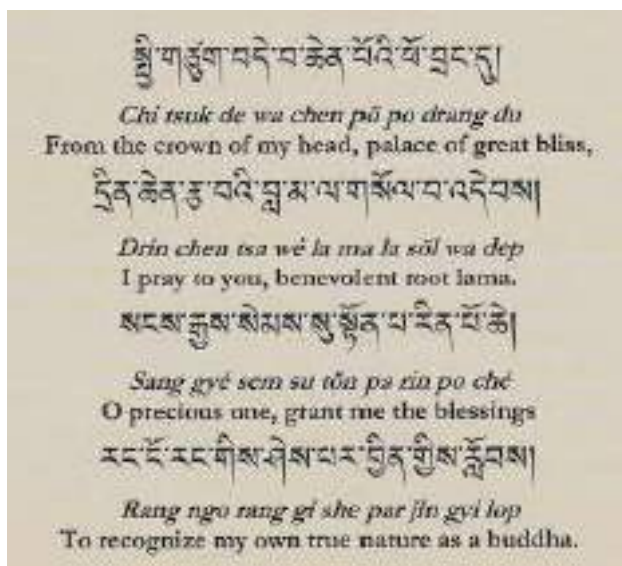
*“Basically contemplation is a relaxing into the alert Natural State of the Nature of Mind, and this can in no way be coerced nor created by thoughts and mental exercises.”*

Although contemplation in Dzogchen cannot be executed like a goal oriented task, we can create favourable conditions through the *Guru Yoga* practice or by practicing *zhiné*. When you are ready you can start with advanced Dzogchen practices (2, p. 68):

*“The later contemplation practices particular to Dzogchen are trekchö and tögel; however before embarking on these practices, it is necessary to have established a firm base in meditation through concentration practice.”*

### Dzogchen and Guru Yoga

On every retreat occasion with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche we start with singing the *Guru Yoga* prayer in Tibetan (see below).



*Guru Yoga* is part and parcel of the preliminary practices for practitioners of Dzogchen, be it one of the Nyingma Buddhist Dzogchen streams or of the Bon Buddhist Dzogchen streams. It is a necessary practice. In Appendix 2 (4) you find a description of the complete preliminary practices for the *Zhang Zhung Dzogchen* and *Guru Yoga* is an important part of it. In order to practice it you need a qualified Bon master. In general *Guru Yoga* looks like any of the nine preliminary practices, with generating of devotion, sitting position, breathing exercises, visualizations, purifications prayers, recitations, etc. In Appendix 1 you find a specific description and explanation of the steps of the practice of *Guru Yoga* in *Zhang Zhung*

*Dzogchen*. It is considered to be the single most important daily practice in the Dzogchen tradition (4, p. 246):

*“Through a repeated practice of the Guru Yoga, at least once a day, the practitioner maintains the vital link and connection with all of the transmissions one has received. The Guru Yoga is, therefore, the indispensable preliminary practice for the realization of Dzogchen.”*

The *Guru Yoga* practice makes you part of the transmission lineage of the stream, in this case the *Zhang-Zhung Nyan Gyud* transmission lineage of the masters of the Oral Tradition. In the book *The Oral Tradition from Zhang-Zhung* you find a full description of the lineage and all the masters, complete with their pictures.

### Importance of Tapihritsa

*“According to the Bonpo tradition, originally Tapihritsa was an ordinary human being, a native of Zhang-Zhung in Northern Tibet. Through the dedicated practice of Dzogchen, both in terms of the state of contemplation, that is, Trekchod, and the visions of the Clear Light, that is, Thodgal, he attained realization and full enlightenment. In general, Tapihritsa is said to be the most important master in the lineage of transmission for the Zhang-Zhung Nyan-gyud.”* (4, p. 217).

Tapihritsa lived in the seventh century and was the twenty-fifth master in the lineage. Until then the dzogchen instructions were kept secret and orally given, to one disciple only. Tapihritsa was the first master who allowed his disciple Gyerpungpa (Nangzher Lopo) to set down the secret oral precepts in writing and also to have more than a single disciple for the transmission.

In contrast with the usual image, you see Tapihritsa here as portrayed on a big thangka painting with eighty-six (!) lineage masters. The Tapihritsa image (1, p. 6) is part one of two very old thangka paintings, studied by Bon Dzogchen expert Samten G. Karmay. One image depicts the theoretical side of the teaching:

*“... the other presenting figures of both legendary and historical masters in a long line who practiced the teaching, hence providing evidence for the religious culture of a kind little known even among specialists.”* (1, p. viii ).





Detail from a *thangka* with Tapihritsa portrayed on a big *thangka* painting with eighty-six lineage masters.

As Reynolds comments (4, p. 219):

*“Thus, in a real sense, with Tapihritsa and Gyerpungpa, the Dzogchen teachings entered human history. Therefore, according to the Lupon, one visualizes Tapihritsa in the Guru Yoga practice not only because he exemplifies the great transfer, but because of his kindness and benevolence in revealing the Dzogchen precepts to his disciple and permitting him to set them down in writing.”*

As we have seen, among the several preliminary practices *Guru Yoga* is the foremost. The aim is to establish a connection to the lineage of transmission. Tapihritsa is the manifestation of primordial awareness and he represents the union of all the Bon lineage masters. How Tapihritsa selected his successor is recounted by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche (2, chap.4). When Gyerpungpa was liberated he chanted a long invocation to Tapihritsa. This invocation is known as *Nangzher Lodpo's Invocation to Tapihritsa*. From the introductory verses:

*“With precision you teach*

*The supreme teaching of the Great Perfection,  
The essence of the awareness of the realized ones,  
Peak of the way of realization,  
Heart of the revealed texts (tantra),  
of their essential Summaries (lung),  
and of the secret instructions (upadesa);”*

In the selected part of Rinpoche's translation (2, p. 59) you can read why Tapihritsa is such an important Dzogchen master and why Dzogchen is the most important teaching.

### Connection between Contemplation and Guru Yoga

We now arrive at an answer to the opening question: How does the essential principle practice of Dzogchen, resting in the Nature of Mind, combine with the most important daily practice of *Guru Yoga*? The answer is implied in the end verses of the long *Invocation to Tapihritsa*. According to Reynolds (4, p. 246):

*“At the conclusion that follows this Upadesha, Gyerpungpa prays to Tapihritsa with single-minded devotion addressing him as the Protector of Beings. His own understanding now having become manifest as self-awareness, he fervently requests the master to bestow upon him the realization of the actual meaning of the Primordial State that is empty and without a source and totally transcending the intellect. This is accomplished through the mystical union experienced in the Guru Yoga practice, where the state of contemplation of the master merges with the contemplation of the disciple, thereby becoming inseparable, like pouring water into water. Thereupon the mind-stream of Gyerpungpa became liberated from all entanglements with the delusions of Sam-sara.”*

In the expression ‘mystical union’ Reynolds expresses the crucial merging of two contemplation states, made possible by *Guru Yoga*. And so, for liberation to take place, contemplation and *Guru Yoga* of the practitioner fit seamless together, what's more: they need each other. The *Guru* exemplifies all liberated masters from the transmission-lineage and also (4, p.236):

*“Tapihritsa represents the visible symbol of the Primordial State, which is, in individual terms, the Nature of Mind.”*





We conclude with Namkhai Norbu from his introduction to the famous *Kunjed Gyalpo* Dzogchen tantra (3, p. 84):

*“When we follow the Dzogchen teaching, if we have sufficient capacity, we can start directly with the practice of contemplation. The only really indispensable thing is the practice of guru yoga or ‘unification with the state of the teacher,’ because it is from the teacher that we receive the direct introduction to knowledge.”*

**Text by Frits de Vries**

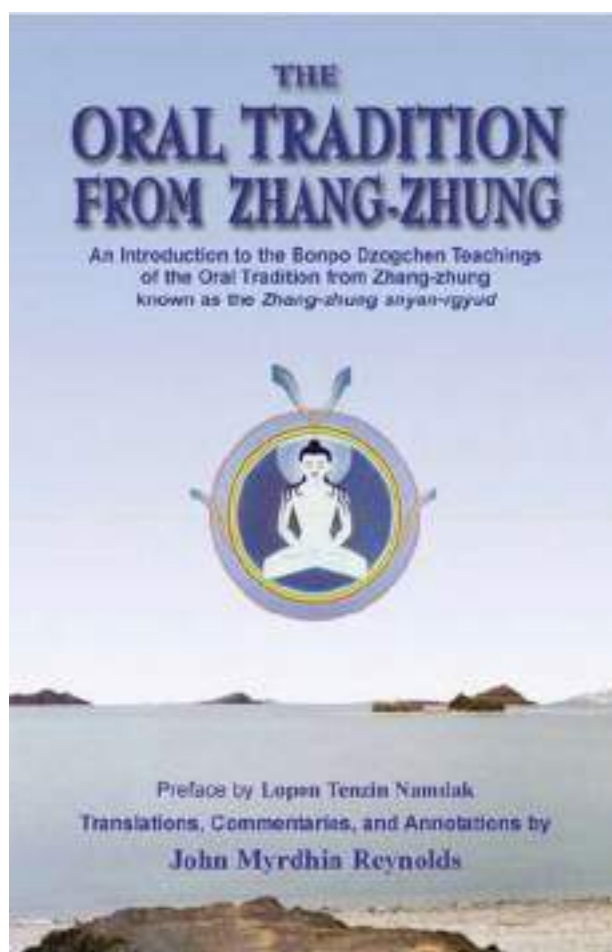
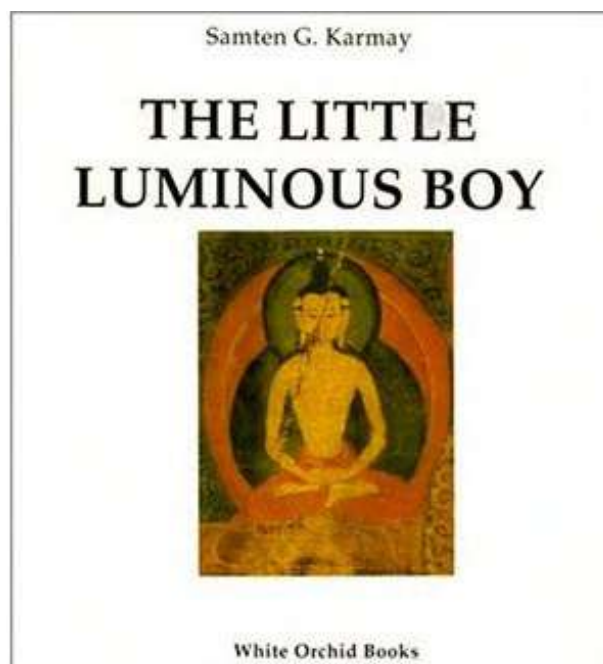
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- (5) *The Healthy Mind Interviews*, volume IV, 2007, Henry M. Vyner, M.D., Published by Vajra Publications. The Trekcho Interview with Lopon Tenzin Namdak.

### Annotation

This article is mainly based upon Appendix 1 from *The Oral Tradition from Zhang-Zhung*, subtitled as: An Introduction to the Bonpo Dzogchen Teachings of the Oral Tradition from Zhang-Zhung known as the Zhang-Zhung snyan-rgyud.

Appendix 1 is in three parts. Part 1 is How to practice *Guru Yoga*. Part 2 is the *Invocation of Tapihritsa*. Of special importance is Part 3 of the appendix, *Guru Yoga* and the Practice of Contemplation.



## TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE'S 2014 EUROPEAN SEMINARS AND ON-LINE TEACHINGS

| When                             | Where                 | What  | More information   |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|---|--|
| May 29                           | Fribourg, Switzerland | Evening talk:<br>The Open Heart   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.fr">www.ligmincha.fr</a>                     |
| May 30 – June 1                  | Gruyères, Switzerland | Weekend seminar:<br>Soul Retrieval  | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.fr">www.ligmincha.fr</a>                     |
| June 4 – July 4                  | Your computer         | Online workshop:<br>The Three Heart Mantras   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha-learning.com">www.ligmincha-learning.com</a> |
| June 8<br>19.00 – 20.30 h (CET)  | Your computer         | Free Live Webcast:<br>Shifting Your Pain Identity: the Sherap Chamma Practice       | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a>                   |
| June 15<br>19.00 – 20.30 h (CET) | Your computer         | Free Live Webcast:<br>Breaking the Cycle of Family Pain                             | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a>                   |
| June 29<br>21.00 – 22.30 h (CET) | Your computer         | The 21 Nails: Guided Dzogchen Meditation, Part 1                                    | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a>                   |
| July 6<br>21.00 – 22.30 h (CET)  | Your computer         | The 21 Nails: Guided Dzogchen Meditation, Part 2                                    | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a>                   |
| July 12 – August 10              | Your computer         | Interactive online course:<br>Tibetan Dream Yoga                                    | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>                   |
| July 15 – 20                     | Wilga, Poland         | The Twenty-One Nails, Part 2  | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.pl">www.ligmincha.pl</a>                     |
| August 25 – 31                   | Buchenau, Germany     | Summer Retreat:<br>The Six Lokas  | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.de">www.ligmincha.de</a>                     |
| September 5 – 7                  | Grenoble, France      | Weekend seminar:<br>Awakening the Luminous Mind                                     | <a href="http://www.cebgrenoble.fr">www.cebgrenoble.fr</a>                 |
| September 12 – 14                | Moscow, Russia        | The Practice of the Six Lamps, Part 2   | <a href="http://www.garuda-bon.ru">www.garuda-bon.ru</a>                   |
| September 20 – October 12        | Your computer         | Interactive online course:<br>Tibetan Sound Healing: The Five Sacred Seed Syllables | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>                   |
| October 14 – 19                  | Maria Alm, Austria    | The Experiential Transmission of Zhang Zhung, Part 5                                | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.at">www.ligmincha.at</a>                     |
| October 24 – 26                  | Brussels, Belgium     | Weekend seminar:<br>Dream Yoga  | <a href="http://www.bongaruda.be">www.bongaruda.be</a>                     |

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# Ligmincha Europe Magazine

**# 13 – Summer 2014**



Meet Ligmincha Slovenskà Republika

The Student – Teacher Relationship

The Six Lokas

New Ligmincha International Board



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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,**

A lot is happening in our sangha: finding a new home for our sangha in Western Europe; there is a new Ligmincha International board; next year you can go to Lishu Institute to study a three year residential training program; you can apply for the new training at The 3 Doors Academies, or participate in the workshops they offer. And you can attend online webcasts by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, interactive online courses on the internet. In this Magazine we'll keep you informed.

You can also read a transcript of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's webcast on the Student-Teacher Relationship. For me that was a very important teaching. Why? Because Rinpoche explained why it is important to have a spiritual teacher, what a student can expect from a teacher and what he expects from his students. During the webcast I had the feeling that Rinpoche was talking to me personally all the time. And when you follow a spiritual path, one day you might ask yourself: "Am I looking for a teacher or a friend?" In the webcast Rinpoche talks also about his relationship to his teachers. So, I would like to share my experiences with my teachers here too.

Although I never met him personally, I consider Chögyam Trungpa as my first teacher. I read his books and was very inspired by his words.

At the end of my journey through China, Tibet, Nepal and India in 1987-1988 I did my first *vipassana* meditation retreat in Bodhgaya, India, with Christopher Titmuss. I still use his dedication after every meditation:

*May all sentient beings be released from suffering  
May all sentient beings live in peace and happiness  
May all sentient beings reach enlightenment.*

Back home, I discovered there was a Tibetan

Kagyu Institute, Yeunten Ling, with four resident lamas in Huy, Belgium, not far from where I live. I studied there for several years, and in 1990 when H.E. The Third Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche was there I took refuge.

In 1996 I found a school for psychotherapy, where the teacher and also founder of the school, Hans Knibbe, saw himself as a spiritual teacher. For him meditation was part of the therapy. He was inspired by Dzogchen teachings, and made that part of our study program. After finishing the education we kept practicing together as a group, and in that

group the Student-Teacher Relationship was a big issue. Several years we have investigated our relationship to the teacher, and at some point our teacher asked us to see him as our only spiritual teacher. I came to the conclusion that I trusted the teachings, but not the teacher. From my point of view, my teacher was not free of anger, and anger was also one of my issues. It was clear that it was not my task to tell him that he had a problem with anger, but I found it very difficult to deal with that issue.

What complicated this matter was that my teacher did not have a teacher to investigate his personal issues. In the end I was still prepared to investigate my part, but it was my teacher who sent me away. I still feel gratitude for what he taught me, but I had to move on.

At the end of that process I met Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche the first time. When I listened to him I didn't think that Rinpoche was perfect, but I did think he was amazing. After going to the seminars of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche for three years, I felt it was time to ask him if he wanted to be my teacher. Eight years after the first encounter I still think that Rinpoche is amazing.

In Bon,

**Ton Bisscheroux, chief editor**



# ON THE OUTER AND INNER SPIRITUAL MASTER

During the live webcast on May 4, 2014, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche talked about the relation between student and teacher. Here you can read an edited transcript from this webcast.

## [Guided meditation]

*Imagine and feel the presence of a white luminous being in the sky in front of you, who is like Samantabhadra or Tathagatagarbha. This being embodies all the masters of the past, present, and future, all the masters from whom you have learned, are learning presently, or from whom you might learn in the future, all the masters that you have practiced with, and grown with their guidance and from whom you have received help, all the masters that you are presently following, and all the masters that you might follow in the future. This luminous being represents all those masters, everyone from whom you have learned, the ones*

*who have helped you, the ones who have shown you the path, who have guided you. Bring everyone in and connect. Let go of all the personal stories, doubts, conflicts, emotions, thoughts, and issues of distrust. In this moment, simply focus from your heart in a pure way towards all those who have guided and taught you. Connect with your open heart.*

*As you connect, feel a sense of unbounded space, which is the inner master. When you find that unbounded open space internally, it allows you, without doubt and with confidence, to connect with your outer master. Feel that connection; allow spontaneous gratitude and joy in that connection. From openness, feel the devotion, and through devotion connect with the master; allow that connection to deepen; feel supported to evolve and grow as a result of this deepening connection.*

## [Bell]



You can watch the recording here: [The Student-Teacher Relationship](#)





I am happy that I am able to discuss some issues that are relevant and helpful for your practice and spiritual development. This time I will talk about the master and student relationship, and share some of my own experiences. The master and student relationship is important for the practitioner. When you have a deeper sense of openness or willingness to understand the teachings, you learn about *karma* and reincarnation as well as the ultimate goal of liberation, enlightenment, and Buddhahood, which is something that every individual can pursue. When you want to achieve ultimate liberation, this relationship is very important, because whatever deep level of development or realization you may have, liberation is a long journey that requires consistent and genuine support.

For example, if, when you examine your everyday life, you see that you have a lot of psychological issues, doubts, confusion, conflicting emotions, or are feeling down, a very good therapist can help you with these experiences. Why do you need a therapist? Because you need help. How can therapy actually help you? It can help when you trust and have respect for the therapist, respect the process of therapy, and have committed to follow through that process. If you don't have that trust and respect and commitment, there is no way that you can get real support from a therapist. In someone's life, this might involve one session or two years. The spiritual journey, however, is not a short journey. It is a very long journey. In the Tibetan tradition there are stories of teachers and students who have a lifetime relationship, and some have a relationship life after life. I don't want to convince everyone to believe in karma and reincarnation, but what I am trying to say is that if you understand there is something much higher to achieve, namely enlightenment or absolute freedom, then you should realize that it is a long journey, and you need real support. Therefore, the master is very important.

Sometimes people wonder if they really need a master. Generally speaking 99.9 percent of people need a master. There is a small chance that someone does not need a master. Most of us need a master. When I examine the question myself, I consider myself as someone from the larger group who needs a master.

So generally speaking, the relationship with a

master is very important because there is an incredible body of knowledge you need to learn, and there are an incredible amount of practices you need to learn and become adept with. In order to fully engage those practices, there are many challenges and outer, inner, and secret obstacles that you might face. You need some kind of mental support and guidance through those challenges. If the path is very important, if liberation is very important, the master is very important. So that is why one needs to have a master.



His Eminence Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

Then you might ask, "How do I find a master?" That is a very good question. During a Summer Retreat someone asked my teacher, Yongdzin Rinpoche, the same question. He answered: "First you have to look for your master. It is absolutely necessary to know you are looking and to look genuinely with dedication. Once you find someone, do not jump immediately into the relationship and exclaim, 'I found my master; I'm so excited.'" I myself have many experiences where people meet me for the first time and say: "You are great, your explanations are clear, and I feel a connection to you." And when I listen a little bit more to them, they complain about the master they had been following for ten years. They are totally critical about that master and are praising me like I am not even a human being. When I hear that, it is as if a red light blinks inside of me, signaling that I am the next target of this person. I don't get excited when people approach me in that way. I am more encouraged when people come to me saying, "I have been following someone for a long time; I have devotion and respect for my teacher, and I have learned much." Maybe that master passed away, maybe he moved away,





His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche.

or there is no longer closeness. “I am at a different stage in my life; I need to learn more, and I also feel some connection to you. Can I learn from you, and yet keep my principal master continuously in my heart?” To that, I think, “Wow. Yes, this is a good person.”

My teacher was very explicit: you don't jump right away to a decision. First, you analyze to see if the master has enough knowledge to offer you so you can grow. Do you feel a heart connection to that master? Do you feel a sense of trust? Some analysis is important, and there is nothing wrong with doing that. At the same time, listen to your heart. Do you genuinely feel a sense of openness, a sense of devotion and connection? When your heart says “yes” and your mind says “yes” then you can say, “This is my master.” Then you have to follow through. While finding a master is not exactly the same, it is a little similar to seeking a life partner, as when you look for a husband or wife. When you first fall in love with somebody, it is best that you do not make a decision overnight to get married. More wisely, you take time, you feel, you analyze, and when you are confident you are connected, you make a decision. Nor do you say, “This person is perfect and it should always be like it was when I first fell in love with this per-

son.” When you fall in love with a person you see such perfection in this person; you see everything that is wonderful in this person. When you expect to feel the same thing in a marriage of thirty years, probably all of us know that is not going to happen. The person you first see does not seem to have any problems or errors, and after ten years you see this person as a normal human being. It is the same person with whom you fell in love, but there is this problem and there are all kinds of issues. You have personal issues, and you always project them on somebody. I am sure if the Buddha appeared on this earth and moved into your neighborhood, and you didn't know that he or she is a Buddha, it is very likely that you are going to have some problems with that Buddha for whatever reason. Perhaps the Buddha parks the wrong car in the wrong place, or plays music too loudly!

So, once you make a clear decision, it is important that you work with it. With my teachers, His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, Lopon Sangye Tenzin Rinpoche, Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, and Geshe Yungdrung Namgyal, sometimes it was not easy. There were challenging situations. Whenever there is a challenging situation, in my mind, I don't tell them they have to work on that situation, because they are not my students but are my teachers. I take those challenges as my work; it is my job to clear those obstacles. I chose these people as my teachers. When my own needs, expectations, and desires challenge our relationship, I work seriously on myself, rather than expecting my teachers to change. I am the student; I chose these people to learn from. I am not saying they don't make mistakes; I don't say they are fully enlightened, but for me they are, even though sometimes I see that something might not be correct. Still, I work on these issues in my own place. It is important to recognize that the student needs to work. And when a situation does not work out at all, it is of course better not to continue that relationship, and find the right person, like we would do in a marriage.

There are marriages that last forever, a lifetime, and there are master-student relationships that last forever, especially when the student has chosen the right person and is working in the right way within him or herself. From that deep relationship a lot of growth is possible. So going back





to the question of how do you choose, these are the criteria: examine intellectually and also know what your heart says, and when you feel somebody is right, then conclude: This is it. And then you seriously work on that relationship. Your commitment is important.

Make sure that you are not trying to follow a particular master because you want to be the head of the organization, or you want to be a close friend to the master, or you want to be the main person. It is not possible not to have ego, but make sure ego is not making the decisions. You want the influence of ego to be minimal in that relationship and your heart and clarity of mind to maximize the relationship. Follow that person and care for the spiritual relationship, and in so doing you grow, you learn, and you develop what you have learned as you pursue your own ultimate liberation. Liberation should be the primary goal, and you need to watch out for every other goal or reason; don't let anything else overtake the relationship. The spiritual goal should be clear and foremost.

I don't think any student-teacher relationship can be completely pure. As I mentioned before, His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, Lopon Sangye Tenzin Rinpoche, and Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, are my principal teachers. I lived and grew up with Yongdzin Rinpoche, who lives in Nepal and frequently visits France [[Shenten Dargye Ling](#)], and I encourage my students to go there and feel his presence. I have had a relationship with him for forty years, and I know clearly this relationship has not only been in this lifetime, but many lifetimes, and if I am lucky enough it will continue into the next life. This relationship, of course, had changed over the years. When I was a ten year-old boy I did not have that much understanding and did not know how to relate to the master. It was more a father and son relationship. I remember clearly how he helped to feed me and clean my shirts as he guided me. Gradually our relationship changed to more learning, and every day we had classes. I felt close to him and comfortable with him and I could talk to him about anything.

In the West I sometimes see that I make people nervous. When people have to drive me they almost have accidents. I am not even saying anything, but they project things on me, although



Lopon Sangye Tenzin Rinpoche.

whatever they project on me has nothing to do with me. There I am totally normal, very casual, friendly, talking, sharing. Sometimes they are not able to talk, and I think that it is important that people should be able to talk clearly and share their thoughts and feelings. That is what I felt with Yongdzin Rinpoche. Once I finished my geshé degree we travelled together through Tibet, and when we came back I was like a child who had grown up, and I had to move on. After I came to the West, the relationship shifted and changed. Now I don't have the fortune to be with him all the time as we were, being together, eating together.

Also, for many years I went every year to visit His Holiness at Menri Monastery. Nothing has changed in our relationship, and every time I go, I go to him as a student and do whatever a student does. This relationship for me has been very enriching, and it is possible for everyone to have this kind of relationship. That's why I am sharing these personal stories.

What are the obstacles to this relationship so essential for liberation? What I have seen in the West is that sometimes people are not really looking for a teacher. It is very important to become aware of what you really seek. If you are looking for a friend, a teacher is the wrong place to look.



The teacher is not such a good friend, because the teacher will probably tell you what to do, and might give you orders that you have to learn to obey. Once you respect someone as a teacher, you will have to learn to obey that teacher. That is the role of a teacher. You always have the right to not consider someone as a teacher, because you don't trust that person, or that person does not know enough, or whatever. But once you trust and consider someone as your teacher, you will have to learn to obey that teacher. You don't have to obey your friend, so if one is looking for a friend, don't go to a teacher. The teacher can be a friend to some degree, but a teacher is not a friend.

If you are looking for a relationship, the teacher is not the right person to have a relationship with, because the teacher will still order you about in a relationship. You don't want somebody to order you about in a relationship. If you want to do business, the teacher is not a good person to do business with, because in business it is good to have an equal and open position with your partners. If you are looking for some sense of organizational power, a teacher is not a good place to look either. Sometimes when people come to me, I recognize that while they are interested in me and my teachings, they are more interested in organizational power, power that they do not find in themselves. I always teach that power is within. The inner refuge is the most powerful source, and you can connect with that. But when you are looking for organizational power, dharma groups are one of the worst places to find power, because everybody works as a volunteer, has too many opinions, and do not necessarily have the skills that are required, because everything is based on availability and free time. If you are seeking power, then run for a function in the government, or something like that.

The bottom line is: make sure of your motives for following a particular person. Is it truly that you want to follow Yungdrung Bon, to follow the dharma, the spiritual path, for your wellbeing in this lifetime, for the wellbeing of others, and to ultimately achieve liberation? Achieving liberation is the single most important reason why you follow a particular path or person. If that is the primary reason, then there is much more chance of success in the relationship in the long run. Many people work in the community because they believe



Volunteers prepared these tables for dinner during the Summer Retraet 2013 in Buchenau, Germany.

in service. I know many people who have time and want to do something meaningful in their lives and they contribute their time, skills, and funds toward something they really believe is worth investing in. Of course you can get involved in the sangha and support things. But when you do that, make sure that you hold yourself in a very humble place, in a minimum ego place, and that you always hold separate your relationship to the teacher and the teaching. In that way you keep that relationship very clean and very pure, and you remember the number one reason that you are with that person and teaching. If there is any issue in the relationship that develops because of your activities and roles in the community, then you drop everything else and remain true to that relationship. The reason why I say that is that I have many experiences where people gain much power in an organization or group. And when that relationship does not work out, they blame the teacher and other members of the organization. Then they blame the teachings, and then they disconnect. Not only do they separate themselves from the teacher and the sangha, but sometimes





they also separate, unfortunately, with the teachings and their practice. It does not have to be like that. You can get rid of many things: you can get rid of all your organizational responsibilities — all the service tasks and the people you have conflicts with. Just let it all go; it is not important. Simply remain with your connection with the teacher and the teaching. That is how you initially began to follow. You don't have to work in the organization. If it does not work out, just follow the teacher, and hopefully it will work for you. If you have started in the right way, are relating in the right way, it will work for you. For some it will not work, because they have mixed it up too much: the organization, their own inner conflicts, the teachings, and the teacher. In some cases you also let go of the teacher. Forget about the organization, forget about those working positions, you can even let go of the teacher. But do not let go of the teachings and the practices your teacher taught you. You can start in the same tradition with another teacher and continue with the same practices. You can hold some sense of respect to that first teacher, but you don't have to follow that teacher from day to day, year to year. You can still continue some sense of relationship but not that closeness you previously had. So, I think there are many different ways it is possible to maintain these higher relationships for one's spiritual development.

### **[Guided meditation ~ Guru Yoga]**

*Sit comfortably. Bring your attention inward. In the sky in front of you, see the image of Taphritsa or Samantabhadra as a white luminous being embodying all the masters. Open your heart and feel spontaneous devotion. Feel the connection with yourself and all the masters. It is all one. Just continuously rest in that connection, in the connection with yourself and with the master.*

### **[Bell]**

When we talk about the master, we do not only mean the outer master. We know the outer or external refuge. The inner refuge that I emphasize is also known as the innermost secret refuge, but instead of making many divisions, I simply use the term inner refuge to refer to it. There is an important text called Yetri Thasel [ye krhi mtha' sel]. I will read from it in Tibetan and translate. It says: "The meaning of the master is the one who guides



Samantabhadra.

and protects, the one who shows and interprets." The master this text refers to is the inner refuge, our own inner essence, the nature of mind, *rigpa*, innate awareness. In the same text it says: "It [this nature of mind] knows everything and it shows everything. It is the one, the shower of showers. It is the one who shows everything that is to be shown. It knows everything; it shows everything. It is the one who shows whatever is needed to be shown." All this is referring to the inner master, which I have been emphasizing in the last couple of years as the inner refuge. So when you are still, silent, and spacious internally and connect with that source, that inner intelligence, that knowing knows what, when, and how to teach you, how to guide you, and how to protect you in any particular moment. I personally truly trust going to that space. All the advice and the guidance you need will come from that inner space. When one is able to go into that space, you will receive the most accurate, intelligent advice possible. Learn to go to that place when you experience any form of conflict in a relationship. Seek advice from this place instead of seeking advice from anyone else. We can have cultural differences and issues with teachers, in the relationship between teacher and student, and issues of trust, and experiences of



distrust. The West is different from the Tibetan culture. When this happens to you, you should not get in the mood of critically attacking others, but find the inner teacher within yourself. You will find guidance and solutions from that place this teaching praises.

### **[Questions and answers]**

**Question:** What are the true characteristic qualities of the teacher?

**Answer:** Of course there are many different explanations. I will keep it simple. The true qualities of the teacher will be a teacher who represents the teachings. According to the ways I have been teaching, you would find a teacher who is open enough — a teacher who has qualities of the first refuge; a teacher who is aware enough — having qualities of the second refuge; a teacher whose loving and caring warmth is enough — qualities of the third refuge. The unbounded space is the quality of the first refuge. Having that quality means that the teacher is not egoistic; the ego is at a minimum. So there is lot of space and loving kindness is present. The teacher has, as I mentioned earlier, a body of knowledge. The West is an intellectual society, and I include myself in that group as well. We feel that we need to learn intellectually. Even when we do not practice what we know already, we have a desire to learn more. To respect that desire to learn, it is important that you have a teacher who has that knowledge, too. When you don't have so much intellectual hunger, you need a more experiential teacher, or a teacher with both qualities.

**Question:** How does one deal with a situation when a student is feeling resistance to the teaching itself?

**Answer:** My feeling is that sometimes in the West teachers try to teach too many topics and particularly the teachings that come from Tibet. There are many cultural elements in these teachings that are very important for Tibetans and may not be necessary in the Western world. Sometimes when there are specific teachings that you are not able to relate to, just make sure that you are not relating to them just because you are lazy. You might say, “I cannot relate to exercising at the gym,” and so you are not exercising. But that is laziness and has nothing to do with the gym. You have to work with your laziness. But when it is not about laziness, but is more about the teaching

that you cannot relate to, it is possible that a particular teaching may not be for you. I think it is important that you respect yourself and give space to yourself. You don't have to relate equally to every teaching. It is okay not to feel the same level of deep connection to every teaching. You work with the teachings with which you feel connection. And the teachings you don't feel connection with, you give yourself space not to do them. But that does not mean that there is something wrong with that teaching. It is important that you don't conclude that teaching is not important or valuable. It is simply not for you; and you respect yourself and respect the teaching as it is, and even help preserve the teaching, because it can be very beneficial for others.

**Question:** If the teachers' behavior is unethical and something is not acceptable, how should one continue?

**Answer:** Each person needs to reflect deeply, and see exactly what the situation is. If there is a situation that is clearly not right, and it is collectively agreed upon and different perspectives are taken into account, then one does not need to follow that teacher; one does not need to obey, and can let go completely. But if the conflict is of an interpersonal nature, then maybe there is something to work on; if not, one can let it go.



Video on YouTube: [Lama Chenna \(Calling the Perfect Master\) - Khenpo Pema Choephel Rinpoche.](#)

**Question:** If we call the master from afar, does the master hear it?

**Answer:** Once I asked this question of Yongdzin Rinpoche. I told him that in my dreams I have long conversations with him, and I asked him “Are you really there?” He smiled. I don't know how to interpret that smile. Was he answering yes or no? But when a student asks me, no, I don't hear





them. But I don't think it is so important for me to hear when somebody is calling me. When I am having a good night's sleep and somebody is calling me from the other side of the world, I don't think it such a good idea that I would have to wake up! But when the connection is there, you don't need to call. Regarding deep meditation we say, "Don't listen to silence when you already hear it." So, when there is a connection, stop calling from far away, just go into the inner refuge.

**Question:** What is your expectation from the cyber student?

**Answer:** Usually student and teacher have close contact. Sometimes the time of the master and the student is not the same time. We can have wonderful transmissions and teachings from a master who lived five hundred years ago. We read and learn from them and deep inside we feel we follow that master, even though we never met him. It is similar with the cyber student. But to the cyber student I always say there is a great opportunity to relate is the cyber way, because we are bound by time and space. The internet era allows us to connect with each other, so I think it would be great to develop this relationship as we are doing today in this webcast. I know there are cyber groups among my students, and often when I go to different countries, one member comes up to me and brings to me this heartfelt and beautiful card with the name of each person who has been gathering and hearing these cyber teachings. I want to thank everyone for that.

**Question:** I want to be a good student, and what does it mean to obey and follow?

**Answer:** As far as I am concerned I personally don't tell people what to do or not to do. Sometimes you hear stories of strict masters giving a lot of rules, discipline, and guidance on what to do. I am not that person. Sometimes I would like to be a little more straightforward with certain things. Sometimes I would like to be able to say, without offending someone, that they seem to be egoistic. I don't remember ever saying that to anybody. But it would be good to have that freedom to say that, if I really truly feel to say that. When I say that, I have to have a student who is willing to take it, rather than saying: "I think you're egoistic too." Of course I have an ego, and maybe sometimes I am egoistic too, but in that relationship I wish they would not tell me that but listen and reflect, "Okay, you're showing me my ego. Thank you for

that, because I put you in the role of my teacher, and I am willing to work on it. It is not my job to show you your ego, because you have your teacher who can show you."

In my teachings I often talk about certain situations and issues in life, and people often tell me, "It seems that you have been talking all evening about me." Sometimes I might be strong in statements I make. If you take these statements as if "he is not talking to somebody, but he is talking to me, and I will take it to my heart," and if you listen in that way and obey that, I will consider that as obeying in the situation. Other than that I will not tell somebody what to do, like in the stories of Milarepa, where his master asked him to build something in the night and then he destroyed it during the day, giving him a hard time. In the Western world we would call that torture and abuse!



Marpa and Milarepa. You can read a summary of the story: [What was Marpa trying to teach Milarepa?](#)

**Question:** How does one approach the teacher or how does one achieve closer communication with the teacher?

**Answer:** Particularly the second question is very important. There are a lot of problems with that. I hear from students of other well known masters that they used to hang out with their master, and now they don't even get a five minute appointment with him. People get very disappointed about that, and sometimes people even get quite upset about it. So there are different degrees of problems with that situation. I think it is really im-



portant that this is the moment that you have to let go of that idea that you need to hang out with the master, that you need to have regular e-mails with the master, that you need to have regular phone calls with the master, or something like that. You absolutely have to let go of that idea.

From the age of ten until I was twenty-six I lived together with my master in the same house, ate three meals a day at the same place, and spent hours in classes and teachings with him. Even during the holidays we walked together. Things change, time changes, space changes. Now when I go to visit my teacher in Nepal or in France, I expect I will have very little time to talk with him. It is my ego who feels the need for time with my teacher. When I was in Nepal I went to visit him in the morning, and every five minutes somebody came in with a *khata* and offerings, asking for his blessings. At the time I thought "Can we just close the door for half an hour?" As I felt that I realized, that's my ego, my expectation. In my lifetime I probably had his time more than anybody, so I should be happy and satisfied now. If I didn't have another opportunity to see him even for a moment, I should be happy enough, because I feel such a strong connection with him. The connection is so strong that it fulfills my need for physical contact, a phone call or a conversation. It is not necessary, and practically speaking, it is not possible, and I have to respect that. When you begin to expect, you bring yourself and your master into a difficult position. The most important relationship between the master and the student is the teaching, which is always there, and the practice, which is always there. And it is especially here in new forms like this internet teaching. Right now many people are listening to me, and the connection is right here. As you hear me, as you see me, it should be the same as if I were sitting with you. There are no differences. I am talking to all of you, each one of you, individually. I am sharing whatever I feel is most important at this moment for my students' evolution of practice and spiritual development. I do my best to share that. If you would come as an individual to me to ask a question, I would have nothing more to share than what I share now. I always tell people, and I think the bottom line is this: closeness is right here. If for you an e-mail, a phone call, or physical presence is the only definition of closeness, then I think it is important to delete that, and to define the meaning of closeness in a different way. At



Video on YouTube: [Guru Yoga by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche](#).

this very moment we are close. When we did the practice of *Guru Yoga* together, you could not be closer to your inner teacher, your guide teacher. So cultivate that knowing and that quality of closeness.

**Question:** Can a student have more than one teacher from different spiritual lineages?

**Answer:** Yes, because the most important thing is about the student. It is you who are important, not the teacher. The teacher will always tell you what the general guidelines will be. I have students who follow different teachers, but they don't have a conflict because they embody both traditions. They practice different things in both traditions, and they don't mix the traditions. They understand their practices, the essential part of the teachings, meet in the same place. That core, that same meeting place, is what their practice is. For example, when you learn how to practice compassion you learn slightly different visualizations and different deities from one master to another. You learn slightly different instructions. With one master, you have three steps with one deity. With another master it might be two steps or no steps. But in the end, you know it is the practice of compassion. You can do three steps, you can do no steps, but you know each time you





are doing a practice of compassion. When you conclude like that, you have no conflict. The problem is that sometimes people say, "I am overwhelmed by all these differences. I am overwhelmed by too many practices. I am overwhelmed by following two teachers. I don't have the time and money to follow two teachers." Well, who told you to follow two teachers? Did somebody pressure you to follow? If that is really the story, then stop following two masters, and stop doing two practices. Focus, because focus is good. Do not get in the mood of shopping for teachers, shopping for dharma, shopping for practices. We do a lot of shopping in the West. Do you use everything you have purchased? No. When I am shopping I always think of getting the best. I look for what I will wear all the time. Many times when people buy something, they think something is nice when they first see it, and then they don't even wear it. So get the best, and wear it all the time. Find the right person and follow him or her all the time. That is my advice.

**Question:** When you are already relating to the second teacher, how do you follow the previous *samayas*?

**Answer:** That depends on your previous *samayas*. If the previous *samaya* is not to follow other teachers, then I think the previous *samaya* and the previous teacher will have a problem. I would never tell a student not to follow anybody else, but I would tell them to connect deeply with their own practice and their own teacher. Then you will feel full. Wandering around searching for too

many things is a sign of dissatisfaction, a sign of not enough connection, a sign of not knowing your connection, a sign of not enough depth in the connection. You do not fall in love with everyone you meet. If you do, you don't have a real connection with one person.

What if you have a previous *samaya* to a practice, and you don't have enough time to do both practices?

In that situation, whether you practice the current one or the past one, deep inside your heart you know the core principle of both practices is the same. If you know what that one thing is, then you don't break the *samaya* by simply doing another prayer or technique. If you are not doing any practice, or if you are disconnected from your practice, if you are completely against those precepts, then you are probably breaking the *samaya*. But practicing a different form with the

same essence is not breaking the *samaya*.

**Question:** What is the next good step to follow, if I want to follow these teachings?

**Answer:** If you are referring to these teachings as the Bon teachings, and are following me as your teacher, your question is the first step. When you keep that question in your mind, and the question is strong, alive, and activated within you all the time, I am sure your inner intelligence will give you the answer of what to do next and how to follow and listen to that inner voice.

**Transcription by Ton Bisscheroux**  
**Edited by Marcy Vaughn**



Refugetree with Bon Lineage Teachers and the field of deities for the accumulation of merit.



# NEW 3 DOORS ACADEMIES BEGIN IN 2015



## The 3 Doors

The 3 Doors, [www.the3doors.org](http://www.the3doors.org), inspired by the vision of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, is a contemplative educational organization whose purpose is to offer simple and powerful meditation practices in contexts that support self-reflection, transformation, and the desire to benefit others. Headquartered in the United States, The 3 Doors is an international organization that currently offers classes and retreats throughout the United States, Latin America, and Europe.

## Transforming Lives Through Meditation

### New 3 Doors Academies Begin in 2015

Applications are now being accepted for the next U.S. and European Academies at:  
[www.the3doors.org](http://www.the3doors.org).

The U.S. Academy, beginning April 2015, meets at the Serenity Ridge Retreat Center in Shipman, Va., and is taught by [Marcy Vaughn](#) and [Gabriel Rocco](#).

The European Academy begins in June 2015 (location to be determined) and is taught by [John](#)



[Jackson](#) and [Raven Lee](#).

U.S Academy email to  
[us-3coordinator@the3doors.org](mailto:us-3coordinator@the3doors.org).

European Academy email to  
[eu-2coordinator@the3doors.org](mailto:eu-2coordinator@the3doors.org).

## The 3 Doors Global

The 3 Doors Global keeps us connected to what is happening. Our newsletter is the voice for teachers, current trainees, and alumni. It is also where prospective trainees and all our friends can find out about upcoming Academies and other workshops and classes taught worldwide. Watch for classes and activities in your area!

## SUBSCRIBE

## The 3 Doors Introductory Presentations and Workshops

In our introductory presentations and workshops, we invite participants to engage in practices of meditation and reflection so that they may look within and discover the jewel that is hidden in ordinary experience. We call this jewel 'the inner refuge.' We connect to our inner refuge by bringing attention to the clear and open space of being which enables the warmth of transformation to arise and benefit ourselves and others. Join us for any of our weekend seminars presenting simple and profound meditation practices of body, speech, and mind as a means to connect with the power of being fully present and alive to the infinite possibilities in each moment of life. These workshops are appropriate for beginning and advanced meditation practitioners alike.







3PA Council Members and Advisors.

*The Healing Power of the Inner Refuge* explores how bringing attention to the stillness of the body, the silence within inner speech, and the spaciousness of mind provide access to the free and open space of being and the positive healing qualities that emerge.

*Awakening the Sacred Body* introduces the practices of the nine breathings and five *Tsa Lung* exercises as supports to clear obstacles and enter the healing space of the inner refuge.

*Awakening Authentic Presence* introduces the practice of the *Five Warrior Syllables*, a practice of sound and silence to clear obstacles and awaken positive qualities that transform one's life.

*Awakening the Luminous Mind* introduces the practice of the *Fivefold Teaching of Dawa Gyaltsen*, offering clear guidance on transforming confusion into wisdom.

### **Schedule of Introductory Presentations and Workshops**

Please [subscribe](#) to The 3 Doors newsletter to learn about more events as they are scheduled around the world.

#### *An Introduction to The 3 Doors: Transforming Lives through Meditation*

An evening introductory presentation and guided meditation with Raven Lee in Hilversum, Netherlands on November 5, 2014. Contact: Tonny Maas, [3deurenederland@gmail.com](mailto:3deurenederland@gmail.com).

*Awakening the Sacred Body* with John Jackson in Berlin, Germany during November 7-9, 2014. Contact: Anja Benesch, [anja@the3doors.org](mailto:anja@the3doors.org).

#### *An Introduction to The 3 Doors: Transforming Lives through Meditation*

An evening introductory presentation and guided meditation with John Jackson and Raven Lee in Berlin, Germany on November 12, 2014.

Contact: Karolina Seltenheim, [info.europe@the3doors.org](mailto:info.europe@the3doors.org).

*Awakening the Sacred Body* with John Jackson in Frankfurt, Germany on November 15-16, 2014. Contact: George Ajhar, [george@trust-the-void.de](mailto:george@trust-the-void.de).

### **The 3 Doors Practitioners Association: Bringing Open Hearts into the World**

Once you complete your Academy training, you are invited to join The 3 Doors Practitioners Association (3PA) and its worldwide network of teachers, mentors, and graduates. We are here to support your continued personal growth, creative expression, and service to others.

#### **Who We Are**

The 3 Doors Practitioners Association is an international community of The 3 Doors Academy graduates and teachers. We support our members to bring the life-enriching meditation practices of The 3 Doors into our own lives and into the world.

#### **Our Mission**

The 3 Doors Practitioners Association provides multiple avenues for members to connect with one another and to access continuing education for personal growth and service to others. From our collective energy come ideas, creative expressions, service projects, and leaders vibrant with Tenzin Wangyal's vision of social transformation.

3PA will have its own page on The 3 Doors website soon. In the interim, please contact one of these 3PA Council members for information:

Bea Ledyard (US), email: [bealedyard@gmail.com](mailto:bealedyard@gmail.com)

George Ajhar (Europe), email: [george@trust-the-void.de](mailto:george@trust-the-void.de)

Katrin Schikora (Latin America), email: [katrin.schikora@gmail.com](mailto:katrin.schikora@gmail.com).



# TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE DISCUSSES LISHU INSTITUTE

At a recent retreat this year in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, Floor van Orsouw asked Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche for an update on Lishu Institute.

Lishu Institute is preparing to host students in the near future and will offer a three year residential training program made up of two and a half month blocks. It can be taken at Lishu's campus in India, remotely on-line, or in a combination of both. The curriculum will be the *Nine Ways of Bon*, the *Mother Tantra* and the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud*.

**Rinpoche, how did the idea to create Lishu Institute arise?**

During the time I have been teaching in the last twenty years in the West I have felt a very strong need to have a residential training program. Teaching a weekend here, a weekend there, the longest being three weeks in the summer does not provide enough. Also as far of preserving the knowledge of Yungdrung Bon in the West is concerned, more learning and practice is needed, both in a more dedicated way. That was the primary reason for building Lishu.

The reason why it is in India is because we already have a number of facilities in the West. These facilities become very expensive for students to attend. To run the logistics in that way is very costly for students. So we thought India is the best. There are more teachers and energetically India is where a lot of these teachings originated. So we thought it was very good to put effort here, and we found the land in Dehra Dun.

**Could you tell us a little about Nyachen Lishu Taring after whom you named Lishu Institute?**

Lishu Taring is one of the very important scholars from around the seventh and eight century in Tibet. Lishu Taring also has a connection to both the Buddhists and Bonpo's. He is a very important scholar and somehow one day the name just popped up and that's how I called it.

**Why did you choose these three texts for the curriculum?**

The reason why we chose the Nine Ways of Bon for the first year is that it provides an overview of



Siddha Nyachen Lishu Taring.

each vehicle and becomes like an introduction to Bon. We thought it's very important.

Then the last two years we will focus on Tantra and Dzogchen. When looking at all the different texts, teaching cycles on tantra, *Ma Gyud* seems most appropriate because all the teachings are contained in it. Many of these I have been teaching in the West. And also it's the principal practice of my main teacher Yongdzin Rinpoche.

As far as the Dzogchen is concerned *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* is probably the most important Dzogchen text in the Bon tradition. Lopon Sangye Tenzin taught us that. I have been teaching pieces here and there for many years.

Probably we will not be able to finish everything in three years, but we will do as much as possible to finish in these three years. And we hope eventually we will be able to translate all these three books.

**What qualities would be needed to become a student at Lishu Institute?**

The most important quality is the commitment. So that people have full commitment. That they are willing to stay there, that they are willing to learn. There might be things to memorize. There might be a lot of things to learn and to practice. So the most important quality is the commitment.

**Why did you choose to offer both possibilities of the residential and the online program?**

First we did not choose the 'both' approach. We choose only the residential. And as time passed I





realized more that nowadays so many things are happening online.

Online is also a way to go because people have a job, family, and other commitments. It will be very difficult to take time off like that. It makes total sense to have an online program. But also people who have time to go and are doing the residential program, because the residential is much more preferable, can do both online and residential.



And so we are going to do over a hundred hours of recording for the program in June and July. And we are lining up many hundred more hours of recording.

So these recordings we perform permanently for training purposes. We want many people to go to this training, particularly all the people who are instructors of Ligmincha: they are required to go to these online trainings.

**How will the Lishu training support the student in understanding and experience of these teachings in one's individual path?**

You have a place that is environmentally very friendly. Books and supports are there. A number of teachers are there. So you have every day classes, every day access to the teacher. So I think it will be a great support for people who really want to learn. And it would also not be that many people. One main thing that we changed: instead of three years continuously, some people can do six months at a time. If one person chooses to do *Ma Gyud* six months they can do *Ma Gyud* six months. But of course somebody who wants to complete: the completion would be to do all three years.

**How do you see the graduates of Lishu Institute being able to benefit the local sanghas, Ligmincha and Bon community as a whole?**

Just finishing does not mean necessarily they will become teachers. There are quite a number of retreat requirements, practices and retreats. And also attitude, that is very important, because teachers need to have the right attitude. Not like universities where you finish the degree. You do a PHD, you publish a paper and after you published a paper you are more arrogant than ever before,

but you can still be a professor. We don't want people who are finishing like that. We want to test.

There will be a group of lamas, the main lamas who evaluate the personality of that individual, if that person can be a teacher or not. We have a clear, systematic way of doing it.

When they have finished then they would have learned more traditional ways, as much as possible. So they can study the texts, rather than a weekend here, a weekend there with me. That's not good enough. I value them much more than a weekend here, weekend there. So they would have much more to offer for sure for the sangha.

**How can sangha members who don't study themselves at Lishu support and be involved?**

That's a very good question. I think it's very important. I think maybe every country, sangha, among themselves, finds a person, like Erik for example in Holland to go to Lishu. So the Dutch sangha financially supports Erik to go. I am not saying he will go or not, but I am saying just an example. If people support that, I think in a way that community cares about proper training of somebody. And in this sense: "We want to support you to go and then you come back and tell us what happened". It would be great that each country, each community supports. Especially if some one is in financial need. We strongly recommend and encourage that.

**You can watch the video of this interview at:**  
[vimeo.com/Lishu](https://vimeo.com/Lishu).

**Interview by Floor van Orsouw**

Photos by Geertje Bloemers and from the Lishu website



# WILL RINPOCHE COME TO SLOVAKIA?

**We introduce the smallest, and one of the youngest Ligmincha sanghas, which is located in Slovakia. Ton Bisscheroux interviewed the three members of the sangha: Mirka Janošková, Daniel Konečný and Svetozár Košícký. Persons with different characters: earth, fire and silence.**

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

**Mirka:** The first time I met Rinpoche was during the *First International Lishu Retreat* in Dehradun, India, in 2009. My best friend Lidia Castellano, suggested to read books of Rinpoche, and later she asked me to come and meet him. Meeting Rinpoche the first time was very special to me, and I felt a strong connection with him. During that retreat I also had a chance to meet His Holiness in Menri Monastery and people from all over the world. When I read Rinpoche's books I had that true recognition of my lama, and when I saw him, I knew directly, and felt 'this is it.' Even before seeing him I felt a strong inner connection. In Lishu I also had the first connection with the deities through the teaching of Sherab Chamma, which was wonderful.

**Daniel:** Mirka brought me in 2013 in contact with Ligmincha and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. When I

wanted to invite Geshe Gyatso Choekhortshang I asked Mirka to help me organize a *Thrul Khor* and *Tumo* teaching in 2013. That year Mirka invited me to go with her to the teachings of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in Vienna, Austria, for the seminar of *Awakening the Luminous Mind*. In 2013 we also went to Poland for the inauguration of the *Gompa* in Wilga with his Eminence Lopon Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche.

When I was about fifteen years old I first encountered Buddhism. From that time on I read books, but did not practice much. In 2012 during the *Losar* celebration in Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia, there was Khenpo Tsultrim Tenzin Rinpoche from Triten Norbutse Monastery. When I listened to him I thought, 'this is the best thing I have ever heard.' Till that moment there was always something interesting, but then there was everything, and I felt 'this is it.' After this public talk, I asked people about the teachings and I met Sveto, who did the translation. I asked him how to connect to Khenpo and Dzogchen. He said there will be a retreat with Khenpo. Because Khenpo was teachings parts of the *Zang Zhung Nyen Gyud* and giving transmissions, Sveto felt that he had to ask him if I could participate. Khenpo said: "You can come tomorrow when the teachings start." After one week of intense teachings I was sure that Dzog-



Geshe Gyatso taught *Trul Khor* in Bratislava in 2013.





chen is the best of the best. Then I began to read more books and began to practice.

**Sveto:** Many years ago I read the *Dream Yoga* book of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. Reading Rinpoche's book I was very happy, because for me that felt really complete and beautiful, and Rinpoche's way of explaining is amazing because of his simplicity and going direct to the core. But I had no possibility to connect to him physically, and then I met Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and started to follow him. But this year I met Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in Vienna. First I did not want to go, because of financial issues, but Mirka and Daniel helped me.

I am also a student of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, and through him I connected to Dzogchen teachings. He is one of my root Lamas. I met him in France about two years after reading his book. I received transmission in 2006 and met him in 2008.

In 2009 I went to Nepal to Triten Norbutse Monastery in Kathmandu where I had a opportunity to receive the teaching from the *A-tri* cycle from a great teacher Khenpo Tsultrim Tenzin Rinpoche. I had spend six months there. Before that, I practiced Zen Buddhism, so from then on I have practiced both the Buddhist as well as the Bon tradition. In 2012 Khenpo Tsultrim Tenzin Rinpoche kindly accepted my invitation, came to Bratislava and granted the teaching to eleven people and I did the translations.

#### **Can you tell how it all started?**

**Daniel:** When I talked to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in Vienna in 2013, I told him that we wanted to start a group in Bratislava, because we want to spread the Bon teachings in Slovakia. Rinpoche asked with how many people we are, and I answered that we are three. Maybe he expected I would say ten or twenty people, and after thinking a few moments he replied: "The amount of people is not important, and I like your fire, and I will help you to create it. Just do it." So we started to create Ligmincha Slovenská republika. This year, in March, we organized our first activity under the name of Ligmincha with Ryszard Adamiak from Poland. We met him in the

retreat center in Wilga in Poland in 2013. He taught *Tsa Lung* and *Sound Healing*. Before, it was Bon teachings and Bon teachers we presented to the public. In 2012 we invited Khenpo Tsultrim Tenzin Rinpoche, in 2013 we invited Geshe Gyatso Choekhortshang. About fifteen people came, and we want to organize every year a teaching.

#### **With which countries in Europe do you have contacts?**

**Mirka:** Attending the European 3 Doors Academy I got to know many people from Europe with who I am in very close relationship now. And we have good connection with Czech Republic, Poland and Austria. They are all very nice people, it always feels great being around them. We feel great support from them, they had already helped us in many ways and I feel there is a lot we can learn from them too.

#### **Is there a chance that Rinpoche will come to Slovakia sometime in the future?**

**Mirka:** I know that Rinpoche is very busy and we are very little for the moment, but yes, it is our greatest wish that one day Rinpoche will come to Bratislava. As the Austrian sangha is very close to us, it takes just one hour from Bratislava to Vienna, in the near future we would like to combine others Lamas teachings in Vienna with Bratislava. The public talk could be organized here and the teachings in Vienna, or the other way around.

**Daniel:** I always remember that at Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's first public teaching there were only two persons. As Rinpoche says, "The amount of people is not important, but the internal quality and enthusiastic case."

#### **Can you tell how you are organized?**

**Daniel:** I have the ideas, Mirka helps me to stabilize and finish it, and with Sveto it feels that we are a Sangha. We use the live webcast as much as possible to interest people here in the teachings. Mirka invites people for the webcasts, and most of the time we come together in her apartment to look to the webcast and to practice together. Last time six people came. At that time there was also a *Losar* celebration in Bratislava, so not many people came. Every time when we organize an event we send the money we collected to a Mon-



astery. Sveto is the responsible for the content, and I do the 'dharma marketing.' We promote all the events on the Ligmincha and my personal Facebook page. And every time I meet with friends I talk about my dharma activities, about Buddhism, Bon culture, Dzogchen teaching and Ligmincha of course, and tell them they are welcome. I also tell them if money is a problem, we will find a solution. Teachings, actually all Dharma activities should be more important than money!



**Can you tell more about the teachings by Ryszard Adamiak?**

**Sveto:** It was great. Ryszard is a wise man who explains very well, is very friendly, and everybody was happy.

**Do the participants come back, or do they say 'it was nice, but I continue my old life'?**

**Mirka:** There are three more people who come sometimes for the Sunday practice. They seem to enjoy the *Tsa Lung* and *The Five Warrior Syllables*. But from the most of people we don't hear or see much. We hope, in the future more people will come. Even when there is not much response, we will continue. We try to meet every Sunday to practice together.

**Daniel:** When I talk about the teachings, I say there is a source with information. Here you can find it. I can't explain it, but here is a book, you can watch videos and live webcasts or meet our great Masters personally.

**Mirka, you participated in The 3 Doors Academy in Europe. Can you tell how you experienced the training?**

**Mirka:** Yes, I would like to share few words, as it has changed my life in an incredible positive and wonderful way. It almost feels like I am living the

life of somebody else now. I just do not see the same person anymore. With such a great guidance of our Mentors and the tools (the practices) we were given by Rinpoche, there is no obstacle, no pain that cannot be reduced and finally dissolved. I still cannot believe, that one is able to change so much in such a short period of time. The most wonderful thing or realization is, that behind all that pain or suffering I always encountered enormous joy, the joy of life. Learning to

host the pain I got closer to my true essence, my true being and by strengthening the connection I found a deep peace within myself and great confidence in who I am. And the most wonderful thing about this training is, that it is not just about myself, but about others too. I have discovered new qualities, new potential in me, and this recognition is slowly manifesting out in benefiting others. Attending The 3 Doors Academy training was the most precious gift I could give to myself, my

family and all I am in touch with. I would like to express my deep Gratitude to Rinpoche, to our Mentors John Jackson and Raven Lee and of course to Kallon Basquin, Director of Operation of The 3 Doors Academy.

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

**Mirka:** We look forward to work together and deepen our connection with other sanghas in Europe and in the rest of the world.

**Daniel:** There are three jewels, the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha, and I want to say about the Sangha that does not have to be twenty, fifty or one-hundred people, but connecting with other sangha members is a great help for me when I have doubts. I have many friends who do not follow the Dharma, but with them I can talk about many things, but not in a Dharma view. It is important for me to have Dharma friends. And I am also very excited about the new technologies, which we are using also for this interview, the conference Skype call. It is a wonderful way to connect, and it is very helpful. All of us are sitting at our homes and talking about Dharma.

**Interview by Ton Bisscheroux**

Photos: courtesy of Ligmincha Slovenská Republika





# WHAT'S HAPPENED IN EUROPE

It is always exciting to read what happens in our sangha in Europe. Tenzin Wanyal Rinpoche visited the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Switzerland, and gave internet teachings. Other lamas and teachers were invited. Here is an impression of these events.

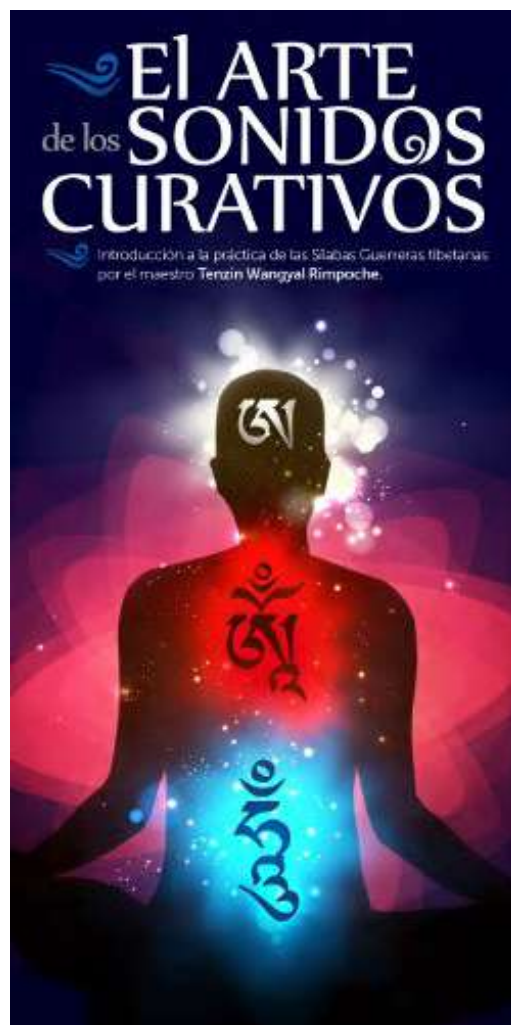
**May 9 – 11: Tibetan Sound Healing seminar with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in Málaga, Spain.**

It started on Friday evening with a presentation of Rinpoche's last book published in Spain, *Awakening the Luminous Mind*. This was the first online broadcast from Spain. The teachings on Saturday and Sunday were simultaneously translated to Spanish and four more languages.

The teachings were held in a place next to the beach. The proximity of the sea allowed us to practice *Tsa Lung* and the *Nine Breathings of Purification* in the seashore guided by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

Rinpoche's teachings touched the heart of the participants and became a seed of healing and reconciliation.

For the Spanish sangha, and particularly for the new Málaga sangha, it was an honour and a great experience that helped us to grow and heal ourselves with the service to others, joined and with our heart put in the preparation and during the workshop. We feel very thankful for the generosity, warmth and wisdom of Rinpoche.



**May 22 – 25:  
A-tri seminar part 2  
in Amsterdam, the  
Netherlands, with  
Tenzin Wangyal  
Rinpoche.**



On Thursday evening was the presentation of the translation of Rinpoche's book *Awakening the Luminous Mind*.

During the weekend the main practice was *zhiné*. The seminar was attended by about one-hundred-fifty people from several countries.



**May 29 – June 1:  
Soul Retrieval semi-  
nar with Tenzin  
Wangyal Rinpoche  
in Gruyères, Swit-  
zerland.**

Rinpoche gave the lucky people gathered in Gruyères the wonderful gift of an evening public talk on the theme *Open heart*, followed by a three day *Soul Retrieval* teaching. The first event gathered around eighty people at the Tibet Museum in Gruyères, Switzerland, and was meant more specifically for new-comers. The latter gathered well over a hundred people in a very open, particularly warmhearted atmosphere. The participants were very enthusiastic and deeply moved by the teaching. So Rinpoche left us all with a rainbow of tears and smiles, and the promise to come back next year, which will also be the fifth time he grants us with his presence in the area of Bulle.



**May 16 – 18:  
*Awakening the Luminous Mind* seminar with  
Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in Helsinki,  
Finland.**

Around one-hundred-twenty people participated during this wonderful weekend teachings.



**July 15 – 20:  
*The Twenty-One Nails, Part 2* with Tenzin  
Wangyal Rinpoche in  
Wilga, Poland.**

Around one-hundred-eighty people came to receive second part of Dzogchen teachings of *The Twenty-One Nails*. We received beautiful teachings that everything is perfect in its nature. Everything is *Kuntu Zangpo* (all good).







#### Activities in Poland:

- In February Geshe Nyima Woser visited Cracow and taught *Healing Water of Sipe Gyalmo*.

- Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche spent around two months (April-June) in Poland. His Polish organization 'Śardza Ling' organized nine retreats, including *Trul Khor*, *Powa* and *Dzogchen* teachings.



Geshe Chaphur Rinpoche in Wilga, Poland.

- In June Geshe Chaphur Rinpoche taught *Takla Mebar* in Chamma Ling in Wilga.

- In August Alejandro Chaoul came to Poland for an evening talk in Warsaw about *Tibetan Yoga Trul Khor*. Next year he will teach five days *Trul Khor* in Chamma Ling (probably June or July 2015).



#### Activities in the Netherlands:

- Alejandro Chaoul was a special guest during the *A-tri* seminar in Amsterdam, and taught *Tsa Lung* and *Atri Trul Khor* the three days immediately after the seminar. Also people who did not attend the seminar registered.

- In June Ponlop Tsangpa Tendzin, the head of the study- and education program of the Triten Norbutse monastery, gave teachings on *The Four Wheels of Bon* in Midlaren, the Netherlands. He taught from the same text a week before in Paris, France. The weekend was organised by the Bon-Dzogchen meditation group from Groningen. Some twenty attendees were present: Ligmincha students and participants of Bon-Dzogchen meditation group that started last year in Groningen. Also several people from the direct environment were introduced for the first time with the Bon tradition. Although Ponlop was teaching in the West for the first time, he explained the traditional text direct and inspirational for Westerners. Ponlop will probably come back next year for an intensive retreat.





On invitation of Jitka Polanská the resident lama of Shenten Dargye Ling, Sangye Monlam, came July 11 – 13 to Prague, Czech Republic, and taught a group of about twenty-five people on the topics *Guru Yoga*, *Refuge* and *Boddhicitta*. The Ligmincha meditation group supported the event with their help and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche sent his best wishes and affection. Afterwards, many of the participants of the retreat – who were in part bonpo and in part new to bon – expressed their appreciation of the thoughtful and inspiring way of teaching and equanimous conduct of lama Sangye who himself said he had had a very good time in Prague. Next teachings are being planned. People from other countries are welcome.



Alejandro Chaoul suggested to Anna-Kaisa Hirvanen to give *Tsa Lung Trul Khor* courses in Finland, including *Tsa Lung*, *The Nine Breathings of Purification*, *Jam Lung*, *Zhan Zhung Nyen Gyud Trul Khor* and *Ngöndro*

*movement from A-tri*. The purpose is to introduce *Tsa Lung Trul Khor* practice to everyone who is interested and to give preparatory teachings, so people can also continue to study with Alejandro Chaoul in Poland next summer, where Alejandro will be starting a *Tsa Lung Trul Khor* training.

*Tsa Lung Trul Khor* part 1 in was given in Helsinki March 14 – 16 with twenty-four participants, in Jyväskylä May 2 – 4 with seventeen participants and parts 1 and 2 in Kemiö July 9 – 13 with eighteen participants.

The next *Tsa Lung Trul Khor* in Helsinki will be October 24 – 26, 2014.





**Free Live Webcast**  
 Live teachings from the Tibetan Bon Buddhist tradition

**Shifting Your Pain Identity**  
 with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

**June 8, 2014**  
 19.00–21.30 h. (C.E.T.)

 *Translations in multiple languages available*  
[www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)



You can watch the recording here:  
[Shifting Your Pain Identity](#)

**Free Live Webcast**  
 Live teachings from the Tibetan Bon Buddhist tradition

**Breaking the Cycle of Family Pain**  
 with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

**June 15, 2014**  
 19.00–21.30 h. (C.E.T.)

 *Translations in multiple languages available*  
[www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)



You can watch the recording here:  
[Breaking the Cycle of Family Pain](#)

**Free Live Webcast**  
 Live teachings from the Tibetan Bon Buddhist tradition

**The 21 Nails: Guided Dzogchen Meditation**  
 with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

**Part 1 June 29, 2014 21.00 – 22.30 h C.E.T.**  
**Part 2 July 6, 2014 21.00 – 22.30 h C.E.T.**

 *Translations in multiple languages available*  
[www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)



You can watch the recordings here:  
[Guided Dzogchen Meditation, The Twenty-One Nails, Part 1](#)  
[Guided Dzogchen Meditation, The Twenty-One Nails, Part 2](#)



# FINDING A HOME: LIGMINCHA RETREAT CENTER IN EUROPE

**The Founders' Circle wants to update you on the progress of the Ligmincha Retreat Center in Europe.**

We are happy to welcome you to our wonderful project of finding a home for the European sangha of our teacher Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. We feel that with this project, we support the further development of the European sangha and our teacher's vision to preserve the Bon tradition and its wisdom in the world, as the indigenous source of Tibetan culture.

## Vision

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche:

"Last 20 years I've been coming to Europe. Many people in my teachings are much more stable now, much more grounded and now I feel all these people need a home for practice further and deepen their experiences."

All these practitioners need a center, where the teachings can happen, and where we also have the opportunity to invite other Bon lamas as well as lamas of other traditions to teach, connect and to stay.

This center is to be located in the center of Europe on a location, which is easy accessible for everybody.



Photo by Rogelio Jaramillo Flores.

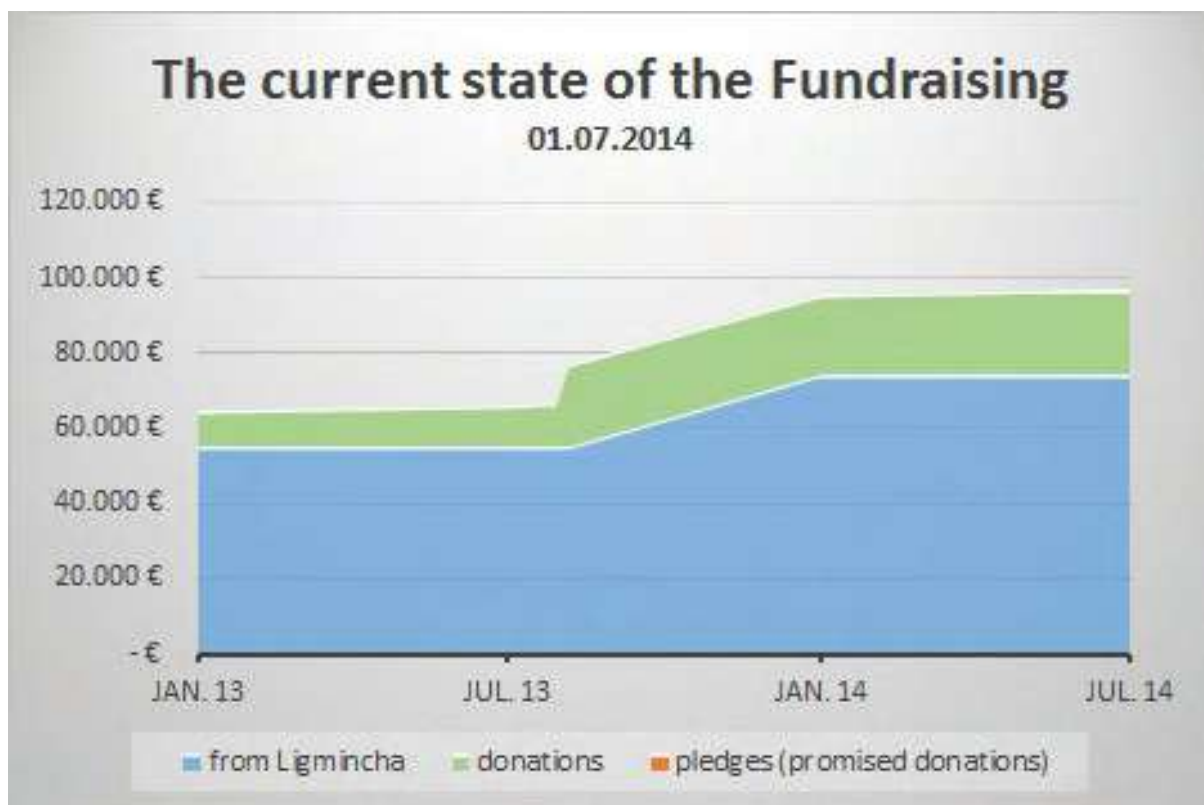
## Support

Finding and sustaining a European Retreat Center, which offers a broad scope of opportunities to enhance the spiritual development of our sangha members, need a lot of potential and energy of the European sangha. A retreat center can only be created and maintained by practitioners, who like giving something such as their skills, energy, and support. And vice versa, the center will offer a big support for practitioners in their study, practice and their everyday life.

Do you have any ideas or suggestions? Please contact us by email or our [contact form](#) on the website.







## Finance

In May 2014 Rinpoche and the Founders' Circle agreed after solid research on setting up an initial goal of raising € 1.000.000,-. We are convinced that having reached this initial goal will give us a solid basis for our next steps in this project.

If you feel like financially supporting our vision of a Ligmincha Retreat Center in Europe please send your donation to Ligmincha Deutschland e.V., which is hosting the funds until we have found an entity.

Ligmincha Deutschland e.V. is a nonprofit organization. Donations are tax deductible, since they are exclusively and directly for non-profit and charitable purposes in terms of §§ 51ff. AO under German law.

## How to donate

### Donation by bank transfer – single

Ligmincha Deutschland e.V.  
 Frankfurter Sparkasse  
 BLZ: 50050201  
 Kto. Nr.: 200269283  
 IBAN: DE09500502010200269283  
 BIC/SWIFT: HELADEF1822

Address your donation with purpose:  
 “Ligmincha Retreat Center in Europe.”

### Donation by bank transfer by standing order – recurring (monthly, quarterly)

Please use the same information as mentioned above for the single donation by bank transfer.

### Donation by Paypal (single or recurring)

After clicking on the icon you see “Ligmincha Deutschland e.V.” and the purpose of your donation “Ligmincha Retreat Center in Europe.”

You can choose between one-time or monthly payment.



*For donations of 200 euros or more we'll send you a donation receipt. Please send us your address. For donations, the payment receipt or bank statement applies up to 200 euros as tax-deductible for submission.*



Progress

For actual progress see: [www.home.ligmincha.eu](http://www.home.ligmincha.eu).



Founders' Circle

We are a network of national Ligmincha sanghas in Europe. Each country is invited to send a representative to our Founders' Circle. So far, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary and The Netherlands accepted the invitation of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. We meet on a regular basis to exchange and support each other regarding the development of the project.

The representatives in the Founders' Circle are:

|                 |                       |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Austria         | Heide Mitsche         |
| Belgium         | Nicolas Gounaropoulos |
| Denmark         | Birgit Bastholm       |
| Finland         | Anna-Kaisa Hirvannen  |
| Germany         | Oliver Wirtz          |
| Hungary         | Katalin Jakab         |
| the Netherlands | Anneke Dekkers        |

Contact

You can contact us directly via email [support@home.ligmincha.eu](mailto:support@home.ligmincha.eu) or visiting our website [www.home.ligmincha.eu](http://www.home.ligmincha.eu) and use the contactform.

Find us on Facebook



and on the website:





# NEWS FROM THE LIGMINCHA INTERNATIONAL BOARD

**Ligmincha now has a new International Board of Directors, an important step in Ligmincha's movement toward becoming a truly international organization. New Board Chair Rob Patzig shares with us how the new board can support Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Tibetan Bon Buddhism worldwide.**

During the first week of summer retreat 2014, the new Board of Directors of Ligmincha International met at Serenity Ridge Retreat Center in the U.S., the headquarters of Ligmincha International. Accepting Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's invitation to join him on this new international board are Anneke Dekkers from the Netherlands, Nathalie Duchanois from France, Carlos Madero from Mexico, Rob Patzig from the U.S., Justyna Przondo from Poland, Pam Rodeheaver from the U.S. and Oliver Wirtz from Germany. Gabriel Rocco, who has served on the board of Ligmincha Institute for eighteen years, will continue to serve on the new International Board. While Nathalie and Oliver had to participate via Skype, all other members were able to come to retreat and participate in person. H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, who has been on the board of Ligmincha Institute since Ligmincha was founded, is now an emeritus member of the Ligmincha International Board of Directors.

The formation of the new board is only one of many steps in the process of Ligmincha's becoming a truly international organization. Over the last three years, a group of volunteers have worked with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche to write new bylaws. The bylaws describe the purpose of Ligmincha and, broadly, the organizational framework for accomplishing our mission. The mission is threefold: to preserve the traditions and teachings of Tonpa Shenrap and the lineage of Bon; to support the work of our Spiritual Director, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, in all ways; and to provide support and resources for practitioners and students of Tibetan Bon Buddhism.

Organizationally, Rinpoche is the center of an expanding mandala of (currently) 40 practice centers and communities around the world. The International Board's mission is to understand Rinpoche's vision for the community, as well as the needs of practitioners and centers, wherever they may be located, and to create a plan to ensure that the vision

can manifest and practitioners be supported.

There is far more work to be done than the board can accomplish on its own, and so two councils will provide support. One is the Mandala Council: a group of leaders (chosen by Rinpoche) from many different sanghas who will come together to share the successes, challenges, knowledge and needs of the communities they represent. The goal of the Mandala Council is to provide greater independence and more opportunities for growth for each center by supporting one another. Just as we come together to practice in part because we can find more support for our own progress by asking questions, sharing our experiences and supporting one another, so too can each center support and nurture the others. More details will be shared soon when this group is formally created.

The second council is the Ligmincha International Council. This will consist of sangha members selected by Rinpoche, nominated by the board or by regional sanghas because of their expertise and experience in particular areas. The purpose is to provide the skills, time and resources to ensure that Ligmincha International can meet its mission. The activities of this council will change over time based on the needs of the organization as a whole, but it will include activities as diverse as developing practice and educational materials, monitoring the financial status of Ligmincha, marketing and social media development, fundraising, etc.

Coming together to work and support Bon, our Spiritual Director and our international community of practitioners is an evolving process. As we continue to implement and refine this new structure, it is important that we hear from many different voices and consider different perspectives within our community. I look forward to working with each of you, to listening to your ideas, needs, concerns and advice, as we work to build an enduring home for Bon in the Western world under the guidance and direction of Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

Yours in Bon,  
**Rob Patzig, Chair**  
**Ligmincha International Board of Directors**



# PRAYERSONG



Only on a Heavenly day.  
Creatures long so much to play.  
Different in an expressive way.  
Oneness, in the place they stay.

Being on these Heavenly days.  
Warmly in a sunny place.  
Meet each other face to face.  
Easily to feel the grace.

During all those Heavenly days.  
Pain comes easy at the surface.  
Holding in these golden rays.  
It's melting deep in the traces.

*Tonny Maas*





# THE SIX REALMS OF CYCLIC EXISTENCE

**During the Summer Retreat 2014 in Buchenau, Germany, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche teaches the Six Lokas. We reprint the pages 34 to 40 from his book *The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep*.**

“According to the teachings, there are six realms (*loka*\*) of existence\* in which all deluded beings exist. These are the realms of gods, demigods, humans, animals, hungry ghosts, and hell-beings. Fundamentally, the realms are six dimensions of consciousness, six dimensions of possible experience. They manifest in us individually as the six negative emotions: anger, greed, ignorance, jealousy, pride, and pleasurable distraction. (Pleasurable distraction is the emotional state when the other five emotions are present in equal measure, harmoniously balanced.) The six realms are not, however, only categories of emotional experience but are also actual realms into which beings are born, just as we were born into the human realm or a lion is born into the animal realm.

Each realm can be thought of as a continuum of experience. The hell realm, for instance, ranges from the internal emotional experience of anger and hatred, to behaviors rooted in anger such as fighting and wars, to institutions, prejudices, and biases built on hatred such as armies, racial hatred, and intolerance, to the actual realm in which beings exist. A name for the entirety of this dimension of experience, from individual emotion to actual realm, is ‘hell.’

Like dreams, the realms are manifestations of karmic traces, but in the instance of the realms, the karmic traces are collective rather than individual. Because the karma is collective, the beings in each realm share similar experiences in a consensual world, as we share similar experiences with other humans. Collective karma creates bodies and

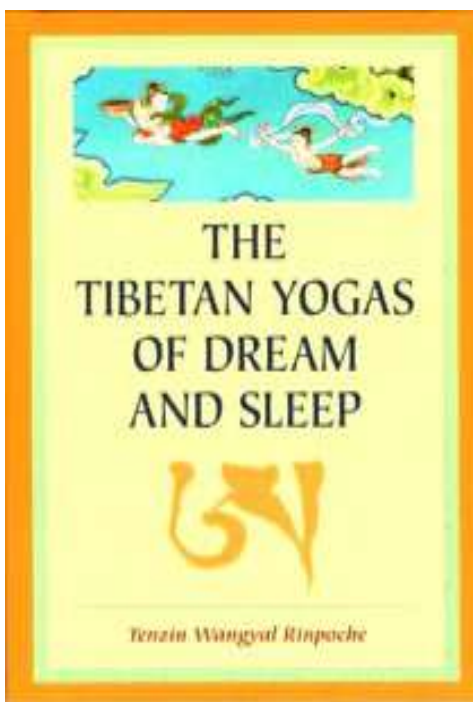
senses and mental capacities that allow individuals to participate in shared potentials and categories of experience while making other kinds of experience impossible. Dogs, for example, can collectively hear sounds that humans cannot, and humans experience language in a way that dogs cannot.

Although the realms appear to be distinct and solid, as our world seems to us, they are actually dreamy and insubstantial. They inter-penetrate one another and we are connected to each. We have the seeds of rebirth into the other realms in us, and when we experience different emotions we participate in some of the characteristic qualities

and suffering predominant in other realms. When we are caught up in self-centered pride or angry envy, for example, we experience something of the characteristic quality of experience of the demigod realm. Sometimes individuals have a predominance of one dimension in their makeup: more animal, or more hungry ghost, or more god nature, or more demigod. It stands out as the dominant trait of their character, and can be recognized in the way they talk, in their walk, and in their relationships. We may know people who always seem to be trapped in the hungry ghost realm: they can never get

enough, they are always hungry for more of everything – more from their friends, their environment, their life – but can never be satisfied. Or perhaps we know someone who seems like a hell being: angry, violent, raging, in turmoil. More commonly, people have aspects of all the dimensions in their individual make-ups.

As these dimensions of consciousness manifest in emotions, it becomes apparent how universal they are. For example, every culture knows jealousy. The appearance of jealousy may vary because emotional expression is a means of communication, a language of gesture, determined both



by biology and culture, and culture provides the variable. But the feeling of jealousy is the same everywhere. In Bön-Buddhism, this universality is explained by and correlated with the reality of the realms.

The six negative emotions are not meant to constitute an exhaustive list of emotions. It is pointless to argue about where sadness or fear fits into the realms. Fear can occur in any of the realms as can sadness or anger or jealousy or love. Although the negative emotions are affective experiences that we have, and are characteristic affective experiences of the realms, they are also keywords representing the entire dimension of experience, the continuum from individual emotional experience to actual realms. And those dimensions each encompass wide possibilities of experience, including diverse emotional experience.

The six qualities of consciousness are called paths because they lead somewhere: they take us to the places of our rebirth as well as into different realms of experience in this life. When a being identifies with, or is ensnared by, one of the negative emotions, certain results occur. This is the way karma actually works. For example, in order to be born as a human, we must have been heavily involved in moral disciplines in previous lifetimes. Even in popular culture this is expressed in the observation that it is not until love and concern for others matures that a person is considered to be ‘fully human.’

If we live a life characterized by the negative emotions of hatred or anger, we experience a different result: we are reborn in hell. This happens actually, that a being may be born in the hell realm, as well as psychologically. Connecting oneself to the dimension of hatred produces experiences that even in this life we call hellish.

Clearly this does not mean that all humans try to avoid these experiences. Karma may lead a person so strongly into a dimension of experience that the negative emotion becomes attractive. Think of all the ‘entertainment’ full of hatred, killing, and war. We can develop a taste for it. We say “War is hell,” yet many of us are drawn to war.

Our bias toward one or another of these dimensions can also be shaped by the culture. For in-

stance, in a society in which the angry warrior is considered heroic, we may be led in that direction. This is an example of the cultural ignorance described previously.

Although the realms may sound fanciful to people in the West, the manifestation of the six realms can be recognized in our own experience, in our dreams and waking lives, and in the lives of people near us. Sometimes, for example, we may feel lost. We know how to go about our daily routine, but the significance eludes us. The meaning is gone, not through liberation, but through lack of understanding. We have dreams of being in mud, or in a dark place, or on a street with no signs. We arrive in a room that has no exit, or feel confusion about which direction to take. This may be a manifestation of ignorance, the animal realm. (This ignorance is not the same as the innate ignorance. Instead it is a dullness, a lack of intelligence.)

We experience something of the god realm when we are lost in pleasurable distraction, enjoying hazy periods of pleasure and happiness. But these periods eventually come to an end. And while



*Wheel of Life, with the six realms, painted on a wall in Drepung Monastery in Lhasa, Tibet.*





they last, our awareness must be constricted. We must remain in a kind of superficiality and avoid looking too deeply into the situation around us, avoid becoming aware of the suffering around us. It is good to enjoy pleasant periods in our lives, but if we do not practice, do not continue to free ourselves of constricting and erroneous identities, eventually we will pass through the period of pleasantness and fall into a more difficult state, unprepared, where we are likely to be lost in some kind of suffering. At the end of a party or a very pleasant day there is often a kind of letdown or depression upon returning home. Or after a happy weekend we may feel disappointed when we return to work.

We all have periods during which we experience different realms: the happiness of the god realm, maybe while we're on vacation or on a walk with friends, the ache of greed when we see something we feel we must have, the shame of wounded pride, the pangs of jealousy, the hellishness of bitterness and hatred, the dullness and confusion of ignorance. We move from the experience of one realm to another easily and frequently. We have all had the experience of being in a happy mood, connected to the god realm; the sun is out, people appear beautiful, we feel good about ourselves. Then we receive bad news or a friend says something that hurts us. Suddenly the world itself appears to have changed. Laughter sounds hollow, the sky is cold and uncaring, we no longer find others attractive nor do we enjoy ourselves. We have changed dimensions of experience and the world seems to have changed with us. Just so, do beings in other realms remain connected to all the realms; both a cat and a demigod may experience anger, jealousy, emotional hunger, and so on.

During our dreaming lives, too, we experience the six realms. Just as the six negative emotions determine the quality of experience during the day, they shape the feeling and content of dreams. Dreams are of infinite variety but all karmic dreams are connected to one or more of the six dimensions.

Below is a brief description of the six realms. Traditionally, the realms are presented as descriptions of places and the beings that inhabit those places. The hells, for example, are eighteen in number, nine hot and nine cold hells. All the de-

tails in the traditional descriptions have meaning, but here we are focused on the experiences of the realms right now, in this life. We connect to each dimension of experience energetically through an energy center (*chakra*\*) in the body. The locations are listed below. The chakras are important in many different practices and play an important role in dream yoga.

| Realm                 | Primary emotion         | Chakra            |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| God (Devas)           | Pleasurable distraction | Crown             |
| Demigod (Asuras)      | Envy                    | Throat            |
| Human                 | Jealousy                | Heart             |
| Animal                | Ignorance               | Navel             |
| Hungry ghost (Pretas) | Greed                   | Sexual organs     |
| Hell                  | Hatred                  | Soles of the feet |

### Hell Realm

Anger is the seed emotion of the hell realm. When the karmic traces of anger manifest, there are many possible expressions, such as aversion, tension, resentment, criticism, argument, and violence. Much of the destruction of wars is caused by anger, and many people die every day as a result of anger. Yet anger never resolves any problem. When anger overcomes us we lose control and self-awareness. When we are trapped or victimized by hatred, violence, and anger, we are participating in the hell realm.



The energetic center of anger is in the soles of the feet. The antidote for anger is pure unconditioned love, which arises from the unconditioned self.

Traditionally, the hells are said to be composed of



nine hot hells and nine cold hells. The beings who live there suffer immeasurably, being tortured to death and instantly returning to life, time after time.

### **Hungry Ghost Realm**

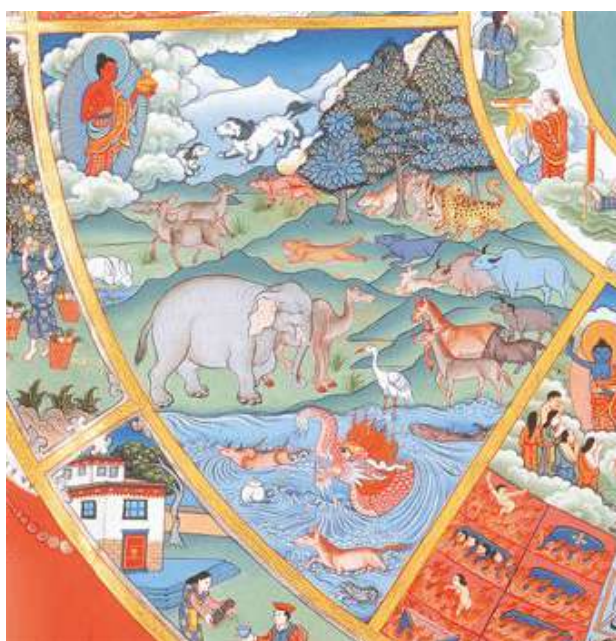
Greed is the seed emotion of the hungry ghost (*preta*) realm. Greed arises as a feeling of excessive need that cannot be fulfilled. The attempt to satisfy greed is like drinking salty water when thirsty. When lost in greed we look outward rather than inward for satisfaction, yet we never find enough to fill the emptiness we wish to escape. The real hunger we feel is for knowledge of our true nature.

Greed is associated with sexual desire; its energetic center in the body is the chakra behind the genitals. Generosity, the open giving of what others need, unties the hard knot of greed.

The pretas are traditionally represented as beings with huge, hungry bellies and tiny mouths and throats. Some inhabit parched lands where there is not even a mention of water for hundreds of years. Others may find food and drink, yet if they swallow even a little through their tiny mouths, the food bursts into flame in their stomachs and causes great pain. There are many kinds of suffering for pretas, but all result from stinginess and opposing the generosity of others.

### **Animal Realm**

Ignorance is the seed of the animal realm. It is ex-



perienced as a feeling of being lost, dull, uncertain, or unaware. Many people experience a darkness and sadness rooted in this ignorance; they feel a need but do not even know what they want or what to do to satisfy themselves. In the West, people are often considered happy if they are continually busy, yet we can be lost in ignorance in the midst of our busyness when we do not know our true nature.

The chakra associated with ignorance is in the center of the body at the level of the navel. The wisdom found when we turn inward and come to know our true self is the antidote to ignorance.

Beings in the animal realm are dominated by the darkness of ignorance. Animals live in fear because of the constant threat from other animals and humans. Even large animals are tormented by insects that burrow into their skin and live on their flesh. Domesticated animals are milked, loaded down, castrated, pierced through the nose, and ridden, without being able to escape. Animals feel pain and pleasure, but they are dominated by the ignorance that prevents them from looking beneath the circumstances of their lives to find their true nature.

### **Human Realm**

Jealousy is the root emotion of the human realm. When possessed by jealousy, we want to hold on to and draw to ourselves what we have: an idea, a possession, a relationship. We see the source of happiness as something external to us, which leads to greater attachment to the object of our desire.

Jealousy is related to the heart center in the body. The antidote to jealousy is great openness of the heart, the openness that arises when we connect to our true nature.

It is easy for us to observe the suffering of our own realm. We experience birth, sickness, old age, and death. We are plagued by loss due to constant change. When we attain the object of our desire, we struggle to keep it, but its eventual loss is certain. Rather than rejoicing in the happiness of others, we often fall prey to envy and jealousy. Even though human birth is considered the greatest of good fortune because humans have the chance to hear and practice the teachings, only a tiny minority of us ever find our way to,





and avail ourselves of, this great opportunity.

### Demigod Realm

Pride is the principal affliction of the demigods (*asuras*). Pride is a feeling connected to accomplishment and is often territorial. One cause of war is the pride of individuals and nations that believe they have the solution to other people's problems. There is a hidden aspect of pride that manifests when we believe ourselves worse than others in a particular ability or trait, a negative self-centeredness that singles us out from others.

Pride is associated with the chakra in the throat. Pride is often manifested in wrathful action, and its antidote is the great peace and humility that arises when we rest in our true nature.

The asuras enjoy pleasure and abundance but they tend toward envy and wrath. They continually fight with one another, but their greatest suffering occurs when they declare war on the gods, who enjoy even greater abundance than the demigods. The gods are more powerful than asuras and very difficult to kill. They always win the wars, and the asuras suffer the emotional devastation of wounded pride and envy in which they feel diminished and which, in turn, drives them into futile wars again and again.

### God Realm

Pleasurable distraction is the seed of the god realm. In the god realm, the five negative emotions are equally present, balanced like five harmonious voices in a chorus. The gods are lost in a heady sense of lazy joy and self-centered pleasure. They enjoy great wealth and comfort in lives that last as long as an eon. All needs seem to be fulfilled and all desires sated. Just as is true for some individuals and societies, the gods become trapped in pleasure and the pursuit of pleasure.



They have no sense of the reality beneath their experience. Lost in meaningless diversions and pleasures, they are distracted and do not turn to the path to liberation.

But the situation ultimately changes as the karmic causes for existence in the god realm are exhausted. As death finally approaches, the dying god is abandoned by friends and companions, who are unable to face the proof of their own mortality. The previously perfect body ages and deteriorates. The period of happiness is over. With divine eyes the god can see the conditions of the realm of suffering into which he or she is fated to be reborn, and even before death the suffering of that coming life begins.

The god realm is associated with the chakra at the crown of the head. The antidote to the selfish joy of the gods is encompassing compassion that arises spontaneously through awareness of the reality underlying self and world."

### Glossary

**chakra** (Tib., *khor-lo*; Skt., *chakra*). Literally 'wheel' or 'circle.' Chakra is a Sanskrit word referring to energetic centers in the body. A chakra is a location at which a number of energetic channels (*tsa*) meet. Different meditation systems work with different chakras.

**loka** (Tib., *'jig rten*). Literally 'world' or 'world system.' Commonly used in English to refer to the six realms of cyclic existence, loka actually refers to the greater world systems, one of which is occupied by the six realms. (See six realms of cyclic existence.)

**six realms of cyclic existence** (Tib., *rigs drug*). Commonly referred to as 'the six realms' or 'six lokas.' The six realms refer to six classes of beings: gods, demi-gods, humans, animals, hungry-ghosts, and hell-beings. Beings in the six realms are subject to suffering. They are literal realms, in which beings take birth, and also broad experiential and affective bands of potential experience that shape and limit experience even in our current life.

### Text selected by Ton Bisscheroux

Photos by Ton Bisscheroux and from the website [www.rigpawiki.org](http://www.rigpawiki.org)



# DZOGCHEN: SPACES

In the Dzogchen meditation we are often invited to connect to Unbounded Space. But what is this Space? Frits de Vries studied several books on this subject in the Bon and Nyingma tradition, and shares his understanding with us.

*With the perception of the true nature of phenomena within basic space, wisdom arises continuously as the adornment of that space*

## Introduction

In the book *Wonders of the Natural Mind* Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche distinguishes three streams of Dzogchen in Bon. They correspond to Nyingma series. The second Bon stream corresponds to the *longde* series in Nyingma Dzogchen, connected with clarity and space (1, p. 54). According to the famous Nyingma teacher Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche, Buddha nature is said to resemble space. But he also comments: *"Can we say space exists? Can we say that it doesn't? We cannot, because space itself does not comply with any such ideas. Concepts made about space are merely concepts. Space, in itself, is beyond any ideas we can hold about it. Buddha nature is like this."* (2, p. 49)

When comparing the nine vehicles and employing the practices of *shamatha* and *vipashyana* (*zhiné* and contemplation) Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche comes to the conclusion: *"The special quality of Dzogchen is the view that is totally free from any ideas whatsoever. This view is called the view of fruition, meaning it is utterly devoid of any conceptual formulations."* (2, p. 35)

Elsewhere we find a more clear demarcation: *"Dzogpa Chenpo, on the other hand, solely maintains intrinsic awareness [the true nature of mind], and uses it as the path. It does not employ concepts, since concepts [are the province of] mind, and Dzogpa Chenpo involves meditation [on intrinsic awareness after] distinguishing mind from intrinsic awareness."* (3, p. xi). Concepts delineate the difference between *mind* and *nature of mind*.

A basic question of this contribution is: why do Dzogchen masters in their teachings make fre-

quent use of a concept like 'space' in the concept-free domain of Dzogchen? Is it an apparent contradiction (paradox)? Reminder: on basic Dzogchen terms and meanings we may fairly assume a complete harmony between Bon Dzogchen and Nyingma Dzogchen.

## Example 1: Adding up three spaces?

Lets look at a first example on the meaning of 'space'. On the flourishing Ligmincha channel of YouTube (4) a very short Dzogchen teaching can be found. In approximately nine minutes each, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche teaches us three lessons from *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud*, called "The Unification of the Three Spaces." The three spaces referred to here are connected to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's Inner Refuge and can be found by looking within. They are reached by the three doors called: stillness of the body, silence of the speech and the spaciousness of the mind. Opening one door is not enough, all three doors need to be opened for liberation.



The more we work with this inner refuge the more inner space we will experience. When we train for a long time, sooner or later a glimpse of the nature of mind will be experienced, the concept-free state of mind. In the long run, when you have more glimpses, there is less need for a concept like space, because you have found 'space.' It is like the proverbial raft from the *sutra's*, you can leave it behind when it has brought you on the other shore.

## Example 2: Space, gaps and awareness

A more comprehensive example on the meaning of space can be found in an interview with His Eminence Lopon Tenzin Namdak. In 2007 two interesting interviews with Lopon Tenzin Namdak were published (5) and in the second interview







His Eminence Lopon Tenzin Namdak.

spaces were the central theme. Henry M. Vyner and Lopon Tenzin Namdak (Lopon) explore some experiences and definitions. They arrive at a mutual understanding, where space is related to awareness when meditating and long gaps appear in the stream of consciousness:

**“Vyner:** My experience has been that when a person first starts meditating, that many thoughts, a stream of thoughts, will appear in a person's mind. Is that correct?

**Lopon:** Sure. This is nature.

**Vyner:** And then after a person has been meditating for a while, thoughts begin to slow down.

**Lopon:** Yes.

**Vyner:** And sometimes they even disappear. Is that correct?

**Lopon:** Yes.

**Vyner:** Eventually, it seems that gaps will begin to appear in the stream of thoughts. Periods of time occur when there are no thoughts appearing. Sometimes those gaps will last for a very long time. In your experience, can that happen?

**Lopon:** Yes. What do you mean by gap?

**Vyner:** By gap I mean a period of time in which there are no inner appearances. Nothing appears.

**Lopon:** Then what is there?

**Vyner:** Nothing.

**Lopon:** Nothing?

**Vyner:** Well there is an awareness present.

**Lopon:** What is awareness?

**Vyner:** It's just awareness.

**Lopon:** What's it aware of? To be aware means seeing or knowing something. Otherwise there is no awareness.

**Vyner:** It is aware of space.”

What then follows is an exchange between Lopon Tenzin Namdak and Henry M. Vyner about the specific relation between awareness and space. Lopon seems to negate the relation between space and awareness, but here is Henry's conclusion:

**“Vyner:** There is only space, but it also definitely feels like there is an awareness present within the space, and my experience has also been that single inner

appearances can continue to arise within this space.

**Lopon:** Yes.

**Vyner:** The inner appearances continue, but they dissolve as soon as they appear.

**Lopon:** Yes they continue, but is something changing, or does the space go on?

**Vyner:** The way it seems to me is that the space goes on.

**Lopon:** Never changing.”

### ***Kadag and lhundup***

Then Henry M. Vyner starts to talk about his experiences of light when meditating. It seems as if Lopon is surprised Henry has experienced this already and he is prepared to teach more about these experiences of light in terms of central Dzogchen concepts of *kadag* and *lhundup*. He explains the difference between two kinds of spaces: normal space and a space with special power that can liberate consciousness.

**“Lopon:** So if you have experienced this much, this space itself, if you don't touch anything, this space is not normal space. It has special qualities.

**Vyner:** What do you mean by special qualities?

**Lopon:** I am going to tell you now. This is not normal space. Normal space is only space. It is a space because material things are not present in that space. Nothing is there. This other space is special because it liberates thoughts. It liberates consciousness. It looks like space. You have to use words to describe it. But it is not real space. This condition has special power. Everything, *nirvana*, *samsara*, happiness, sadness can spontaneously appear.



**Vyner:** Are you saying that everything takes its origin from this space?

**Lopon:** This space has special power. We call it *lhundhup*. There is nothing to point out in the space. But this nature is also completely and originally pure. You cannot take any negative actions in this space. Therefore this space is also called pure or *kadag*. And *kadag* and *lhundhup* spontaneously exist within this space. And if you don't care about staying in this condition, you won't need to check anything. There is no one to check. But it is there. You don't need to check something that is pure or that exists spontaneously. They are there.

**Vyner:** Everything that appears in that space is pure.

**Lopon:** Yes. Whatever appears, you don't have to do anything. Good things come. Bad things can come. Sometimes very bad emotions come up, sometimes good things come up.

**Vyner:** Do negative emotions change when they come into that space?

**Lopon:** If you are able to keep still without being disturbed, if whatever comes up you don't care, if you are remaining in that space without being disturbed, then you are ok. If you are able to do this, and if you are seriously and continuously practicing, gradually all of the negative things become weaker and weaker. Finally they disappear.

**Vyner:** Ok."

In a long concluding sentence Lopon sketches the final practices that lead to liberation. This is the end of this remarkable interview. Henry M. Vyner adds several clarifying annotations and footnotes. And so, for the use and meaning of the concept of 'space' in Dzogchen we conclude it is fully established. It has even some special qualities: *"This space has special power. We call it lhundhup,"* and *"Therefore this space is also called pure or kadag."* Your practices end in this special power space.

Back to the question: is there a paradox? No, as Lopon says: *"This other space is special because it liberates thoughts. It liberates consciousness. It looks like space. You have to use words to describe it. But it is not real space."*

### Example 3: Space as a metaphor

A metaphor is a figure of speech that describes a 'subject' by asserting that it is, on some point of comparison, the same as another otherwise unrelated 'object' (see 6). The subject in the previous

example is 'this space with special power,' which Lopon is referring to when he says: *"You have to use words to describe it."* The object is then the use of the word 'space with special power' with the addition 'but it is not real space.' That is typical of a figure of speech, you do not take it literally. The space you are using as a metaphor is not real space. With the use of the concept 'space' we are approaching the unspeakable experience of the nature of mind, mind essence or *rigpa*.

The famous Dzogchen master Longchen Rabjam (Longchenpa) was the first one to know that Dzogchen teaching and transmission cannot be directly connected to concepts, but concepts can only be used temporarily and preliminary. So here is the answer found in the *Chöying Dzöd* of Longchenpa (3, p. 54) to the question from the introduction: How can we use a concept like 'space' in the concept-free domain of Dzogchen?:

*"Space is a metaphor for awakened mind. Since that mind has no cause and is not an object that comes into being, it does not abide in any finite way, is inexpressible, and transcends the realm of the imagination. The phrase 'the realm: of space' is simply a way of illustrating it metaphorically."*

When working with conceptual metaphors as Longchenpa does, there are three working-concepts to consider (see: 7):

the source domain; i.e. the conceptual domain from which we draw metaphorical expression, in this case: awakened mind is like *space*.

the target domain; i.e. the conceptual domain that we try to understand, in this case: *awakened mind* is like space.

the mapping; i.e. the systematic set of correspondences that exist between constituent elements of the source and the target domain.

Instances of mappings here are: space is endless like awakened mind, has no beginning or end, cannot be separated, etc. But the mapping between space and awakened mind is only partial, because space has no consciousness and also awakened mind is inexpressible like Longchenpa says.

After three examples we are back to the original questions of this contribution: why do Dzogchen masters in their teachings make frequent use of a concept like 'space' in the concept-free domain of Dzogchen? Is it an apparent contradiction (para-



dox)? The tentative answer is: they do use concepts like 'space' but only in the preliminary phase. In the main phase of Dzogchen teachings they use concepts as incomplete metaphors. Please note Padmasambhava (8, p. 52-53) warned us long ago of this incompleteness when comparing the nature of mind with the space or sky:

*"This nature of mind, which is all-knowing, aware of everything, empty and radiant, Is established to be manifestly radiant and self-originating pristine cognition, [Present] from the beginning, just like the sky, As an indivisible [union] of emptiness and radiance. This itself is actual reality.*

*(...)*

*However, this example of the sky, though used to illustrate actual reality, Is merely a symbol, a partial and provisional illustration.*

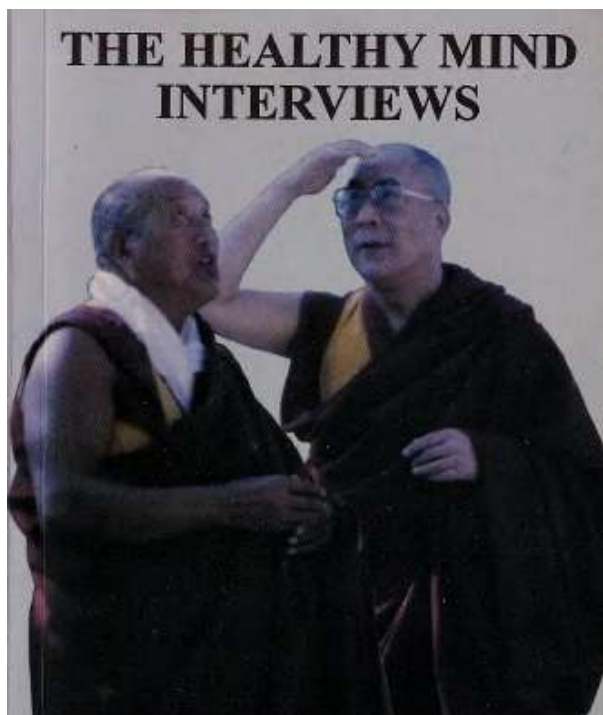
*For the nature of mind is aware, empty, and radiant in all respects,*

*While the sky is without awareness, empty, inanimate and void.*

*Therefore, the true understanding of the nature of mind is **not** illustrated by [the metaphor of] the sky."*



Padmasambhava.



## Notes

Epigraph: The *Self Liberation Interview* with H.E. Lopon Tenzin Namdak has this same epigraph, it was taken from Longchenpa (3, p. 23)

(1) *Wonders of the Natural Mind*, The Essence of Dzogchen in the Native Bon Tradition of Tibet, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, 2000, Snow Lion Publications.

(2) *Rainbow Painting*, A collection of Miscellaneous Aspects of Development and Completion, Tulku Ugyen Rinpoche, Rangjung Yeshe Publications, 2009.

(3) *A Treasure Trove of Scriptural Transmission*, A commentary on The Precious Treasury of the Basic Space of Phenomena, Longchen Rabjam (Longchenpa) 2001, Padma Publishing, CA.

(4) [www.youtube.com/user/ligmincha](http://www.youtube.com/user/ligmincha)

part 1: [www.youtube.com/part one](http://www.youtube.com/part one)

part 2: [www.youtube.com/part two](http://www.youtube.com/part two)

part 3: [www.youtube.com/part three](http://www.youtube.com/part three)

(5) *The Healthy Mind Interviews*, volume IV, 2007, Henry M. Vyner, M.D., Published by Vajra publications. The *Self Liberation Interview* with Lopon Tenzin Namdak.

(6) [wikipedia.org/wiki/Metaphor](http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Metaphor)

(7) [wikipedia.org/wiki/Conceptual\\_metaphor](http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Conceptual_metaphor)

(8) *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, Composed by Padmasambhava, First complete translation, Intr. comm. by HH the Dalai Lama, Viking Pub., 2005.

Text by Frits de Vries





## TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE'S 2014 EUROPEAN SEMINARS AND ON-LINE TEACHINGS

| When                      | Where              | What  | More information   |
|---------------------------|--------------------|---|--|
| August 30                 | Your computer      | Free Live Webcast:<br>Clearing Your Negative Emotions: Transforming Your World Through the Six Lokas Practice | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a>                 |
| September 5 – 7           | Grenoble, France   | Weekend seminar:<br>Awakening the Luminous Mind   | <a href="http://www.cebgtrenoble.fr">www.cebgtrenoble.fr</a>             |
| September 12 – 14         | Moscow, Russia     | Weekend seminar:<br>The Practice of the Six Lamps, Part 2   | <a href="http://www.garuda-bon.ru">www.garuda-bon.ru</a>                 |
| September 20 – October 12 | Your computer      | Interactive online course:<br>Tibetan Sound Healing: The Five Sacred Seed Syllables                           | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>                 |
| September 27              | Your computer      | Guided Meditation:<br>Purifying Your Karma Through Mantra   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a>                 |
| October 11                | Your computer      | Free Live Webcast:<br>The Healing Power of Primordial Awareness   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a>                 |
| October 13 – November 23  | Your computer      | Online meditation instruction:<br>The Five Elements, Healing with Form Energy and Light                       | <a href="http://www.ligminchalearning.com">www.ligminchalearning.com</a> |
| October 14 – 19           | Maria Alm, Austria | The Experiential Transmission of Zhang Zhung, Part 5  | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.at">www.ligmincha.at</a>                   |
| October 24 – 26           | Brussels, Belgium  | Weekend seminar:<br>Dream Yoga  | <a href="http://www.bongaruda.be">www.bongaruda.be</a>                   |
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# Ligmincha Europe Magazine

**# 14 – Autumn 2014**



Meet the Swiss sangha

Everyday Life is the Practice

Lishu or The 3 Doors?

Openness is my Path



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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 this issue Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche elaborates the difference between the program of Lishu Institute and The 3 Doors Academy; we have an article where Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche tells us how to turn our daily challenges into meditation practice; we introduce the Swiss sangha; we tell you what's happened/happening in Europe, and more.

I would like to share a personal experience from the Summer Retreat in Buchenau, Germany.

negative emotions, clear them at a deep level, and transform them into positive qualities. And I realized: sitting at Rinpoche's table would not satisfy my *Hungry Ghost* in any way.

I was not invited, and I volunteered to serve a guest at Rinpoche's table as a waiter. Every guest had a personal waiter. When I went to my guest to ask what she wanted to eat, she was surprised and said that she actually did not want to sit there... And later, when I wanted to sit at the servers table — the waiters had a table near Rinpoche — there was no place left for me!



A warm *Thank You* for the cook and his team, who prepared a wonderful dinner.

During this retreat we practiced [The Six Lokas](#). While I was working with the *Hungry Ghost Realm*, there was one thought that bothered me a lot: during the dinner I would like to sit at Rinpoche's table. In Buchenau it is a tradition that members of the European Ligmincha boards and some other guests are invited to sit at Rinpoche's table on the last evening of the retreat. Although Rinpoche has shown his appreciation for the work I do many times in different ways, for my *Hungry Ghost* it was not enough.

Of course it was a stupid thought/desire to have, but it was very strong. Working with this during the practice helped me to recognize my own

I could have blamed the organization, but I accepted the situation. And during dinner somebody at the servers table was so generous to offer me her place, after she had finished her dinner. And then I had the best place, close to Rinpoche.

Not being invited to Rinpoche's table was the best that could happen to me. While serving, I felt a great inner joy, something nobody could 'give' to me. A few weeks later I realized that I practiced Generosity, the antidote of desire and attachment. Thank you Rinpoche for your teachings!

In Bon,

**Ton Bisscheroux, chief editor**



# MOST STUDENTS SEEK GUIDANCE

During the Summer Retreat 2014 in Buchenau, Germany, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche gave an update on the progress of Lishu Institute and also said a few words about Ligmincha and The 3 Doors program. We would like to share this information with you.

As many of you know, I have been teaching for over twenty years in the West. And I have learned so much, perhaps even more than I taught. In the process of teaching I have realized that we are all different and have different needs. During the flight over here, I reflected that perhaps Tibetan lamas need to ask a simple question when teaching Westerners: Are their students coming to learn Bon and Buddhism or are they seeking help from Bon and Buddhism? These are two different things.

I have discovered that the majority of people don't come to me in order to become a Buddhist or Bonpo. They come seeking help, and primarily the help that they couldn't find in their own cultures or from the traditions in which they were raised. So they are seeking guidance.

To those seeking this kind of help, you don't try to lay out the whole philosophy of Buddhism. It took me a long time to realize this, and finally I have. But it has been a challenge to balance these two very different interests. As a teacher in the West I



went back and forth and used different approaches. The way I have been teaching here in Buchenau this week is a kind of middle way.

Lishu addresses the interest at one extreme and The 3 Doors the other. I use the word 'extreme' in a positive way here. The differing approaches of educating students through Lishu or through The 3 Doors are equally valid. Each is important for different people.

For the group of students drawn to study the teachings in depth, Lishu has been created. And this is very important, even if this group might be very small. And a group such as those gathered here at this retreat might be a medium-sized group, and this is also important. The 3 Doors might possibly be an even larger group, and it's equally important.



Geshe Thupten Negi with the Bon canon in Lishu Institute.

Through Lishu we will train Westerners who are seriously interested in learning the dharma, and willing to dedicate their life pursuing this. In the past, many people went to India and spent a considerable amount of time studying there, like Jeffrey Hopkins and Robert Thurman. This became their life's work. They went to a university and completed PhD work in Buddhist Studies or Tibetology and they





continue to practice and study. It is a lifetime pursuit. With Lishu we are creating a place where people will be able to go and spend years learning in as close as possible a way to the way I learned in the monastery. I don't think it's possible to do it in exactly the same way, but as close as possible.

It has long been one of my dreams to have a place where people can go and study for a long time. That's what we have been working on for a number of years now. So basically people will live at Lishu and learn the texts. As it has been evolving, we have changed the program from five years to three years and from three years to the possibility now of doing it year by year. So we are trying to become a little more flexible.

I could not see the possibility of doing this in the West, but the possibility of doing this in the East looked promising. However, in India everything moves at a different speed than in the West, so it took much longer than we had anticipated. So far we have established the Association, bought the land, raised the money, built the buildings, and now we are looking into the details of the kitchen. And the good news is that we are very close to beginning the program! We will soon be ready, so I want everybody to know this. We want people to come there, to study there, and to support Lishu financially. A description of all these possibilities is available on the website [www.lishu.org](http://www.lishu.org).

Another vision of mine is The 3 Doors. This program is experientially based and focuses on the essence of the teachings. It does not so much emphasize learning from the texts as it does gaining experience with the practices that bring direct benefit. Website: [www.the3doors.org](http://www.the3doors.org).

In the last three or four years we've probably trained over one hundred people around the world in The 3 Doors Academy program. Those who have completed the two and a half year long Academy have expressed much enthusiasm, and I trust this enthusiasm will continue and will expand to many different places throughout the world.

Both The 3 Doors and Ligmincha are like a family. In a way, The 3 Doors was born from Ligmincha and is now growing in its own way. It has a slightly different purpose as an organization. But always we support each other to grow. While there is much more to say about Lishu and The 3 Doors, I just wanted to highlight the progress of these organizations. I invite you to go to their websites for more information. If you are open or if you are curious, you can always Google it! [or click on the pictures on this page]

**Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche**





# THE AMAZING 3 DOORS ORGANIZATIONAL RETREAT



“You will be amazed” were the prophetic words of [The 3 Doors'](#) Vice President, Kallon Basquin in his opening remarks to the members of the first International Organizational retreat in July 2014. Words of amazement were echoed many times during the next three and a half days. First-time hugs were shared among people meeting face-to-face for the first time, although they had spent countless hours working together by Skype, email and phone over the last four years.

Although, unable to attend the retreat, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, President of the Board, prepared four short videos to instruct and inspire us further in upholding his vision for The 3 Doors.

Beginning with this inspiration, committees reported to the entire group about their roles and accomplishments so far. Then everyone jumped into the work, each person flowing in and out of small groups as needed to weave the whole of our 3 Doors organizational mandala. And what a mandala it is! Volunteers are at the heart of our inner workings. In addition to being guided by the Board of Directors and Senior Teachers (formally known as Academy Teachers), volunteers are in place to manage Website Development, 3 Doors Practitioners Association (3PA), Marketing and Media, Branding and Image, Research and Publishing, Finance and Business, Translation, and more.

At the end of the retreat Chelsea Canedy, co-retreat organizer, was asked to reflect on her experience. Her response: “What impressed me most was the level of dedication and tirelessness that these people possess. To learn just how much effort The 3 Doors has actually required and how many moving parts are involved is almost beyond comprehension. I never witnessed a meeting of so many minds that progressed so smoothly and beneficially, with everyone's voice being heard and given equal value and attention.”

We all felt honored to be a part of the inner workings of The 3 Doors. The global connections that we are forging and the invaluable practices that we are manifesting in our collective actions are nothing that we ever imagined when we began our individual 3 Doors journeys. We were amazed! We left with experience of what people can do when connected to the Inner Refuge and with a deep knowing that we are on the forefront of something that will change the world.



Amazement unfolding at the 3 Doors Organizational Retreat.

## Your Doorway to The 3 Doors: Introductory Workshops and The Academy

Why attend an introductory workshop for The 3 Doors? Each one provides an opportunity to experience the benefits of these remarkable practices and take them home with you to continue to apply in your life. It is also an opportunity to meet teachers, graduates, and trainees in [The 3 Doors Academy](#) and explore the opportunity for you to apply to the next Academies starting in the United States in April 2015 and in Europe in June 2015.

For information and to apply to The 3 Doors Academy, visit our [website](#) or inquire by email here: [European Academy](#) or [U.S. Academy](#).





Here is the **schedule of introductory programs and workshops** coming up in Europe. Please subscribe to *The 3 Doors Global* newsletter in [English](#) or in [Spanish](#) to learn when additional programs will be offered around the world.

***An Introduction to The 3 Doors: Transforming Lives through Meditation***

An evening public talk and guided meditation with Raven Lee in Hilversum, The Netherlands  
November 5, 2014  
Contact: Tonny Maas  
[3deurenederland@gmail.com](mailto:3deurenederland@gmail.com)

***Awakening the Sacred Body***

With John Jackson in Berlin, Germany  
November 7 – 9, 2014  
Contact: Anja Benesch  
[anja@the3doors.org](mailto:anja@the3doors.org)

***An Introduction to The 3 Doors: Transforming Lives through Meditation***

An evening public talk and guided meditation with John Jackson and Raven Lee in Berlin, Germany  
November 12, 2014  
Contact: Karolina Steltenheim  
[seltenheim@aon.at](mailto:seltenheim@aon.at)

***Awakening the Sacred Body***

With John Jackson in Frankfurt, Germany  
November 15-16, 2014  
Contact: George Ajhar  
[george@trust-the-void.de](mailto:george@trust-the-void.de)

***Awakening Authentic Presence***

With John Jackson in Maastricht, the Netherlands  
January 3 – 4, 2015  
Contact: Marlies Cober  
[3deurenlimburg@gmail.com](mailto:3deurenlimburg@gmail.com)

***Awakening Authentic Presence***

With John Jackson, Hotel Klösterli, Rigi, Switzerland  
January 16 – 18, 2015  
Contact: Walter Hofmann  
[swiss3doors@gmail.com](mailto:swiss3doors@gmail.com)



A light-hearted moment with Senior Teacher Marcy Vaughn and Retreat Coordinator Anja Benesch at an introductory 3 Doors workshop in Berlin.



# IN TRANSITION

Every sangha has a different story to tell. This time Walter Hofmann tells the story of the Swiss Ligmincha sangha, and how he got more and more involved in The 3 Doors program.

**When did you first meet Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche?**

In 2008 I went together with my wife Rita to Vienna, Austria, for a weekend seminar the *Six Lokas* and the *Nine Lung*. We had been in a Zen sangha for about twelve years before we met Rinpoche. I had experiences with light, and in the Zen sangha I did not know what to do with that, and did not find answers that were satisfying. When I realized that I missed something I started to search on the internet and found in my hometown, Zurich, Switzerland, a sangha from Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. At that time I did know nothing about Bon, and I knew little about Tibetan Buddhism. We wanted to learn more from this practice with mantras and visualizations. When we saw that Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche would be in Vienna for a retreat, we went there to check if it was something for us.

From then on till 2012 we went every year to Rinpoche's seminars in Zurich, and we went several times to the Summer Retreats in Buchenau, Germany. And since 2010 we participate in the five-year cycle of the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* in Maria Alm, Austria.

**And you also participated in The 3 Doors Academy. How was that for you?**

Yes, for me it was a quite natural thing to do,



because I was eager to learn more, to experience on a deeper level. To me, The 3 Doors Academies are a great possibility to deepen the experiences with these wonderful practices, using them very directly to transform personal conditionings and any kind of obstacles. The 3 Doors Academies are a unique way to dive deeply into oneself under the professional guidance of one's mentor and together with a group of people who become very close friends. You use the practices to change yourself, to transform yourself, to work with your ego, your fear, your attachment and your anger. During the three years of the Academy you have to do sixty-three transformations in all the three aspects of your life (i.e. personal, relationship, society). It is transforming not only yourself and your partnership and family, but miraculously, also people around you, and situations you are involved in get more open and more relaxed.

**Participating in the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* and in The 3 Doors Academy takes a lot of time. How did you manage that?**

I have not completed the *Ngöngdo* yet. Some parts I have finished, but for example the *pros-*







# Ligmincha Switzerland

Preserving Bön Buddhist Wisdom in the World

TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE

trations, which I really like to do, I have not finished yet. I have a fulltime job, so I get up early in the morning and I do a short meditation, and during the day I do mantras. I still have to complete the one-hundred-thousand *mandala offerings* and the one-hundred-thousand *prostrations*. For most participants it has not been possible to finish the *Ngöngdo* within five years, so we just continue in our own pace.

## Can you tell something about the organization of the Swiss sangha?

Ann-Marie Jakob organized all the retreats with Rinpoche, and after a few years going to the seminars we got engaged, and supported the organization and preparations. For all of us it was shocking when Ann-Marie announced in 2012 that she stopped. Then the sangha fell apart, and the *Dream Yoga* seminar in 2012 was cancelled. Unfortunately we have not been able to organize anything since.

The organization has always been informal. We have practice groups in Bern, the capital of Switzerland, and in Zurich. The practice group in Bern has been meeting once a month for seven years now. When Ann-Marie stopped, I took over the practice group in Zurich. For two years it went well with our practice group, and when the room where we practiced was no longer available, the group fell apart.

In October in Maria Alm, during the last cycle of the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud*, I will meet about twenty sangha members from Switzerland and I want to discuss with them if they want support the Ligmincha sangha. We still have a website, which I update regularly. It would be a shame if the sangha would no longer continue, because the teachings are so precious and have to be spread out to as many people as possible.

Since 2012 I have been less involved in *Ligmincha Schweiz*, and have been more involved in The 3 Doors Academy. In November

2013 we organized a Taste weekend with Marcy Vaughn in Zurich, and afterwards I organized regular meetings with a group of about seven interested people. And then it happened again that the room where we met was no longer available, so now again, it is unclear on how we will continue. We will have a meeting to discuss these things in early October. John Jackson will give a 3 Doors workshop *Awakening Authentic Presence* in January 2015, and many people are interested to come. It will be a very special event on a marvelous place called Rigi Klösterli. It's a Seminar-Hotel located on the mountain called Rigi in the middle of Switzerland. Rigi mountain is known as a energetically very powerful place. John Jackson will teach the *Five Warrior Seed Syllables* with the special approach of The 3 Doors. I'm looking very much forward to this event.

## Do you want to share something with the sangha?

Most important for me is to take the practices into everyday life. It is not just about retreats and having a great teacher. We have great teachers indeed, but we should not only depend on them. We have to do something with our life, now that we are connected to the teachers and these precious teachings.

I feel responsible to act accordingly, to do the practices as often as I can, and use the Three Pills. That will make a difference in everyone's life and the whole society.

For sure there are many practitioners out there who feel the same. We should start communicating, sharing experiences, coming together thus rebuilding the sangha. Because the support of a community is an invaluable means to proceed on the path.

## Interview by Ton Bisscheroux

Photo from the Ligmincha Schweiz website



# WHAT'S HAPPENED IN EUROPE

It is always exciting to read what happens in our sangha in Europe. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche visited the France, Russia and Germany, and gave internet teachings. Other lamas and teachers were invited. Here is an impression of these events.



## September 5 – 7:

About one-hundred-eighty people participated in the seminar *Awakening the Luminous Mind* with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in the park of *Centre théologique de Meylan-Grenoble* in Grenoble, France.



## September 12 – 14:

About one-hundred-fifty people attended the seminar *Purification Through Mantra* with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in Moscow, Russia.







**August 26 – 31:**  
**The topic of the Summer Retreat with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in Buchenau, Germany, was *The Six Lokas*.**

It was wonderful to practice with six emotions and their antidotes in the six realms: In the *Hell Realm* we transformed our anger into Love, in the *Hungry Ghost Realm* we transformed our greed into Generosity, in the *Animal Realm* we transformed our ignorance into Wisdom, in the *Human Realm* we transformed our jealousy into Openness, in the *Demigod Realm* we transformed our pride into Peacefulness, in the *God Realm* we transformed our laziness into Compassion.

About one-hundred-forty people participated, and amongst them were many people who met Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche the first time.

We had a wonderful auction, where € 10.000 were collected for the European Center, a Skype-meeting with Geshe Thupten Negi at the Lishu Institute, and for the first time a Live Webcast from the European Summer Retreat.







#### Activities in Poland:

- **July 15 – 20:** Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught part 2 of *The Twenty-One Nails* at Chamma Ling Poland.
- **August 8:** Alejandro Chaoul gave lecture in Warsaw about *Trul Khor* and told about his academic studies using these methods to help people with cancer.
- **August 15 – 17:** Darek Orwat, student of Alejandro, taught *Trul Khor* movements from the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* cycle at Chamma Ling Poland.
- **September 26 – 28:** Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche, Abbot of Triten Norbutse Monastery in Nepal, gave teachings about the practice of Dzogchen from cycle *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud*. Almost one-hundred people participated. It was a beautiful teachings about our mind, how to skillfully work with our thoughts and emotions, and discover our True Nature.



**Free Live Webcast**  
 Live teachings from the Tibetan Bon Buddhist tradition  
**Clearing Your Negative Emotions:  
 The Six Lokas Practice**  
 with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche  
**August 30, 2014**  
 20.00–21.00 h (C.E.T.)




*Translations in multiple languages available*  
[www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)

You can watch the recording here:

[Clearing Your Negative Emotions: The Six Lokas Practice](#)

**Free Live Webcast**  
 Live teachings from the Tibetan Bon Buddhist tradition  
**Purifying Your Karma Through Mantra**  
 with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche  
**September 27, 2014**  
 20.30–21.30 h (C.E.T.)



*Translations in multiple languages available*



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

You can watch the recording here:

[Guided Meditation: Purifying Your Karma Through Mantra](#)

**Free Live Webcast**  
 Live teachings from the Tibetan Bon Buddhist tradition  
**The Healing Power of Primordial Awareness**  
 with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche  
**October 11, 2014**  
 21.00–22.30 h. (C.E.T.)




*Translations in multiple languages available*  
[www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)

You can watch the recording here:

[The Healing Power of Primordial Awareness](#)





# OPENNESS IS MY PATH

Swami Mangalananda Giri attended teachings at Serenity Ridge (US), Crestone (US), and many other seminars with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in Germany, Austria, Poland, Switzerland and the Netherlands. She is a participant at the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* cycle (Austria) and a graduate of the first 3 Doors Academy in Europe. Because she is also dressed like a nun in an orange cloth, Ton Bisscheroux got curious and asked for an interview.

**I saw you were often in the presence of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, and that made me curious. Can you tell something about yourself?**

Of course, yes. I am a *sannyasi*, a nun, and my innermost desire is to really find out about my True Nature. I'm not clinging to only one tradition, I want to be open, and want to get a deeper understanding of life, of being. About ten years ago, after reading Rinpoche's book *The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep*, Rinpoche came to Vienna, Austria. I attended his seminar and got very inspired by his teachings, learned the practice of the *Nine Breathings of Purification* and was amazed about its instant beneficial effect. I am a practitioner of *Kriya Yoga* and know the way of yogic breathing which connects us with the divine, but this type of teachings and explanations I had never heard before. I could sense the depth of the teachings of Rinpoche and their positive influence on me and nowadays I take every opportunity to come to his seminars and retreats and learn and practice more. As I am a traveling nun, giving myself seminars and initiations into *Kriya Yoga*, I can easily manage to meet Rinpoche more often somewhere in this world.

**Can you say something more about the *Kriya Yoga* you teach?**

It is an old meditation technique, coming from India. There is an unbroken lineage of realized Masters like Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Swami Shriyukteswarji, Paramahansa Yogananda, Paramahansa Hariharananda and Paramahansa Prajnanananda. It is very powerful and very similar to what Rinpoche teaches us in essence. In *Kriya Yoga* we have also concentration and breathing



techniques which help to open and clear the chakras and channels. In *Kriya Yoga* we speak about God. For me the Nature of God is the same inner sacred empty space with which we try to connect and become more aware of when going in Inner Refuge. I have been teaching *Kriya Yoga* for fourteen years and travel all around Europe. We have many groups in Europe from Iceland to Tenerife. We are a very big family worldwide. I am the first and only teaching female monk in Europe in our lineage.

**What do you appreciate most about Rinpoche's teachings?**

We should look at the areas of our lives where we got stuck, where we feel pain, where we feel constricted or angry or sad. I meditate regularly since over twenty years, but I never got this very fundamental advice to bring my blockages, obscurations, doubts and emotions into my practice. To





work with my weaknesses, anger, fears, and to use any painful situation as a path for inner growth. There is some restlessness within me, thoughts, memories of the past, undissolved issues, which are not only hindering me to live in peace and happiness with myself and others but also block me to meditate deeper. Rinpoche points it out so clearly: We have to look at ourselves and work with our mind as it is. Everything what arises in our experience we can use as a path for liberating ourselves. Not to blame others or the circumstances in which we live. But to become more actively participating in one's own progress towards healing, towards freedom, towards peace. It is not just sitting and meditating. If I really want to change myself I have to understand where my blockages are and to work with them. And of course I know from my own experience how annoying a long-lasting difficult relationship with another person can be. I had one over many years. I had given up all hope to find a solution to handle the situation with this person in a better way. But when I heard Rinpoche talking about the 'famous person' and that all experiences we have we experience in our own mind it was immediately clear to me: it is only in my mind. That really opened my eyes. I realized that it was me, my pain-body, pain-speech and pain-mind, which created all these negative stories and bad feelings over so many years. It wasn't her mistake. It was me getting stuck in my own pain-stories.

**Can you tell us something more about the 'famous person' you worked with, and how it worked for you?**

The 'famous person' is that person in one's life of which one thinks that he or she is the reason for all one's troubles, the reason for many sleepless nights, the reason behind all one's anger and frustration. Sometimes it might be a karmic relationship. Even the thought of my 'famous person' or just sensing her presence in the house made me inwardly shrink and getting into either an attack or defending position. My normally good and joyful mood left me in her presence and I became easily irritated and aggressive.

I brought this situation into my practice according to the teachings of Rinpoche. Going into Inner Refuge first and connecting with the felt experience of the inner light and warmth of the true Nature of Mind I invited this situation to be with me

energetically, allowing myself to be with the whole story as it is and just hosting it. In this way and with the other practices taught by Rinpoche in The 3 Doors Academy and in many of his seminars, slowly the intensity of my mental and emotional involvement with her was getting less and less. When we practice with our 'famous person' or any other difficult or challenging situation in our life, it is important not to judge or analyze the story with our conceptual mind, but instead to host the issue, the pain, like a loving mother holds her child in her arms. Through my practice – of course it took some time – the whole story changed its appearance. What I thought is so solid, so concrete, so real, and impossible to change, changed. Today we can speak and even laugh together in a very easygoing natural manner. The old pattern died.

**Are there differences between the Bon teachings of Rinpoche and the Kriya Yoga?**

Yes, there are differences, but I don't really look at the differences. I prefer to look what is the common thing and what helps to feel better in our lives: the love and compassion, openness for everybody. Rinpoche transmits the essence and lets the people know what is important and practical and helping us in our daily life to live with more openness and kindness.

**In the Summer Retreat in 2013, we worked a lot with pain. Rinpoche said: "Just go in it." There is no excuse of taking another path. Actually everybody is free, but he advises us to just do the exercises. To go directly into the pain, stay with the pain, and welcome the pain.**

Yes, and not to avoid it and not to delay it, or to hate it, or to hide it, or to suppress it. We would be all enlightened if there were no obscurations of our innermost essence. The Light, the Truth is within. That what obscures the Light, the Truth, needs to be cleared.

Sometimes I lose the trust in my True Self and get stuck in my pain, my false identity. My pain is not who I am. So, I do not remain with the pain on a mental, conceptual, emotional level, but allow it to be in my awareness, a loving open awareness, which isn't in the need to do anything with the experienced pain, and what happens? The pain dissolves like a cloud in the sky. It's a very exciting experience to see my long cultivated pain-identity dissolve like a cloud and nothing but an empty





Participants of the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* teachings in Maria Alm, Austria.

and vast open inner space full of light and inner joy opens up in my mind.

We can get experiences and realizations of the true Nature of our Mind in allowing our pain to become a path instead of considering a pain or any difficult situation as a hindrance and fighting against it.

**So, now you have a choice: either you stay with the pain or you move on. Either you focus on the openness or you focus on the blame or your guilt.**

Yes, that choice we all have in any given situation of our life. But rarely are we aware of this choice. We do not understand the working of our minds and get so easily stuck in negativity, may it be a sense of guilt or blame, fear, anger or attachment or any other negative feeling or mental concept.

And most of us are not aware of the deeper aspect of our mind, its true Nature. We have the choice to either focus and connect with the true Nature of our Mind, our innermost primordial pure essence, or keep on being the ignorant slaves of the restless, moving mind, the surface only.

**Can you also tell something about The 3 Doors, what are your experiences there?**

With The 3 Doors the past three years had a special taste, a special flavor. Sometimes it was quite

challenging to confront myself with some not so nice aspects of myself and practice with whatever came to me. Alone I wouldn't have done it. But the support from our whole group, the teachers and all the participants, is just fantastic. And every little success is such a joy. Even the experience of becoming aware of me, reacting to some situations or people so massive and uncontrolled because of my so-called emotional-karmic-conceptual pain-body was actually becoming the starting point of just another spiritual adventure. Sometimes I became quite a bit excited and liked to work with all the challenges and bring them into my practice. My biggest challenge was to write down what happened within and how the practices helped. We had to write a journal and sent our transformations to our mentor. To tell the truth, I wanted to give it up and not to complete it. And one of my characteristics – it is seen even in my horoscope – is a strong tendency to stubbornness.

With this issue I still have to work in future. But for now the Masters saved me. Just in the last moment the right energy came to me to make me complete the sixty-three transformations.

E MA HO!

**Interview by Ton Bisscheroux**

Photos: courtesy of Swami Mangalananda Giri



## UPCOMING EVENTS IN EUROPE



**GESHE NYIMA ÖSER**  
FROM FIVE ELEMENTS TO HEALTH AND WISDOM  
22-23TH NOVEMBER 2014, WROCŁAW

More information: [ligmincha.pl](http://ligmincha.pl).




**MARCY VAUGHN**  
5 WARRIOR SEED SYLLABLES  
6-7TH DECEMBER 2014, WARSAW, POLAND

Also: Lecture and meditation Awakening Authentic Presence with Marcy Vaughn on 5th December.

More information: [ligmincha.pl](http://ligmincha.pl).



**Khenpo Gelek Jinpa - Gyalwa Chagtri**  
**Zhang Zhung Nyan Gyud Ngondro**  
December 5th – 7th 2014  
Helsinki, Finland  
[www.ligmincha.fi](http://www.ligmincha.fi)



**Geshe Nyima Woser Choekhorthsang**  
**Theory and Practice of**  
**CHOD**  
December 6th — 8th 2014  
Orte (Viterbo), Italy  
For booking and information about how to reach and where to stay,  
please contact:  
Dana: [thomasdanalloyd@virgilio.it](mailto:thomasdanalloyd@virgilio.it) Tel. +39 3288833756, or  
Lidia: [lcaster@hotmail.it](mailto:lcaster@hotmail.it) Tel. +39 3203837211





# THE HEALING PRACTICE OF THE RED GARUDA

**WITH JOHN JACKSON**  
**JANUARY 9 — 11, 2015**  
**UTRECHT, THE NETHERLANDS**

## **The Red Garuda**

The archetype of the person who rises above all obstacles and obscurations, transforms themselves into an eagle and soars through the sky is found in many cultures throughout the world. In the Bon tradition, the Garuda holds a special position of importance and reverence as an enlightened *Yidam*, a wisdom being who emanates in forms of each of the five elements.

The Red Garuda is associated with the fire



element. The Red Garuda practice is especially known as a healing practice for emotional and physical problems, both for ourselves and for 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 us for a weekend and connect with the power, strength and wisdom that lie within our innermost being.

## **Event dates**

The weekend will start on Friday evening from 20.00 to 21.30 hours with an introduction to the practice.

Saturday and Sunday will be full days of practice from 9.30 to 17.00 hours with a lunch break.

The teachings will be given in English.

The seminar will take place at Centrum Well, Doelenstraat 34, Utrecht, The Netherlands.

More information: [www.ligmincha.nl](http://www.ligmincha.nl) or [www.centrumwell.nl/redgaruda](http://www.centrumwell.nl/redgaruda).

## **Registration and fee**

Price: € 110, including coffee and tea. For participants in the weekend the Friday lecture is free. For those who only wish to join for Friday evening, the fee for the lecture is € 10.

Register through the form on: [www.ligmincha.nl](http://www.ligmincha.nl).  
Your registration is definite upon payment.

## **John Jackson**

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 centre in the mountains of Colorado ([colorado.ligmincha.org](http://colorado.ligmincha.org)), and leads retreats throughout North America and Europe.



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

## Awakening the Sacred Feminine A 5 Day Meditation Retreat with Marcy Vaughn

March 10 - 15th 2015, Pauenhof / Germany

### Sherap Chamma: Mother of Wisdom and Love

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

Those experienced in meditation as well as those who are beginning are warmly welcomed.



### About Marcy Vaughn



Marcy Vaughn has been a practitioner of Tibetan Buddhism for more than 35 years and is a senior student of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. She graduated in the first class of the master's program in contemplative psychotherapy at Naropa University. Currently a therapist in private practice in Pennsylvania, USA. Marcy teaches meditation classes and also leads retreats that explore imagery and voice in the healing process. She edited the books Tibetan Sound Healing, Awakening the Sacred Body, and Awakening the Luminous Mind, all by Tenzin Wangyal. She helped design and teaches in the The 3 Doors Academy, a three-year training program bringing contemplative practices to a secular world.

### Event Details

**Dates:** March 10 – 15, 2015 (arrival in the evening, departure after lunch).

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

**Participation fee (including meals):** € 315,- early bird registration fee (before February 1st),  
€ 350,- registration fee (after February 1<sup>st</sup>).

**Accommodation fee:** will vary from € 55,- to € 100,- euro, depending on private or shared room.

Availability of the rooms is limited, so we cannot guarantee your preference will be available.

**Registration:** [www.ligmincha.nl](http://www.ligmincha.nl) or [www.ligmincha.de](http://www.ligmincha.de). Your registration is definite upon payment.

**Contact** us through: [sherabchamma@ligmincha.nl](mailto:sherabchamma@ligmincha.nl).

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

Organized by:



Ligmincha Nederland and



Ligmincha Deutschland



The sangha

# MEDITATION PRACTICE DIARY



**In September 2014 started in Shenten Dargye Ling in France a four-year meditation cycle. Lowell Britson is one of the participants, and he is going to share his experiences with us in the next issues. Here you can read more about this retreat.**

In the Introduction to *Everyday Life is the Practice*, page 23-27 in this issue, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche describes the way to completely commit to the dharma.

*"Leaving everyday life and committing yourself to formal meditation practice is one way to enter the dharma, as demonstrated by the many yogis practicing in remote places and monks and nuns living a simple monastic lifestyle. Perhaps in your own life, you are considering this approach. You may be retired and financially secure and can clearly decide that this is the time to completely commit your life to practice, renouncing your ordinary lifestyle."*

The traditional way is to do a three year retreat in a monastery with practice and study under supervision of experienced lama's. Even to complete a one year retreat is still impressive. But the restrictions are heavy on outside movements and communications. It is impossible to do such a retreat when you have a job and a family life. In order to accommodate the needs of lay practitioners alter-

native study and practice programs were recently designed in the well-known Nyingma retreat centre in Chanteloube, France. On their [website](#) we find the description of a program 'parallel' to the traditional three year retreat:

*"While more and more people have become interested in performing the intensive practice and study of the traditional three-year retreat, not everyone is able to retire from the world for three and a half years. To help meet the needs of the average lay practitioner and as a result of numerous requests, Pema Wangyal Rinpoche established an alternative to the three-year retreat: a cycle of teachings and practices lasting over a period of 5 or more years, known as the 'parallel retreats'."*

What is the similarity, what is the benefit for the lay practitioner?

*"These retreats aim to offer the same cycle of teachings as the traditional three-year retreat, with the following differences: The retreat is in a less restricted environment: the group meets only every few months for 3-5 days of intensive teachings and practice, and participants make a commitment to practice daily at home. The retreat cycle is pursued for a longer period of time, as practice has to be combined with work and family life."*

With currently several hundred students the organizational set-up is a success. More institu-





tions will be expected to operate in this spiritual 'market,' experimenting with new designs. A comparable meditation program, meeting the wishes of more and more lay practitioners, was set-up at Shenten Dargye Ling, France, in 2009 under the title *Gomdra Meditation School*. From their website (1):

*"The Shenten Dargye Ling Meditation School (Shenten Dargye Ling Drub-dra) was established in 2009. It offers an opportunity for intensive study and practice of Dzogchen following the curriculum of the Meditation School that has been established by Yongdzin Lopon Tenzin Namdak in Tritten Norbutse in Nepal. Between 2009 and 2012 the three year Atri-cycle was completed successfully."*

The first cycle of the meditation training was finished in 2012. The start of a new four year *Gomdra* cycle was announced for 2014 – 2017. It is called *Gomdra Meditation School*. The length and content of the new cycle is different than the first cycle. Instead of the *Atri Dzogchen* in three years, it is now four years, based on *Zhang Zhung Dzogchen*:

*"It is with pleasure that we now announce that the second four-year cycle of the school will start in the fall of 2014. The topic for this four-year cycle will be the complete transmission and practice of the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud. The cycle will last for four years with a retreat of seventy days each year taking place during autumn."*

*Students will study the texts and apply the preliminary and main practice. The daily routine will consist of four sessions of meditation per day, the performance of the rites of the Four Generosities, and one teaching session. The remaining time is spent on study, recitation of mantra and other accumulations."*

Although a smaller scale than the Chanteloube 'parallel' program, this *Gomdra* program also seems to be a success. The registration for the *Gomdra* was closed in the summer. Twenty-seven participants were accepted and there was a waiting list.

Staying within the defined boundaries and restricted communication count 'only' for the seventy days when the whole group is practicing in Shenten Dargye Ling. From the website:

- *"Students who enroll for the meditation school are required to commit to follow the entire program of the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud cycle that will last until 2017 and will take place in autumn of each year."*
- *Participants agree to follow the instructions of the retreat master.*
  - *During the program participants are required to adhere to the daily routine unless excused by the retreat master.*
  - *Participants stay within the retreat boundaries. The retreat boundaries are defined as Shenten Dargye Ling's premises.*
  - *Correspondence with the outside world (telephone/internet/email) can only take place once a week, on the seventh day ('holiday')."*



Unfortunately it is not possible to sample and check if this retreat is for you. However, we will occasionally give you an inside view of how it is there. We found Lowell Britson, one of the participants of the new cycle, willing to share parts of his diary with us. Lowell is an experienced Bon Buddhist practitioner. For instance, Lowell guided and supported Ngöndro practitioners at the [Olmo Ling Bon Center & Institute](#). Lowell also attended several teachings with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, like *Twenty-One Little Nails* at Serenity Ridge, Virginia. At Shenten Dargye Ling Lowell followed the last three years *Atri Dzogchen* teachings with Lopon Tenzin Namdak and Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung.

We expect Lowell's first diary in the Winter 2014-2015 issue of *Ligmincha Europe Magazine*.

#### Note

(1) The quoted website pages were on: [www.shenten.org](http://www.shenten.org), but were actually removed at the start of the *Gomdra* program on September 4, 2014.

**Text by Frits de Vries**



# EMPTINESS AND FORMS

Though different forms are perceived, they are in essence empty;

yet in the emptiness one perceives forms.

Though different sounds are heard, they are empty;

yet in the emptiness one perceives sounds.

Also different thoughts arise; they are empty,

yet in the emptiness one perceives thoughts.

DUDJOM RINPOCHE



Photo by Ton Bisscheroux



# EVERYDAY LIFE IS THE PRACTICE

**In this article, published in *Shambhala Sun* in November 2005, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche tells us how to turn our daily challenges into meditation practice. Here we reprint the article, which is published at the website: [www.shambhalasun.com](http://www.shambhalasun.com).**

Leaving everyday life and committing yourself to formal meditation practice is one way to enter the dharma, as demonstrated by the many yogis practicing in remote places and monks and nuns living a simple monastic lifestyle. Perhaps in your own life, you are considering this approach. You may be retired and financially secure and can clearly decide that this is the time to completely commit your life to practice, renouncing your ordinary lifestyle. For most of us in the West, however, it is hard to leave our lives in order to practice dharma. In fact, to do so could cause harm to our family and loved ones. So we have no alternative but to bring our dharma practice fully into our lives, which is just as valid an approach as leaving our life behind to practice dharma.

There are certainly times when you can leave your daily working life — times for learning and for personal retreats — but these events should not be the primary emphasis of your spiritual development. Such special occasions are opportunities to gain a clearer idea of how to practice and to find some perspective as you reflect upon how you are going to integrate practice into your life. But you should not depend on them to grow and achieve liberation.

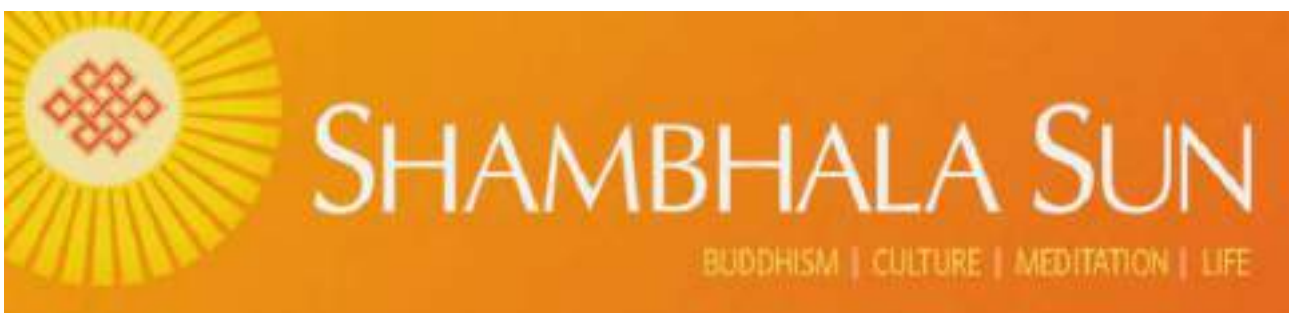
A conflict may emerge for those of us who pay bills and have children and have an ordinary, beautiful life. We feel creative and self-motivated within our ordinary life. We also know the value of formal practice, yet that sometimes conflicts with

family or job responsibilities. On top of that, we don't even know if we are making progress in our practice, because we feel we are not doing it enough. Many times, with the pressures of daily life, we find ourselves saying "Oh, I didn't do any formal practice at all last week. I am a bad practitioner. I committed to do this, and now I just dropped everything." We feel bad about ourselves and our path.



So we end up with a big gap between the reality of our everyday lives and our formal meditation, and big gaps like this are a problem. Because we are consumed by the fact that we are not practicing enough, we don't apply the antidotes we learned to counteract our habitual patterns. We don't deepen our experiences of practice. Overall, we are uncertain how to judge the success of our meditation practice. We are not skillful enough to bring the practice into our lives and build a bridge between dharma and the challenges of everyday life, including the many relationships it involves.

To illustrate this gap, I give the example of a friend of mine who wants to have a loving relationship with her mother. Fighting and arguing between them has been a pattern for a long time. Since her mother is quite old, she wants to change this pattern of arguing. She is now determined to make a





change. With this in mind, she plans for a wonderful time with her mother on a weekend visit, thinking “I’m going to try my best, take some time off, and spend quality time with my mother. We will go out for dinner and a movie. We’ll relax together and enjoy each other’s company.” On Friday, as she leaves work and drives out of the city, she encounters lots of traffic and arrives late. When she arrives, her mother opens the door with, “You’re late,” followed by, “Oh, what have you done to your hair?” That is just enough to awaken the old karma, the spontaneous manifestation of the same mother and the same daughter, and they are back in the same argument. Sparks fly.

This experience shows that my friend was not really engaging deeply enough in her practice for the change she desired to spontaneously manifest. Intellectually, she wanted it to, but internally things hadn’t really changed. If they had, perhaps she could have responded to her mother’s comments with humor, exaggerating her comment and laughing. “Oh yeah, Mom, my hair. It’s very civilized all week, but come Friday it goes wild.” Some humor, something that changes the direction, is often all it takes. If her practice had ripened in her, or touched her as deeply as her mother’s comments had, she could make that shift. Or perhaps she would not even hear the comment. She would be focusing on putting her bag down and washing up rather than listening for and identifying herself entirely as a target for her mother’s comments.

If we were following the path of leaving daily life in order to practice dharma, perhaps we would be focused on renouncing negative emotions, such as anger. And certainly, if you don’t have anger, you’re not missing anything. But if you do experience anger, it doesn’t help to pretend it’s not there, or to suppress it. Rather, consider how you can give some space to it, because it is already in



The Wheel of Life with the six lokas.

you, and cultivate its antidote, which is love. Then your anger can actually become the foundation for the achievement of wisdom.

One of the well-known practices in the Bön Buddhist tradition is called the six lokas practice. While it is a formal meditation practice done on your cushion in a quiet setting, I introduce it because discussing it will help to address how each of us can work to have the results of our formal practice manifest in everyday life. According to the Bön tradition, the six lokas, or six realms, are the actual dimensions of suffering which make up samsara, or cyclic existence, and beings migrate from one to another of these realms through countless lifetimes. It is only through the attainment of buddhahood that one is free from this cycle of birth and death. The underlying cause of the suffering of all of cyclic existence — of each of these realms — is ignorance, or not recognizing



one's true nature as open, clear, and perfected. Until you do, you are reborn in a realm if the root cause for that realm drives you as you transition through the bardo, or the stage between one life and the next.

Anger is the root cause to be born as a hell being; greed and attachment leads to the hungry ghost realm; ignorance and doubt are the seeds to be born in the animal realm; jealousy is the root cause of the human realm; pride results in the demi-god realm, and a balanced array of emotions in blissful self-absorption causes one to be born in the god realm. These emotions may be familiar to each of us as troublemakers in our everyday lives. Psychologically, from one moment to the next we may experience ourselves transitioning from one realm to another, driven by conflicting emotions. Certainly, as we look at our families, corporate organizations, and countries, we can observe each of these realms playing out as the various manifestations of human suffering. In fact, the human realm is an ideal place to work with these emotions, to cultivate their antidotes, and to recognize one's true nature.

In this six lokas practice, the practitioner examines and reflects upon the causes and conditions of the various forms of suffering in cyclic existence. Through visualization and mantra, the practitioner burns, clears, purifies, and overcomes the causes and results for each of the realms of suffering. Through this practice, we are reminded of the truth of impermanence, we deepen our compassion for the suffering of all beings, and we clear away the obstacles to realizing our natural mind, which is Buddha.

Here is a simple description of how the practice works. If you are working with the purification of the hell realm, for example, where the suffering is caused by anger, you reflect deeply on the times in your life when you have acted or spoken driven by anger. You would then take refuge and rouse devotion in the Buddha, dharma, and sangha; purify anger and the potential for anger to manifest in the future through a visualization practice and mantra; and cultivate love, the antidote to anger.

Self-reflection on our negative actions of body, speech, and mind is essential to the practice. We can use the ten precepts — ten actions to be

avoided and ten virtues to be cultivated — as a very useful guideline to support self-reflection by considering how we violate the precepts with our body, speech, or mind. For example, we may reflect upon our negative speech by thinking “Driven by anger I spoke harshly to my mother. I am aware of the suffering this action caused. In my spiritual development, changing that behavior would make a difference.” The precepts allow us to be more definite in seeing and working with our negativity.

You could look at the ten actions to be avoided in relation to greed, the root cause for the suffering of the hungry ghost realm, as you seek to clear the causes and conditions of this realm of suffering. Look at your actions in the past, remembering those times when you were stuck in your version of the hungry ghost realm, feeling incomplete and empty and needing so much to be filled up. You may realize that you gossiped because of an underlying feeling of being inadequate and hungering for attention. Reflecting upon the suffering of yourself and others caused by this action and developing sincere remorse, you can now connect to your inherent open awareness.



*Shenla Odkar* represents open awareness.

This open awareness is represented by the Buddha, and is also at the very foundation of your being. When we take refuge, this is what we are truly taking refuge in. It is this open awareness that allows you to look very closely at the suffer-





ing that arises in your life due to being driven by greed and attachment. Then, after reflecting on the nature of greed and how the realm of the hungry ghost manifests in your life, and reflecting that countless others are suffering in this way, you apply the skillful means of visualization and mantra. The causes and conditions of the suffering are penetrated, destroyed, and purified, and the antidote of generosity is cultivated.

As important as your hour session of meditation is — reflecting on the causes of the hell realm and cultivating the antidote of love, or reflecting on the greed of the hungry ghost realm and cultivating the antidote of generosity — the time when you really grow spiritually is when you are challenged in your life. You grow when your mother opens the door and greets you in that familiar way that invites you to either manifest the seeds of your anger or to exercise your awareness. In the same way that you build muscle when you lift weights, your wisdom muscle is built when you are challenged in life. The challenges are not easily found in a comfortable retreat setting. But they are certainly found in everyday-life settings.



In daily life, there are many times when we unexpectedly encounter problems, and we don't always greet these encounters joyfully or with strength. Sitting on our meditation cushion is a good time to bring these situations to mind, and then to look directly at those encounters, with the support of our refuge in the Buddha as open awareness. In order to bring the fruit of practice into the realities of everyday life, it is important to look deeply and directly at yourself, to examine your actions of body, speech, and mind. The

teachings and practices give you ways to overcome and transform negative emotions, so you can examine yourself with confidence. It is not the case that the closer you look the scarier it gets.

You also do not take this opportunity for reflection as a means to over-analyze your behavior or to develop guilt. You look closely and directly because you feel like a warrior. You can look at your life with strength, with power, with motivation, and with a solution. Because you have a means to transform your life, you actually feel grateful when you can see your stuck places, rather than being fearful, overly intellectual, or guilt-ridden.

By looking closely with the bravery of a warrior, we can grow and transform the self that encounters issues and problems in life. We can shift from being driven by anger or greed or ignorance to abiding in the open space of awareness. We may discover that in this open space of awareness, the antidotes of love, generosity, clarity, openness, peacefulness, and joyful effort naturally and spontaneously arise.

If you are ripened through your practice, if you have allowed your practice to touch those places of weakness in you, when anger arises in daily life, you will not be driven by that anger. In the best case, anger becomes the fuel for the spontaneous expression of love or kindness, or at the very least, you may find some space to host that anger without being driven by it.

In order to love fully, you need to understand the wisdom of emptiness, which I often translate as openness. Openness is the ground of our being.

But how do you actually become more open in the face of anger? I have clear advice: keep silent; don't act. Usually we think acting out is a way of taking care of things when we are angry. "I really have to speak up about this!" Instead, create space by not acting. Give more time. You may think that not acting sounds too simple, but that is my advice. If you are able to give time, you will create space. If you are not able to give time, if you are not able to not act, you will have driven actions, driven speech, and driven thoughts, all of





which result in the ten negative actions to be avoided. Instead, guide your actions, speech, and thoughts with the antidotes and with the ten virtues. Guide yourself rather than being driven by your emotions. To make this possible, you must give time, even though it is sometimes very hard. When people are angry, they have to do, do, do! How fast you feel the urge to act is often the clear message that it is not time to act. The thought "Now I have to act" is a clear message that you need to allow more time and space. And when you give space, you often make the amazing discovery that you don't have to say or do anything. Have you felt that?

If your practice is ripened, awareness is spontaneous. If your practice is not that ripened, a little conscious effort is useful. When you reflect on your life, you try to prepare the causes and conditions for ripening. When you take personal time to practice, you build the foundation and reflect, so you are ready, or almost ready, to change something in your life. When a situation that challenges you arises, you apply a little extra effort to shift your behavior and make the change. Once things change, the benefit of change itself brings power to your awareness, and the next time a challenging situation arises, your awareness is stronger, and you need less effort to shift your behavior. In this way you experience the completion or the result of your practice in your everyday life.

The gap between the opening of your heart in your practice and seeing the fruit in results in your daily life is a very important gap to bridge. We have already discussed reflecting upon our challenges and bringing this reflection to the cushion, looking directly with open awareness at our emotions and conflicts. When we have developed our practice of reflecting with openness, we must keep creating bridges between our practice and our behavior, so that we can make changes in our lives. Perhaps we experience love, but it is only half-ripened, and so a little encouragement to manifest that love would be nice. If you can manifest love in your kitchen or your workplace or with colleagues or with your family, if love can manifest in those particular situations where it seems necessary, that will be a practice. It is not a formal practice, but definitely it is a practice. I would give more credit to those times when you are conscious and aware even when you are challenged and pushed. In those cases, your spiritual muscles

are exercised. When you pay attention to the difficult places and are able to shift them, that is great joy. You can see right in front of your eyes the areas where you have difficulty and the shifts you are able to make.



Perhaps as you have grown through your meditation practice, you have learned to be nice where otherwise you were not. Think of that as a practice, instead of thinking, "I missed my practice, my half-hour of sleepy meditation, this morning." What is the big deal of missing that meditation when you have been kind to somebody in that difficult situation? Consider the success of your day rather than the failure of missing a session of practice. It is important to think, "Yes! I am practicing!" The idea of feeling guilty and inadequate because you are not on the cushion doing your silent meditation is not useful.

I'm not saying formal practice is not important. It is. But we can expand our notion of practice in order to bring the results into everyday life. If we look closely at our lives, we always have time to practice. Do I need to meditate quietly in order to create a little extra problem to work with? No, the long line for the security check at the airport is perfect. I can get agitated and manifest my six realms there — and in many other places — quite easily. In terms of the practice, that time is completely available to practice the virtues and the antidotes. That time becomes wonderful practice as you live your everyday life, conscious and working with the situations of life, and your formal practice supports you to make the changes that benefit you and others.

**Text selected by Ton Bisscheroux**

Photos by Ulla Riewer and from [mingwalk.wordpress](http://mingwalk.wordpress)



## TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE'S 2014 AND 2015 EUROPEAN SEMINARS AND ON-LINE TEACHINGS

| When                         | Where             | What  | More information  |
|------------------------------|-------------------|---|---|
| <b>2014</b>                  |                   |   |   |
| October 24 – 26              | Brussels, Belgium | Weekend seminar:<br>Dream Yoga  | <a href="http://www.facebook.com/Ligmincha-Belgium">www.facebook.com/<br/>Ligmincha-Belgium</a> |
| November 8                   | Your computer     | Free Live Webcast:<br>Sharing Your Inner Peace<br>and Joy for the Welfare of<br>Others                  | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a>  |
| November 8 –<br>December 7   | Your computer     | Interactive online course:<br>Tibetan Dream Yoga  | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>  |
| December 28                  | Your computer     | Free Live Webcast:<br>Topic to be announced   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a>  |
| <b>2015</b>                  |                   |   |   |
| January 10 –<br>February 1   | Your computer     | Interactive online course:<br>Awakening the Sacred<br>Body: The Tibetan Yogas<br>of Breath and Movement | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>  |
| March 7 –<br>April 5         | Your computer     | Interactive online course:<br>Tibetan Dream Yoga  | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>  |
| May 9 – 31                   | Your computer     | Interactive online course:<br>Tibetan Meditation:<br>Achieving Great Bliss<br>Through Pure Awareness    | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>  |
| July 11 –<br>August 9        | Your computer     | Interactive online course:<br>Awakening the Sacred<br>Arts: Discovering Your<br>Creative Potential      | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>  |
| September 19 –<br>October 11 | Your computer     | Interactive online course:<br>Tibetan Sound Healing   | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</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

# 15 – Winter 2014-2015



Meet the Belgium sangha

*Soul Retrieval* Internet Course

Lishu Retreats start in 2015

Preparing to Die





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

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# GREETINGS AND NEWS FROM THE EDITORS

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

Every end is a new beginning. It is not only that the year 2014 ends and the year 2015 starts, but also in our sangha happens a lot. So, we want to invite you to sit in a comfortable chair and take some time to read the forty-four pages of this issue.

You probably know that on January 10, 2015, the yearlong online *Soul Retrieval* Course starts with a full-day webcast. Already nearly 2.000 people have registered. Every month in 2015 you can watch a live webcast, and Rinpoche has invited all the sanghas to organize meetings to watch and practice together. On the next pages you can read more, and you can also check on the Ligmincha websites and Facebook pages what your (local) sangha offer.

The Latin American 3 Doors Academy students graduated in September 2014, and the new 3 Doors Academies will start in the U.S. and in Europe in 2015.

Austria hosted the fifth, and last, retreat of the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud*, but the teachings from the *The Oral Tradition of Zhang Zhung* will continue with the teachings of *The 21 Nails* during the Summer Retreat, August 10 – 16, 2015, in Germany.

In this Magazine we start with a new section called 'Preparing to Die.' Dying is a big issue, but most of us don't want to think about it, and postpone making preparations for it. We discuss an interesting and practical book by Andrew Holecek: *Preparing to Die: Practical Advice and Spiritual Wisdom from the Tibetan Buddhist*

**Begins January 10, 2015**

**The True Source of Healing**

A yearlong Internet course in Soul Retrieval  
with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

**FREE and open to all!**

Register for Jan. 10 all-day webcast: [ligmincha.org](http://ligmincha.org)

Full course materials: [ligminchalearning.com](http://ligminchalearning.com)



In March 2015 you are welcome in Lishu Institute, India, to participate in a *Phowa* Retreat and/or a 6-Week Intensive Tibetan Language Retreat.

As a community we are growing more and more together. You can read about the changes taking place in the international organization, and how we learn more about each other. And, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche wants all the sanghas to practice the same way at each location where we celebrate *Losar*. You are invited to celebrate this event during the European Sangha Weekend, February 20 – 22, 2015, in Buchenau, Germany.

*Tradition.* We hope that this will be the first article of many to come on the issue of dying, and we would like to invite you to share your experiences in one of the next issues.

We introduce the Belgium sangha; you can read what happened in Europe and the activities to come; and more.

Last, but not least, we want to wish you an inspiring 2015, while you connect to the Stillness, Silence and Spaciousness.

In Bon,  
**Ton Bisscheroux, Chief Editor**



# THE TRUE SOURCE OF HEALING

## A Free, Yearlong Course in the Tibetan Practice of *Soul Retrieval*

You are warmly invited to attend a year-long Internet course in *Soul Retrieval*! Beginning this January, Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will generously offer a free course that includes everything from monthly live webcasts to discussion forums, recorded webcasts, MP3 audio recordings, and downloadable print materials. It is based on Rinpoche's forthcoming book *The True Source of Healing: How the Ancient Tibetan Practice of Soul Retrieval Can Transform and Enrich Your Life* (Hay House, summer 2015). Open to everyone from newcomers to experienced meditators!

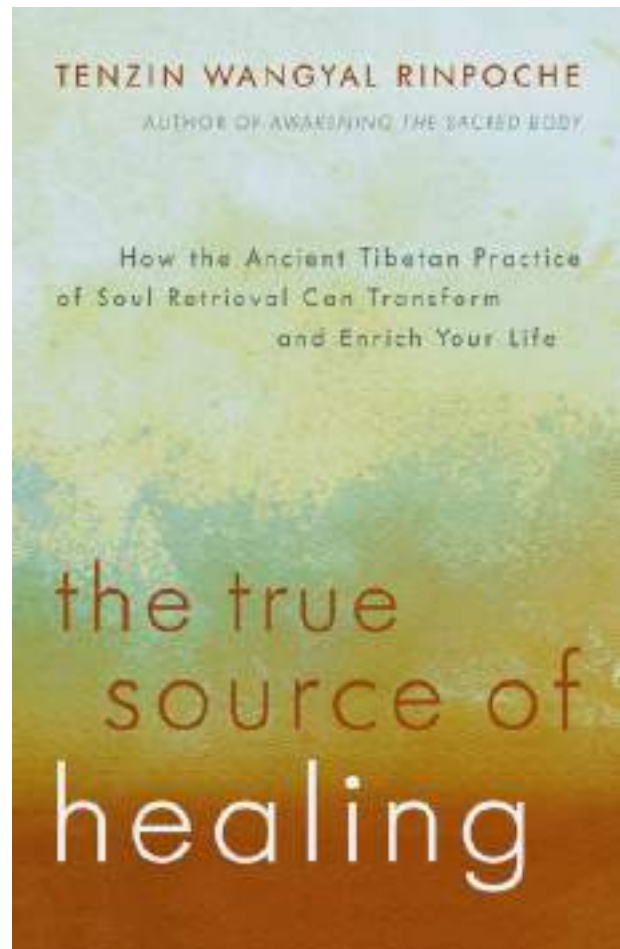
Rinpoche will start off the New Year – and the 2015 course – on Saturday, January 10, with a daylong Internet retreat, “Reconnecting with Your Joyful Essence: An Introduction to the Tibetan Practice of Soul Retrieval.”

This will be a wonderful opportunity to learn the practices of soul retrieval from your home computer, or – in some places around the world – in person at local group webcast screenings and guided meditation sessions. You can view just one webcast, or for truly life-changing benefits, commit to engage in the entire course with all its supports. Soon after each live broadcast, a recording of the webcast will be posted on the course site, [www.ligminchalearning.com](http://www.ligminchalearning.com), so you can view and review any webcast after its original broadcast date. MP3 recordings and discussion forums will be available in several languages.

### About the Course

Done in a committed way, the practices of *Soul Retrieval* can transform your life. They are typically used as a lifetime practice for nourishing one's inner being and restoring one's soul. More specifically, they can help you to:

- Avoid losing your vitality when faced with difficult life challenges.



- Revitalize your personal, family, and professional life.
- Recognize powerful internal and external sources of healing.
- Experience healing on all levels – physically, energetically, psychologically.
- Bring healing to others around you.
- Come home to your inherently joyful and creative nature.
- Progress on the path to higher liberation.

The practices in this course draw from the ancient Tibetan Bon Buddhist teachings of *Soul Retrieval*. While the course instruction contains none of the traditional Bon rituals, the guidance it offers is the heart essence of their healing powers.

### Course Begins January 10, 2015

During the first, full-day webcast event in the series on January 10, Rinpoche will lead two





teaching sessions and senior teacher Marcy Vaughn will lead two related guided-meditation sessions. Already nearly 2.000 people have registered to participate in the day's events! Most but not all other monthly webcasts to come will take place from 21.00 – 22.30 h (Central European Time) on the second Saturday of each month. See full course schedule on page 7.

The course will continue on February 14 as Rinpoche gives an in-depth explanation of the five elements and their relationship with one's soul (see "What Is Soul Retrieval," below). In March, he will guide us in noticing the ways in which we personally have lost our soul and help us pinpoint which element we are most in need of at this time. As the year continues, he will explain in detail how to retrieve these elemental essences, both from the natural world outside us and from the ultimate source of healing: our own inner refuge. He will give advice in overcoming the sense of loneliness that is so pervasive in today's Western society. Finally, he will explain how to use these practices for physical healing, as well as how to nourish one's soul on an ongoing basis, throughout each day and throughout one's life.

In each webcast event Rinpoche will guide a meditation, offer teachings, and give any instructions for formal and informal practice in the month to come. Soon after the webcast ends, video and MP3 audio recordings will be made available at the Ligmincha Learning course site. Downloadable print materials will provide added support in the practice.

Whether you attend these live webcasts online or in person at local screenings, participating with the worldwide sangha can lend a deep level of support. There will be opportunities online via a chat screen to ask Rinpoche questions about the practice. Local group screenings and practices will offer an opportunity to get to know others locally, learn about other local events, and experience further support and camaraderie.

As the New Year begins, we hope you will join participants worldwide in these revitalizing and healing practices!

### Register Now to Attend

You must register separately for each free live



webcast event, as well as for the free yearlong course with its full support materials.

- Register now for the first, full-day webcast event, scheduled for Saturday, January 10, 2015, at: <http://webinarjam.net>.

- Register separately for the yearlong Internet course with full support materials at: [www.ligminchalearning.com/soul-retrieval-course](http://www.ligminchalearning.com/soul-retrieval-course).

**Related teachings:** You are also invited to attend *Soul Retrieval* teachings in person with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche at Ligmincha's annual Spring Retreat in central Virginia from April 3 – 5, 2015. Learn more and register at: [www.serenityridge.ligminchainstitute.org](http://www.serenityridge.ligminchainstitute.org).

\* \* \*

### What Is Soul Retrieval?

*A young girl sits alone on the fireside bench, entranced by the embers and flickering flames. She absorbs the heat into her face and body, undisturbed by the chatter of nearby adults. As the flames dart creatively, arising from nowhere and dissolving into nowhere, she settles ever more deeply into an ineffable sense of joy in simply being.*

*Day after summer day, children play at the swimming pool. In the morning they dive, tread*





*water, dart below the surface, splash, float, play water games. Sometimes after lunch they return to swim some more. The longer they commune with water, the more they become one with that sense of flowing comfort and healing that only the water element can bring. The comfort stays into the night, and continues upon awaking.*

The elements of nature are portals to something very essential and sacred in us as human beings. They bring us closer to the moment, to our true selves. Many of us have had spontaneous experiences like the ones above – perhaps in childhood or during an extended vacation in a natural setting. But such intimate experiences with the elements can be fleeting, and they typically become little more than a memory. Most of us lose essential qualities as we grow older and are shaken by life's challenges. We lose the sense of the groundedness and connectedness that comes with communing deeply with the earth element; the flexibility and flow of connecting with the air element; or the sense of openness and freedom from one's conditions that comes with a deep relationship with the space element.

According to the teachings of the Tibetan Bon tra-



dition, when certain elemental qualities become lost to us, we lose parts of our soul. When we are able to retrieve those elements – when the qualities of the five elemental essences of earth, water, fire, air and space are balanced in us – our soul is restored to health.

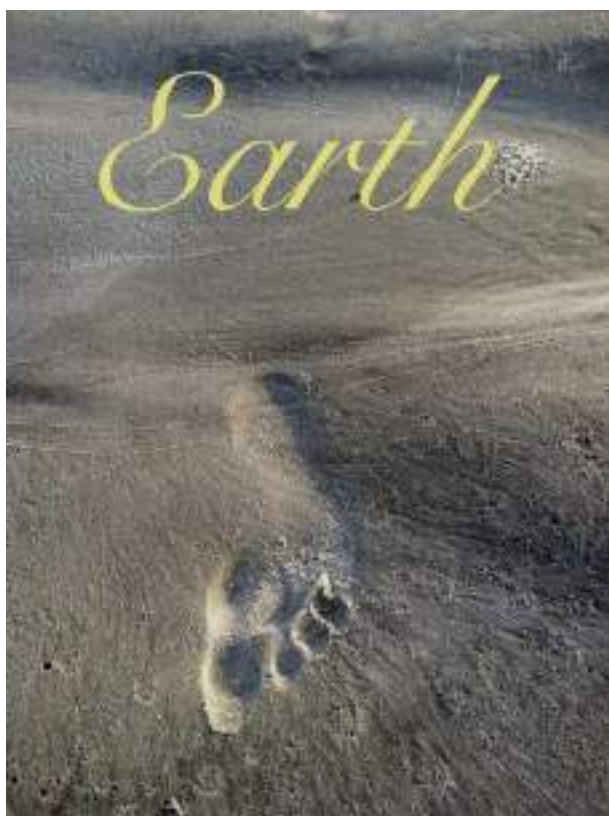
Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche explains that the sacred qualities of the natural elements are always there, deep within us. The external elements of nature simply permit us to recognize these qualities. They help us open our eyes, heart and mind to what is already within. For the same reason, certain meditation practices can also help us tap into this deep source of healing within us. The true source of the elements is our own inner refuge.



Ancient practitioners of the Tibetan traditions recognized the power of nature and its elements, and the power of meditation, to bring profound healing to our soul on all levels – spiritual, mental, energetic and even physical. Indeed, the elemental essences are said to be part of every experience we can have, from normal daily interactions to higher meditative states. They are the building blocks of both dream and reality. The teachings show how we can gain access to their healing properties at any moment of life.

**Text and element images by Polly Turner**, web-cast producer for Ligmincha International and editor of Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's forthcoming book, *The True Source of Healing: How the Ancient Tibetan Practice of Soul Retrieval Can Transform and Enrich Your Life* (Hay House, summer 2015). Adapted from an article first featured in *Voice of Clear Light*, the bimonthly e-newsletter of Ligmincha Institute.





### Full Webcast Schedule

Each live webcast of *The True Source of Healing* course is scheduled for the second Saturday of each month in 2015 with the exception of August (third Saturday). Each webcast will take place from 21.00 – 22.30 h, except the full-day webcasts as noted below. Within a few days after each live webcast, the recorded webcast will be posted at the course site, [www.ligminchalearning.com](http://www.ligminchalearning.com). All times shown are Central European Time.

#### **January 10, 2015, FULL-DAY LIVE WEBCAST \*:**

Reconnecting with Your Joyful Essence: An Introduction to the Tibetan Practice of *Soul Retrieval*.

#### **February 14, 2015, 21.00 – 22.30 h:**

The Five Natural Elements: Finding a Healthy Balance.

#### **March 14, 2015, 21.00 – 22.30 h:**

Discovering the Deepest Needs of Your Soul.

#### **April 11, 2015, 21.00 – 22.30 h:**

Communing with Nature to Nourish Your Soul.

#### **May 9, 2015, 21.00 – 22.30 h:**

The True Source of Healing: Your Own Inner Refuge.

#### **June 13, 2015, FULL-DAY LIVE WEBCAST \*:**

Tapping Into Relationships to Nourish Your Soul.

#### **July 11, 2015, 21.00 – 22.30 h:**

Overcoming Loneliness: Finding the Friend Within.

#### **August 15, 2015, 21.00 – 22.30 h:**

Nourishing Your Inner Being: The Heart of *Soul Retrieval*.

#### **September 12, 2015, 21.00 – 22.30 h:**

Nourishing Your Inner Being: Questions and Answers.

#### **October 10, 2015, 21.00 – 22.30 h:**

The Power of Warmth: Physical Healing Through Meditation.

#### **November 14, 2015, 21.00 – 22.30 h:**

Healing from the Source: Cutting the Root of Your Pain.

#### **December 12, 2015, FULL-DAY LIVE WEBCAST \*:**

*Soul Retrieval* as a Lifetime Practice.

#### **\* Schedule for the full-day live webcasts on January 10, June 13 and December 12:**

15.00 – 16.30 h: Teaching with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

17.15 – 18.15 h: Guided Practice with senior teacher

19.15 – 20.45 h: Teaching with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

21.30 – 22.30 h: Guided Practice with senior teacher





## LAUNCHING LISHU INSTITUTE'S RETREATS AND STUDY PROGRAM

In the webcast of November 8, 2014, Rinpoche shared some exciting news with us: Lishu Institute in India is ready for take off. This brand new retreat center, established to help preserve the ancient spiritual tradition and culture of Bon, is organizing two retreats upcoming Spring and will start the 3-Year Residential Program in September 2015.

Some of us have already witnessed how Lishu Institute, beautifully located in the hills near Dehradun, in Northern India, can uplift your spirit. Upcoming Spring retreats are a chance for all of us to (re)connect to the place, to ancient wisdom and (thus) to ourselves.

### **Phowa Retreat**

A two week *Phowa* retreat with Shedrup Lopon Geshe Gelek Gyatso Rinpoche will take place from March 5 – 19, 2015. These teachings are part of the Mother Tantra, *Ma Gyud*. Students will learn



Shedrup Lopon Geshe Gelek Gyatso Rinpoche.

how to develop the right attitude in preparation of death and how to perform the *Phowa* practice at the moment of death. Shedrup Lopon Geshe Gelek Gyatso Rinpoche is one of the head teachers of the Bon Dialectic School at Menri Monastery, who received his Geshe degree in 2006 after more than thirteen years of study. He taught in western countries several times and looks forward to working with students at Lishu Institute.





Sangmo Yangri, receiving her diploma at the 14th convocation in March 2012.

### 6-Week Intensive Tibetan Language Retreat

The second retreat from March 20 – April 30, 2015 will be a six weeks intensive Tibetan language instructional retreat guided by Sangmo Yangri, Ph.D. All levels will be accommodated: teaching the basics to beginners so they will be able to start reading Tibetan mantras, prayers and texts and providing more experienced students with personalized, advanced instruction. Sangmo Yangri is author of a book on the life of Tibetan Bon master Palden Tsultrim, sought-after conference speaker and the first Tibetan woman to receive a Ph.D. in Bon Philosophy.

For anyone considering to take part in the 3-Year Residential Program, starting September 2015, these Spring Retreats are highly recommended.



Geshe Thupten Negi, Secretary Lishu Institute.

### 3-Year Residential Program

The Residential Program will offer university level education of the Bon doctrine in a very supportive environment. Students from the West will study the traditional Bon texts in depth as part of an organized group, guided by experienced Bon masters. The three main texts of the Bon tradition: *The Nine Ways of Bon*, *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* (The Oral Transmission from Zhang Zhung), and *Ma Gyu* (The Mother Tantra) are an important part of the curriculum, as well as Tibetan language, Tibetan yoga and practice/meditation.

### Volunteers

If anyone feels drawn to offer help to manifest these retreats: the Lishu committee is presently in need of a few good volunteers. We are looking for people who work well with others, with English language proficiency, and with abilities in computer and office skills, marketing, websites, financial and program planning. If interested please contact Geertje Bloemers in the Netherlands at [geertje.bloemers@lishu.org](mailto:geertje.bloemers@lishu.org).

Please check [www.lishu.org](http://www.lishu.org) for details and updates. Registration Spring Retreats is open at: [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org) and [www.lishu.org](http://www.lishu.org). Link to November 8 webcast: [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com). (The part where Rinpoche talks about Lishu starts at 1:04 min).

### Text by Lishu Committee and Floor van Orsouw

Photos: courtesy of Shedrup Lopon Geshe Gelek Gyatso Rinpoche, Sangmo Yangri and Geshe Thupten Negi



# TRANSFORMING THE DISCONNECTED MIND INTO THE SPACIOUS OPEN MIND

When Raven Lee was in Hilversum, the Netherlands, for an evening talk about 'Transforming Your Life through Meditation,' Jantien Spindler and Ton Bisschoux had the opportunity to ask her about The 3 Doors Academy.

**Ton: How would you define the 3 Doors Academy?**

Raven: It is an intimate setting where people are taught to go deeper to know who they truly are. Being supported in a warm environment, in an authentic presence, they will be able to speak freely, and be able to receive support and feedback. The word 'Academy' refers to a sense of 'school.' It is like a school where we receive instructions about who we are and who we are not.

**Ton: Can you explain who we are not?**

Raven: Deep within us is an authentic essence, and many of us growing up have glimpses of it. But then we are taught by our families, our culture, and our human condition to create an identity for survival, in order to fit in. And that identity causes us to react, rather than to say: "This is not who I truly am." That identity is not our true identity. It arises from our conditioning, the need to follow or rebel against rules, and is a reaction to what is happening in the external environment. The 3 Doors training creates opportunities to discover the true essence within us, the unchanging, open, innate awareness of joy, love, compassion and peace. When we are in the presence, all these qualities spontaneously arise.

**Ton: I can feel it when you talk about it.**

Raven: What do you feel?

**Ton: It feels like my heart is open. I feel present, focused, and there is an openness. And also, I don't know who I am.**

Raven: Yes, it is like that. When I am in that open awareness, the one that asks: "Who am I, what should I do?" disappears. There is just that spaciousness. And in that spaciousness is this genuine warmth that spontaneously arises. That does not



mean that sadness will not come. But underneath the sadness is a sweetness that never goes away.

**Jantien: For me it is really touching. When I am listening to you I feel warmth in my back, as if there is someone there. I remember Rinpoche's words: "The warm, strong mother is behind you." I feel safety and warmth, and from there I can face whatever is happening.**

Raven: Exactly. I think that sometimes we go into meditation thinking it is about having no thoughts, without realizing that meditation is to help us transform our dualistic mind. That part of us that is grasping is also the doorway to enter into this spacious mind. And when we do it, it is impossible not to feel warmth. And we start laughing! In The 3 Doors Academy we have a lot of fun discovering the truth. Being a teacher of The 3 Doors Academy is one of the most humbling and heart-opening experiences in my life, because I get to spend time with people who trust, who strip away their defences to be nakedly seen, and who share so openly. It is a lifelong relationship.

**Ton: So once you enter, you don't leave any more?**

Raven: Well, it is your choice. You feel connected, and once you learn what is most important in life, you do not wish to go back. You know it works. It can be challenging when you meet a part of yourself that is really difficult. But if you go away from this part it will still be there. You can try to turn your back on your self, but it won't go away. In order to go deep, deeper and deeper, to face parts of yourself that you may not even know are





there, you need the support. We need to know that we are loved, not because we are perfect. We are loved because we are. But definitely, there is a choice. Would you like to taste The 3 Doors?

**Ton: I have already been to 3 Doors Taste weekends, and they are really good experiences. I was amazed what happened in such a short time. But I can imagine that it is difficult for people who don't have the experience to know what 'presence' means. Can you explain it?**

Raven: We can sense when something feels tense. We can feel when someone says something that is not coming from the truth. But many of us may not have learned what is 'presence,' or may not feel we are truly loved. So to trust someone who says, "This is a group where love is there, presence is there." How can you trust that? We are not asking people to trust that it is going to be there immediately, but it is about developing and becoming connected to the presence, to sense this state of awareness. One feels that she is being witnessed and held when she speaks about her pain. Presence is a sense of warmth. It is the warmth of being witnessed. And I think that is why the program cannot just be a weekend meditation. It is a process where strangers come together and share a journey of discovery. But we are not really strangers, because everyone who joins the Academy is answering a call. Initially there is a sense of trepidation, but this dissipates quickly as we get to know one another. Presence is something that develops throughout the two and a half years of the Academy, and beyond. You sense the presence of Inner Refuge within yourself, and within the group. There is healing power when you are experiencing that presence.

**Ton: Is presence something you, as teacher, create, where the group can connect with?**

Raven: For the teachers, it is about holding the space, facilitating and guiding. And yes, in many ways, it is also as if we are creating the presence. But actually we do not create the presence. We provide the environment, guide the practice, so that the presence can be felt. It is always there. It is like the sun, which always shines. If there is mist

obscuring the sun, we can clear the mist, and then there is openness. So the presence is the open awareness and the warmth, the joy, the aliveness that arises from this open space.

**Ton: I find meditating on my own difficult. I do my daily practice, but I would like to have more structure to go deeper, and it seems impossible to do it alone.**

Raven: Yes, I think you are very wise to come to that realisation. One of the reasons that Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche developed his vision for The 3 Doors was that he saw how some of the students coming to his teachings for ten to fifteen years had not changed. Meditation means to train the mind. So there should be change. Through practice, we learn to transform the dualistic mind, or what you could call the dull, disconnected mind, into the spacious, open mind. The 3 Doors Academy helps us to make this transformation. We work together as a group and there is a lot of support. Group support and practice helps one develop one's individual practice. It's not easy, but with the support of the group and the teachers, it gets easier.

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

Raven: Oh, that memory always takes my breath away! I was born and raised Catholic, but in adulthood, I was drawn first to *Vipassana* and then later into Tibetan Buddhism. A friend of mine, who knows I am a Jungian therapist and work a lot with dreams, suggested I attend a book signing on *Dream Yoga* in Los Angeles. As soon as I saw Rinpoche there, my heart opened, and I knew that he was my root teacher. So, I went to his Dzogchen teachings that weekend and there was one empty seat right in front of Rinpoche. I sat there and looked at him, and it was like I was a child coming home to my mother. And when we started singing *Guru Yoga* I started crying. That is the joy and the warmth of presence.

**Interview by Jantien Spindler and Ton Bisscheroux**

Photo from [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)



# THE 3 DOORS LATIN AMERICAN ACADEMY GRADUATES!

**The 3 Doors family is proud to report the completion of another big step towards Tenzin Wangyal's vision for our international community. The first Latin American Academy graduated in September 2014! We are pleased to introduce our new sisters and brothers and welcome them into our ongoing programs and activities.**

Please celebrate with the graduates in their boundless enthusiasm for their community, their teachers, and The 3 Doors practices.

through the wonderful practices of this training program.

As the time of our graduation approached, we found ourselves breathing the joy that filled the air. From the beginning of this, our last retreat, we felt a strengthened bond within our group, and this allowed a profound connection among us. From inner refuge, we shared our experiences as fellow brothers and sisters in an atmosphere of confidence in the bonds of love and friendship with one another and with our mentors. In the words of Patricia Vigil, "a collective space was generated that allowed us to see into each other's



Under a deep blue sky and the magical mountains of Tepoztlán, the 26th of September 2014 arrived. The thirty students from The Latin American 3 Doors Academy gathered to celebrate one of the most important events of their lives, our graduation ceremony and the end of a journey. During this journey we shared our joys and pains, revealed our vulnerability, and discarded everything we did not need. In this way we overcame our fear and deepened our confidence to be who we really are. All of this was possible because of the strength of our inner refuge, developed

eyes and embrace one another from the heart, healing us individually as well as collectively."

During the celebration, a spontaneous many-colored mandala of joy manifested from our hearts. The ceremony reflected our inner state and our shared respect and cooperation. From here, we received our dear root teacher, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, who offered this beautiful invitation to take our hearts into the world, "This is just the beginning of a commitment that takes us to the liberation of ourselves for the benefit of





others.” During the two and a half year journey, we were guided by our beloved mentors, Laura Shekerjian and Alejandro Chauol, who listened and supported us with warm hearts through all difficult moments, and our ever-present warrior, Kallon Basquin, who with his clear vision was a sustaining force.

As many students said, *“We are deeply thankful.”* And this was reflected in the color, light, food, and music of the celebration as expressed in the words of the graduates themselves:

*“The luminous ceremony of ‘The Candles’ and the liberation of butterflies as a symbol of transformation, were very significant to me and lie deep in my heart as a commitment to honor all the 3 Doors practitioners.”*

– Efraín Díaz

*“The celebration was unforgettable. There were incredible flowers and pre-Hispanic music that brought together the vibration of the elements to surround and purify us. The chanting touched the fibers of our hearts, and we all vibrated in unison. Afterwards came the delicious meal, Cuban music, and butterflies.”*

– Laura Calderon

*“It was a festivity that came from the refuge, full of warmth, love and joy. We lived wonderful, magical moments, I will remember it as one of the most beautiful days in my life.”*

– Marisol Bernal

*“The loving company of everyone present in the refuge made our graduation day an unforgettable one in which each of us could honor the fruits of these incredible two and a half years. I experienced a refuge of peace that extends to all my brothers and*

*sisters. I have a feeling of openness in my heart and an enthusiasm to continue in the 3 Doors. I am forever thankful.”*

– Rosario Arellano

Now that 3 Doors Academies have graduated in the United States, Europe, and Latin America – with a second United States group to graduate next spring – we are happy to announce new Academies in all three geographic locations. Please apply! Transform your life through these simple and powerful meditation methods of body, speech, and mind that facilitate inner transformation and ripen the authentic expression of your unique gifts.

[Applications are now open](#) to the next U.S. Academy, which will begin in April 2015 and to the next European Academy, which will begin in June 2015.

The next Latin American Academy has just been announced for 2016; the application process will begin in 2015.

**Text by Anne Forbes and Laura Calderon**

Translation by Aline Mackissack and Lourdes Hinojosa





# MIND AT PEACE

In this section *Going Beyond* we are going to publish inspiring texts from other Buddhist streams and other religions. Nicolas Gounaropoulos, active in Ligmincha Belgique and Senior Dharma

Teacher in the Zen Buddhist Order of Hsu Yun, is the first to contribute. He has chosen this text by P'ang Yün, because this text speaks about the refuge experience and how we have to keep this experience simple.



Photo from: [www.anhui.travel](http://www.anhui.travel)

**When the mind is at peace,  
the world too is at peace.  
Nothing real, nothing absent.  
Not holding on to reality,  
not getting stuck in the void,  
you are neither holy or wise, just  
an ordinary fellow who has completed his work.**

***P'ang Yün***



# I AM FOR ACTION, NOT FOR REFLECTION

Every sangha has its own structure, and every country is in a way special. Belgium is a country with three official languages: French, Flemish – which is similar to Dutch – and German. And the person who ‘embodies’ Ligmincha Belgique, Nicolas Gounaropoulos, is also a Senior Dharma Teacher in the Zen Buddhist Order of *Hsu Yun*. Ton Bisscheroux interviewed him.



## **When did you meet Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche for the first time?**

In a bookshop I saw the book *Healing with Form, Energy and Light* right in front of me, and when I opened it I saw the pictures of the *Tsa Lung* movements, practices with the five elements, and found them very interesting. After reading the book I wanted to meet the author, and went to a seminar in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. That was twelve years ago.

Before I met Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche I had another teacher, Tarab Tulku Rinpoche, who also taught on the elements and dreams. With Tarab Tulku Rinpoche I had done retreats in Belgium, France and Luxembourg during some years, but then he passed away. Soon after this I came in contact with the teachings of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. It was an incredible continuation.

Also, I have been practicing Zen Buddhism from the age of twenty. Since twelve years I have a little Zen sangha in Belgium, which is connected to the Chinese *Ch'an* practice. Zen is very direct, and I think that Zen has a lot of resemblances to Dzogchen. When I heard the teachings of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche about the refuge, I thought: that is exactly what every Zen practitioner has to learn. Perhaps, for me the best teachings for my Zen practice came from Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. I find that the Inner Refuge from the Bon tradition can help to understand the essence of the Zen meditation practice. It is very complementary for me.

**I have also practiced Zen for a short period, but for me it was too difficult. While I was ‘just sitting’ there were so many thoughts that it felt almost like a torture.**

For most people it is difficult to start with Zen, because you need to have a taste of what refuge is to understand the essence of the practice. If not, you are quickly discouraged. Zen practice is often wrongly presented only from its cultural, monastic dimension. Rinpoche's teachings give us the key to integrate the practice in everyday life. It helped me a lot to integrate my Zen practice in my everyday life and how to use it for transformation too.

## **Can you tell us about Ligmincha Belgique?**

Until now I was alone, Ligmincha Belgique has no legal status, and I have collaborated with the Dutch sangha when John Jackson came in 2011, and Geshe Thupten Negi from *Lishu Institute* visited us in 2013. When Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche agreed to come to Belgium, he told me to contact the Dutch sangha to ask for support.

## **When visited Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche Belgium for the first time?**

In October 2014 we organized the first seminar with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche on *Dream Yoga* in Brussels. It was wonderful because Rinpoche's teaching was very clear, and the people who attended the seminar were very enthusiast. I didn't do much advertising, but everything manifested, and about one-hundred-thirty people came from Belgium, Denmark, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Poland and Switzerland. After the seminar I received a lot of e-mails expressing that the teachings touched them deeply.

## **Was it a great challenge to organize the seminar?**

When I started to organize the seminar I was alone, and it was amazing how everything went in a flow. The Dutch sangha took care of the finance and the bookshop. I knew a nice place, and when I





contacted them, there was just one weekend free, the one Rinpoche wanted to come. When I thought about how to do the sound, someone from the Zen practice group proved to be a professional working in a music studio. And he knew somebody who could make video recordings. For the advertising I used a flyer from Ligmincha France, and then one friend called me and asked: "Why don't you ask me to do that, because it is my work?" And other people from the practice group also offered to help.

During the retreat I also learned: don't make a problem where there is no problem. Sometimes we put too much effort in things, and then they go wrong. Sometimes we just have to wait a bit, and then things go along. Let me give you an example from the seminar. A friend works in a teashop, and I asked him to take care of the tea for Rinpoche during the retreat. He loved to do it. He had special tea made by monks, and he used a special small teacup, which kept the tea all the time warm. So, he did the hot water in a thermos, and Rinpoche could pour the tea in his cup. Rinpoche drank every five minutes some tea. During the retreat I was thinking: "This is not the right way, we have to go to serve Rinpoche directly. But how to do that with this little cup?" That became a problem for me. After the seminar we talked with Rinpoche about the tea, and he said it was wonderful, the taste was good and it was always warm in this little cup. There was no

problem at all, but I realized that we have tendencies to complicate everything. Rinpoche was so relaxed about everything, and that was the best lesson for me: how simplicity creates a flowing space. We just have to serve and trust, and give people responsibility. Organizing is a great teaching, it is a great lesson to stabilize the practice and not lose the connection.

And another wonderful manifestation is that my wife helped me a lot with the organization, and after the seminar she started to practice.

#### **What are your plans for the future?**

I would like more people to get involved in the Belgium organization. After the seminar, I send an e-mail to people asking if they wanted to participate in the Belgium Ligmincha organization, but there was not much response.

I hope that Rinpoche will come again in the future, and I would like to invite other teachers, like Alejandro Chaoul, John Jackson, Raven Lee, and Geshe Lundup, who lives in France.

#### **Are there practice groups in Belgium?**

At my place, in Namur, we have been practicing since six years, every week, *Tsa Lung*, *The Nine Breathings* and *Sound Practice*. Last year I started a group in Brussels, but it was too much for me. Now, I have proposed to do it once a month in Brussels, and combine it with Rinpoche's internet teachings. On the day of the broadcast I organize a gathering in Namur with a projector and a big screen, and the people who can't come there might join in Brussels a few days later.

#### **I have heard that you also practice *Tsa Lung* with children. Can you tell about that?**

It is an extracurricular activity, organized by an official organization working in the school. It is a weekly yoga course for children from seven to twelve years old. We do breathing exercises and the *Tsa Lung* and some *Trul Khor* movements. The idea is to do it very simple, sometimes in a more funny way. Children like to play, and the idea of movement is very interesting for them. They can concentrate for only five to ten minutes, and they have to move, otherwise the energy is moving everywhere. So, if you don't propose something else, they become agitated. In September we started for the third year. In the children who have participated, I saw a lot of changes when it







Geshe Thupten Negi in Namur, Belgium.

comes to concentration. I think that *Thrul Khor* is a wonderful practice for the children.

The children also love the *Sound Practice*. I slowly start to work with the breathing and holding breath. I propose to do it three times, and not five times, and if they can't hold the breath I tell them just to do the movement, and connect to the movement. After one hour they are very peaceful, and when they go out it is like they have charged the battery. They go outside and play. During the practice I see a lot of yawning, and that is a good sign of balancing. When I observed children just doing the movement, and not working with the breath, I saw the same. The idea is to learn them to be present in the here and now, and make contact with the body.

And sometimes we do stillness, silence and spaciousness, and I use words like stillness as a tree or silence like a cat, and be like the sky.

I also tried to practice with children of five and six years old, but that did not work very well, because for them it's more difficult to respect and understand the instructions.

**How did you come to the idea to do these practices with children?**

Working as kinesiologist, with muscular testing, many children came to me with questions about stress at school and family problems. I am a social worker, work since twenty-five years with people who have a handicap or psychiatric problems; worked in a prison; worked with an association for women with cancer; and after that, I wanted to work with children. I looked on the internet, saw an announcement that an organization nearby was looking for somebody to work with the children, so I phoned, and the next day I could start.

### **When you're open, miracles happen?**

I think it is also because of The 3 Doors program I have done. So many things changed in my life, and many external manifestations happened. Sometimes it is difficult to understand with my mind how things can happen. Before the training I wanted to have my own practice place, where I can give the Zen training, *Tsa Lung* classes and Reiki teachings. And during The 3 Doors training everything came, and we will start to build it in February 2015. Before The 3 Doors training it was just a dream, but soon it will be in my house. Another manifestation was to share my practice with others. I worked a lot on how to feel confident, and develop my expression of how I want to share my practice. I teach Reiki and Zen totally differently than before. It is as if all the teachings infuse all the aspects of my life. I found a deep connection with the inner refuge. I don't think too much about it, but expression has become a part of me, that is very present.

### **Can you tell about the Prison Project?**

Before I practiced with Rinpoche, I did Zen practice, just sitting, with prisoners. After I learned the *Tsa Lung* from Rinpoche, I contacted another prison. The jailors were enthusiast, because the practice changed the mind of the prisoners. It opened space in jail. We practiced for one-and-a-half year every week. The problem in that prison was that the group always changed. People were waiting there for their pronouncement in court, and had to go elsewhere for their prison sentence. There I did not work according to Ligmincha Prison Project program.

The Ligmincha Prison Project gives guidelines that you offer a short course of several weeks. I think that works better. And it is good to give people support after they have left the prison, because



for many prisoners it is more difficult to be outside than inside the prison. For most of them it is difficult to continue to practice when they are released. The Ligmincha Prison Project gives prisoners that support. Giving the training in the prison, it would be good to use Rinpoche's DVD with the *Tsa Lung*, but often it is not allowed to take a DVD into a prison. It would be nice if we, as sangha, could offer more practice in the prisons in Europe, also for the people who work there. The jailers say that there are many programs for the prisoners, but not for them, and they suffer a lot too. When we would teach the jailors how to practice, it would benefit a lot of people: the jailors, their families, the prisoners.

While I worked there I was also invited to go to meetings for all the people who work in the prison. A great problem was people with psychiatric problems who stayed in prison. I saw people who should not be there, but should be in a hospital. The jailers thought, "These guys are not feeling well, let's sent them to yoga classes." So I had some difficulties working with these people. It was nice to do, but also difficult because I was alone, and they closed the door behind me. When I had a problem I had to call by phone. Just by going there, I felt how precious it is to be free. Even when the prisoners want to take a shower they have to ask permission. Working with them I also had the chance to find compassion and equanimity for them, because I didn't have to know why they were there. The practice also helped me a lot to work with my own fears.

**You are the coordinator of the Prison Project in Europe. We once interviewed Hannah Lloyd about the Prison Project in *Ligmincha Europe Magazine # 3*. When people are interested, can they contact you?**

Yes, I would like to find a way to work with people in Europe. They can contact me at: [gounaropoulos@gmail.com](mailto:gounaropoulos@gmail.com). There is a whole program ready, and we offer short practice sessions. The Prison Project has no religious framework, so it is accessible for everybody. That's also what I deeply love in Rinpoche's teachings, he speaks everybody's language, and there is so much openness. There is so much compassion in opening the traditional framework and making it accessible to all, everywhere where it is needed.

**Do you make in the practices you offer a clear distinction between The 3 Doors and the Bon practices?**

It has to be different, but I am not the best person to explain why. I am more for action, not so for reflection. The 3 Doors Academy teachers, the Ligmincha Board and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche have done a wonderful and incredible work by creating a good framework. They continue to work on it, and we will see how it will manifest. There are a lot of people who can benefit of these teachings, but I can't wait till everything becomes clear to start helping people. My experience is: the simpler things are, the better things go. One of the most beautiful gifts with the Inner Refuge is that when you have a good connection with it, everything comes in the right way, how to look, how to act.



John Jackson in Pauenhof, Germany.

**What do you want to share with the sangha?**

For me it was very helpful to work deeply with one practice, and not change it after some time. One simple practice becomes more and more powerful. And when we always change we don't get a chance to see the depth. For me the *Breathings of Purification*, *Tsa Lung* and *Sound Practice* are all complete paths. I have been doing the *Tsa Lung* for years and every time there are fruits coming from the practice. Sometimes we think that complexity gives good result, but for me it is more repeating the same practice over and over again, and go deeper and deeper.

**Interview by Ton Bisscheroux**

Photos: courtesy of Nicolas Gounaropoulos





# WHAT'S HAPPENED IN EUROPE

Here is a report from what has happened in the European sangha. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche visited Austria, Belgium and Germany, and gave internet teachings. Some sanghas worked together inviting lamas and other teachers.



## October 14 – 19:

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught Part 5 of *The Experiential Transmission of Zhang Zhung* in Maria Alm, Austria.



## October 24 – 26:

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught *Dream Yoga* in Maison Notre Dame Du Chant D'Oiseau in Brussels, Belgium.







#### November 6 – 9:

Khenpo Tsaltrim Tenzin Rinpoche visited Bratislava, Slovakia. The first two days he taught *Atri*, fixation with characteristics (photo right). And he taught two days from *Zhang Zhung Nyien Gyü Dja Dral Dje Me* (photo top). It was enriching for our practices and we felt very honored to welcome such a great Master.



#### November 22 – 12:

Geshe Nyima Woser Choekhortshang taught in Wrocław, Poland, *From Five Elements to Health and Wisdom*. More than thirty participants came to the teachings.





### November 28 – 30:

The Austrian and Slovakian sangha worked together inviting Geshe Nyima Woser Choekhortshang for a weekend. On Friday he gave a public talk about *Phowa* in a very nice tea-house in the center of Bratislava, Slovakia. About twenty-five people participated, and amongst them some members from the Austrian sangha.



On Saturday and Sunday there was a *Chöd* retreat in the Drikung Gompa of the Buddhist Center in Vienna, Austria. More than twenty people participated – also some from the Slovakian sangha – and all enjoyed it a lot. It was very intense as we were looking closely at the text and Geshe-la explained the meaning of all the lines of *The Laughter of the Dakini (mkha' 'gro gad rgyangs)* – a *Chöd* text written by Sharza Rinpoche.



Geshe-la showed us also how to play the *Damaru* and bell and it was wonderful to do the practice together.



### December 6 – 8:

Geshe Nyima Woser Choekhortshang taught in Orte, Italy, the ancient practice of *Chöd*. A dedicated group of fourteen people attended and experienced the great compassion this practice can generate.







**December 5 –7:**

Geshe Gelek Jinpa taught *Ngondro* from *Gyalwa'i Chagtri* in Helsinki, Finland. About 40 people attended.

**Free Live Webcast**  
**Sharing Your Inner Peace and Joy  
for the Welfare of Others**  
with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche  
**November 8, 2014**  
19.00 –20.30 (C.E.T.)  
*Translations in multiple languages available*  
[www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)

You can watch the recording here:

[Sharing Your Inner Peace and Joy for the Welfare of Others](#)

**Free Live Webcast**  
**Guided Meditation from the  
Experiential Transmission Teachings, Part 1**  
with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche  
**December 28, 2014**  
21.00–22.30 h. C.E.T.  
*Translations in multiple languages available*  
[www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)

You can watch the recording here:

[Guided Meditation from the Experiential Transmission Teachings, Part 1](#)





# LIGMINCHA BERLIN MOVED TO A NEW HOME

**The Berlin sangha moved to a new and bigger place, because the sangha expanded. Ulrike Bross-Kurat, chair of Ligmincha Berlin, reports.**

On September 28, 2014, we moved to our new and much more spacious rooms in a quiet area of Berlin-Friedenau, Germany, which means literally peace in the meadows! In the afternoon it was an uplifting feeling for all of us who helped on that day and during the eight weeks before renovating and setting up everything nicely to be finally sitting on our red cushions and chanting the first Guru Yoga together solemnly again.

The energetic opening of our center was done by a traditional blessing ceremony with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and one day later, October 22, 2014, by his very inspiring public talk on *Tsa Lung*, for which we had more than one-hundred visitors. We could not believe we were able to host so many people in there but this meant really stretching our capacities to the limit. By these two opening events the new *Gompa* and the whole center (altogether 120 m<sup>2</sup>) became much more lively and sacred than it was before. Everyone from the closer Sangha could feel that.

We offer now practice groups twice a week on Tuesday and Thursday. Our growth motivated a few more people to become members of the non-

profit organization Ligmincha Berlin and also to take over some tasks. We could certainly do with more of that and keep inviting people to donate and to work with us! We have a fifth board member elected in our annual meeting at the end of October 2014, and feel now with that increase that our working base and decision-making processes are stabilizing.

We want to express our heartfelt thanks to our beloved teacher Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche who has always encouraged us to think big, keep going and take risks, to his senior Western students who have already been here and supported us a lot, and last not least to our dear friends from Ligmincha Deutschland who were really fast in supporting us with their very useful contribution of new meditation mats.

**Text by Ulrike Bross-Kurat**

Photo: courtesy of Ligmincha Berlin

## Planned activities in 2015:

**February 13 – 15, 2015:** Geshe Nyima teaches *Dream Yoga*.

**March 27 – 29:** Wolfgang Krebs teaches *Introduction into the Practice of the Six Lokas*.

**May 8 – 10, 2015:** Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche teaches: *Outer, Inner and Secret Tsa Lung*.



# THE END IS A NEW BEGINNING

**With the fifth retreat of the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* in Maria Alm, Austria, from October 14 – 19, 2014, the cycle of five years teachings ended. Karoline Seltenheim, who was responsible for the organisation, looks back.**

I remember, when we discussed with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in 2009 to start a cycle of the *Experiential Transmission of Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* teachings in Europe, Rinpoche very often pointed out the importance of these teachings.

international sangha, and many things happened. One of the highlights was that many of the new board members of Ligmincha International gathered on our last retreat in October 2014. We were honoured by the visit of the new chair of Ligmincha International, Rob Patzig. Several international meetings were organized during the retreat, where some people, who could not be present in person, participated through Skype.

We concluded the retreat in a very festive setting by having a gala dinner and in the evening we



Almost the same photo as five years ago...

When we started to organize this retreat, I thought if we would rent a place for approximately one-hundred-twenty people, that would be fine. So, it was a big challenge to manage that around one-hundred-forty-five people could participate during the cycle. Finally we ended these precious teachings with at least one-hundred-twenty people, and those who finished the five years cycle were honoured by Rinpoche with a beautiful certificate.

In the first European newsletter – now *Ligmincha Europe Magazine* – is on the front-page a photo of the first retreat in Maria Alm, and if you're interested you can read in that [newsletter](#) several articles on how it all started. Then it was already said to be the “start of building a community.” During these five years we grew together as an

could enjoy some excellent presentations of creativity of many of our international sangha members.

During this retreat the questions arose “Can we continue?” and “Will Rinpoche give another *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* cycle in Europe?” Rinpoche said that the teachings of *The 21 Nails* next year during the Summer Retreat (August 10 – 16, 2015) in Buchenau, Germany, is from *The Oral Tradition of Zhang Zhung*. He also emphasized that it is now up to us to practice, prepare for the dark retreat experience, grow together as an international sangha and find a home for Ligmincha in Europe. Of course, we will take his advice in our hearts.

**Text by Karoline Seltenheim**

Photo by Martin Schroeder



# 9TH INTERNATIONAL SANGHA PRACTICE-WEEKEND

*with participants from Europe*

**Losar 2015: February 20 – 22, 2015**

We are pleased to invite you to participate in our practice weekend in February 20 – 22, 2015. 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 upcoming gathering takes place around Losar since 2012 and offers:

1. Setting up the *Gompa*
2. Practices as taught by Rinpoche during the Summer Retreat 2014
3. Sang Chö



**Date** | 20 – 22 February 2015,  
Friday 20 February 2015 arrival 18.00 h

**Place** | Schloss Buchenau | Eiterfeld, bei Bad Hersfeld

**Costs incl. meals (vegetarian)** | 108 - 147 Euro  
(depending on accommodation preferences)

**Organizer** | Ligmincha Deutschland e.V.

**Registration** | [click here](#) (German form, English form follows soon)

**End of registration** | starting 13 February 2015 please contact us personally





# FEMALE ENERGY FLOWS THROUGH PAUENHOF

From April 23 to 27, 2014, a meditation retreat was held at the Pauenhof, Germany, guided by Marcy Vaughn. It was organized by the German, Finnish, and Dutch sanghas. The theme was *Sherab Chamma, Loving Wisdom Mother*. The following is an impression by Adrienne van der Maas. Thanks to Christel van Eijnatten for her feedback and editing, and Wieger de Leur for the translation.

*"Don't think that the teachings are complicated, our restless, moving mind is."*

With this statement Marcy Vaughn starts the retreat. She makes a fist and then opens her hand. The essence of the teachings and of your nature are as simple to realize as unfolding your hand, she explains. In this seminar we'll work with our habits, judgments, and assumptions about ourselves and our world. Marcy calls these karmic imprints the pain identity. We can learn to dissolve these imprints in the openness of our Natural Mind. In this practice we do that by connecting with the wisdom which recognizes our nature and the love which supports the release of our pain identity. Both these qualities are embodied by *Sherab Chamma*. The vase she holds in her right hand is a symbol for love and kindness. The mirror in her left hand represents wisdom. This practice is a tantric meditation that helps us recognize our true nature through the three doors of body, speech, and mind.

In preparation for the practice we do the *Nine Breathings of Purification* and a short *Guru Yoga*. Then we reflect on our physical body here and now. We direct our attention to those areas of the body that bother us. With clear awareness of the physical sensations we experience, we rest our attention in the stillness of the body without any judgment. In this way we host the physical sensations; we look at the painful areas in our bodies with loving attention, which enables the release and healing of what goes on behind, within, or around these painful places.

We continue with breathing exercises to open the mind for experiences of the past and expectations



of the future. This opens the space for blocked positive qualities, like loving kindness, to arise. In this part of the practice we focus on the pain identity and on "Who is the one with doubts and insecurities; who is experiencing this?" It is not so much about what we experience, but about the one experiencing. That's the one with stories, ideas, wishes, demands. That's the one with an agenda, who wants the pain to leave and dissolve, and who wants this sooner rather than later. Marcy's comment is that the Natural Mind has no agenda, it looks from open space; it is about discovering that both are related, the event (trauma, pain) and the one looking, and by giving space we enable the transformation of both the pain and the one who suffers.

In the last part of the practice we rest deeply in connection with loving wisdom and then from that connection we radiate wisdom and love to those who suffer around us.

This may sound simple, but for me as a practitioner it's enormously complicated. It's not only my mind. I missed parts of the introduction and transmission, because I don't hear a lot, due through a forty year old partial deafness. Other practitioners seem to dissolve painful experiences effortlessly, have beautiful experiences, and see impressive images. I hear little, see only darkness when I close my eyes, and don't feel anything but the pain in my body. Then Marcy says something that lifts me up. "Go to that pain, go into it and see the event, look more closely, and deeper, go there." At last I know what to do. Immediately my painful



bodily experience shifts into a calmer and milder sensation.

Practitioners have come from far for this retreat: United Kingdom, Finland, Austria, Germany and the Netherlands. What brings us together is our common interest in practicing together and Marcy's teaching on female energy. After the meditation, Marcy shares some experiences of her practice with us. Her openness flows through the group and stimulates us to share more. Marcy vocalizes this when she says: *"It's important to allow and host and heal our collective wounds in a group."*

With this, Marcy draws attention in her teaching to the influence that the lives, behaviors, and thoughts of our ancestors have on us. On an unconscious level we carry that with us. As soon as we connect with our ancestors, we encounter those hidden, secret, and collective wounds. Of course we have that influence on our own offspring and we want them to be spared from this. We wish for a better life for our children and especially more love instead of more suffering from our collective wounds. These practices allow us to express these intentions. Through recognizing this, the practice of *Guru Yoga* develops a deeper dimension for me. *Sherab Chamma* is the guide as I focus on painful experiences, rest there, and experience openness and discover my true nature. The tendency to avoid painful experiences is human and usually a pattern of survival. Becoming aware of discarded emotions and hidden fears means recognizing what is inside of you and remaining close to your own experience and through this, your true nature. Marcy calls this becoming intimate with yourself. In this process, *Sherab Chamma* can be an example, a help, or a mirror of our own true nature. Connecting with the ancestors opens the door to realizing their pain; connecting with the lineage of transmission or the refuge tree, the lineage of enlightened masters, opens the door to light and space. It is a beautiful journey from collective pain to collective wisdom.

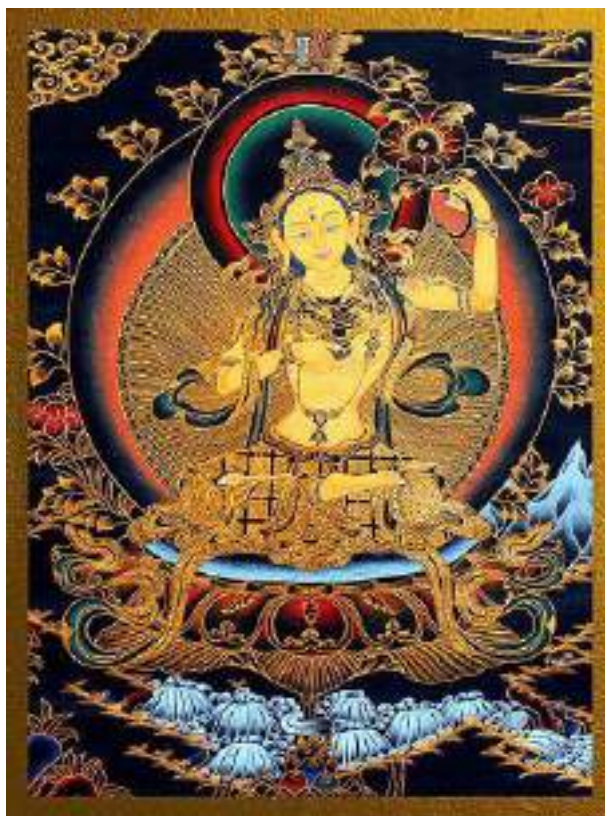
Marcy tells us about her respect for Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and the gift of talking from your heart: *"Drop your individual protection and show who you are; allow all suffering to move and flow through you; feel love and wisdom shining like a jewel."*

The practice of *Sherab Chamma* during the day and the invocation of Yeshe Walmo in the evening were supported by the whole group; this support was tangibly present and such a special experience. The wish to do a fire ceremony, to empower experiences and release suffering, arose effortlessly.

This intensely beautiful retreat ended in a fitting way, with a ceremony for the well-being of loved-ones who suffer from their conditions.

We are grateful for Marcy's inspiration and her personal style of teaching, which allowed for personal exchange and reflection on the practice, for her attention to questions, humor, and space for all of us.

**Text by Adrienne van der Maas**



From March 6 – 8, 2015 will be the next *Sherab Chamma retreat* with Marcy Vaughn in Helsinki, Finland.

Information and registration: [www.ligmincha.fi](http://www.ligmincha.fi).

From March 10 – 15, 2015 will be the *Sherab Chamma retreat* with Marcy Vaughn at the Pauenhof in Germany.

Information and registration: [www.ligmincha.nl](http://www.ligmincha.nl) or [www.ligmincha.de](http://www.ligmincha.de).



# WE ARE GROWING TO ONE COMMUNITY

In the [Ligmincha Europe Magazine # 13](#) Rob Patzig informed us about the newly formed Ligmincha International Board. He said that many activities were underway. Curious about that, Ton Bisscheroux invited him for an interview.

**In June you had the first meeting of the International Board. What has happened since?**

When we met in June it was our first chance to come together and learn about each other, discover what we have in common and what different skills we bring to bear. And it was then that Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche shared with us his vision for Ligmincha International. Rinpoche sees us uniting together to serve the *dharma*, study and practice – becoming one community instead of forty separate communities. Since then we have been talking, skyping, and having calls to discuss how best to implement his vision.

Before the International Board was formed, Rinpoche and a group of dedicated practitioners had already spent almost three years discussing and creating a set of bylaws and planning for the changes Rinpoche wanted to make. This group was primarily or exclusively American, and so the first project for the board was to discuss those bylaws and adapt them to an international organization's needs. So we spent three months rewriting the bylaws to give them a more international feel, and in November Rinpoche signed them. You can find those bylaws soon on the Ligmincha website.

We have also drafted a charter and language for the bylaws of affiliated organizations: the Ligmincha and Chamma Ling centers around the world. These are based on the International Bylaws and are guidelines meant to help ensure that we all serve the same vision and purpose, but they offer flexibility based on the needs of different groups and the laws of different countries.

A big change organizationally is that Serenity Ridge, our retreat center in Shipman, Virginia is now owned by Ligmincha International. That means that as our headquarters it is not just a Virginia or even an American center. It belongs to



us all, and it must serve the needs of the international community in addition to being a retreat center. Previously Serenity Ridge was run more or less independently. The Board formed a committee with responsibility to oversee the retreat center and report back to the International Board. We hope that more and more activities at Serenity Ridge will be related to global activities as time goes by.

We are having conversations about how we make sure that we understand Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's vision, and also understand the needs of practitioners from forty practice groups all over the world. How do we make sure the communication goes in both directions, so that Rinpoche can hear all the voices, but not hear from hundreds of people all the time? And also make sure that his vision is clearly communicated to all the sangha members. Our needs are not always the same and we need to respect our differences. For example, anyone who has been to retreats in different locals – Mexico, the U.S., Poland, Austria, etc. – can see that there are differences in culture and in our daily practices as well as language. But we have to make sure that the vision for Ligmincha and our support of our Spiritual Director, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, is the same wherever we go. This is one of the primary roles of the International Board, trying to balance those





needs, making sure that there is good communication, setting up the policies and procedures to help those things happen.

### **How are you going to implement the vision worldwide?**

We are in the process of forming committees, made of practitioners with different skills and different sets of experiences from all across the community. Some of these are:

- A Committee of Practice and Trainings, which will work to provide more transcripts, videos, audio recordings, more practice materials and practice support, as well as guidelines such as what is required for one to serve as an *umze*.
- The Serenity Ridge Executive Committee (discussed above) responsible for oversight of the activities at the center.
- The Mandala Council, which is perhaps the most immediately important and active group (see below).



Members of the Mandala Council, present in Maria Alm.

The ultimate goal of the Board and of the Committees and the Mandala Council is clear. There was a place for Bon in Tibet and India, and now it is everywhere else in the world, and we would like it to be a place for new people in twenty, fifty or a hundred years. We need to provide stability, like the *Ngondro* gives us stability in our personal life. As we bring in more teachers and instruction and opportunities for practice together and alone we can have more

support. Rinpoche said that he feels that this is the right time to start this project, because now we have strong practitioners in all the countries where he teaches, we have a lot of experience, good *umzés* and practice leaders, we have people who have shown enough long term commitment to the teachings, and we have the practical experience in the different areas we need, like fundraising, organization, information technology. Rinpoche has always had dedicated students serving him faithfully in every way, but until now we haven't had the breadth of people, skills and resources that are required for an international organization of our size.

### **What is the task of the Mandala Council?**

The first task for the Mandala Council is to find ways to share more. Rinpoche is really emphasizing that we should recognize that we are kind of a big family, and that we are scattered across many continents and countries and we speak different languages, but we are a community of practitioners. So, let's start doing things like a community.

The first thing Rinpoche wants us to do is to practice the same way at each location where we celebrate Losar in 2015. He is working with all the resident lamas to see what they can do at the different locations, and he will come with a plan about what we will be doing and how to coordinate that. It is a small thing, but it is a nice gesture: starting a new year, doing the same thing, coming together and sharing a practice.

The Mandala Council focuses on sharing experience, successes and challenges of the different sanghas. We have the same challenges everywhere, like: Where do we practice? How do we pay for it? How do we get the teachers to come? Who will manage things? How do we recruit volunteers? There are many talented people in the sangha. The Berlin sangha is very organized and they are doing great with volunteers, and also in Austria I saw during the retreats that everything was done by volunteers. Other places have bigger challenges with finding and retaining volunteers, so we should share our experiences, consult each other, and share our resources. This is just one small example. In the future our hope is to create some shared funds for when there is a specific project,



e.g. when a small sangha is trying to organize something in a new country and wants to invite a teacher, but they don't have the money, we might join together to support that.

We want to know a little bit how our community looks like, because we don't know much about each other. We don't know about our demographics, we don't know how many people come to the teachings. We have the impression that in Mexico and Poland there are many young practitioners, but in the other countries most practitioners are in their late forties or older. That's fine, but we need to know, because the way we communicate with them is different. Members of the Mandala Council are going to do two surveys. One survey will be going to the board of all the sanghas and asking: How often do you meet? Where do you meet? What practices do you do the most? What kind of thing would you most like to see done? The second survey will be sent to practitioners, to everybody who is on a mailing lists or comes to teachings. The questions will be something like: Do you only follow Bon, or do you have other teachers as well? What practices do you do at home? What support materials do you wish you had? What languages do you speak? The Council is at work on these things now.

Another task the Mandala Council is going to do is reaching out to every place where Rinpoche teaches or has taught, and create a catalogue of the teachings they have, the transcripts they have, what practice material they use. Once we have that catalogue we can give that to the Practice and Training Committee, and say, "Here is what we know that exists. What can we do with it?" We also want electronic and hard copies of everything that everybody has, to make a library of Rinpoche's teachings. Later we may also try to collect historical video and sound recordings from the teachings.

**Do you think that Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche is going to teach more because the International Board takes care of the organizational tasks?**

I don't know if Rinpoche can teach more. He already travels and teaches so much. I can't keep

up with him! I think he will do more through the internet. As an example, in November I completed the fourth year of the *Trul Khor* training with Alejandro Chaoul. Rinpoche was not there, but on the last day he joined us via Skype and gave us the transmission live. This is a new way for him to be involved in practices where he is not the primary teacher or when other activities prevent him from being present physically. In the webcast from November 8th, 2014, he talked about the next years online teachings on *Soul Retrieval*. With advances in technology, we can all be with Rinpoche more by being a part of the cyber sangha. We are also working to support Rinpoche's teachings that are on [Glidewing.com](http://Glidewing.com). And we also have a site called [Ligmincha Learning.com](http://Ligmincha Learning.com) that John Jackson runs and where you take a course on the *Five Elements*, *Sherab Chamma* and *The Three Heart Mantras*. Our goal is to have more online courses available led by our senior teachers, and we want to do that in English, German, Spanish, Polish and other languages.



Rinpoche is our spiritual director, and he should not have to worry about administrative and organizational issues. He definitely has a strong interest in these things and he is very aware of all that is happening, but there are things we can and should do for ourselves within the context of Rinpoche's vision. The bylaws are clear, as is our mission. If you can solve a problem locally, you should solve it locally. And if you can't solve it locally, you have the resources of the Mandala Council and the International Board. And if we can't solve it, or have different opinions or if we are confused, we ask Rinpoche what to do.





### **What will the role of other Bon lamas be in the future?**

Rinpoche has been actively bringing Bon lamas together all around the world, so they are talking about the practices in their community. And we are actively trying to place lamas in any sanghas that have the means of supporting them. We can only benefit by having more direct support from the lineage, from lamas and Geshe who have gone through a traditional cycle of training, that are able to support the meditation practices and the traditions from *Zhang Zhung* and from Tibet, whether it is *Torma* making or ritual practices like *Soul Retrieval*. Having them in the sangha is inspiring and a really solid support. They let us see directly the benefits of the practices and the teachings. We have seen that with Lhari-la Kalsang Nyima. When he was the resident lama in Serenity Ridge – now he is in Mexico – he was active in the community, and many people came because they wanted to meet a Tibetan lama. He was very jovial and a great teacher. When he went to Mexico we lost that momentum, because we did not have him. I know for Serenity Ridge it has an enormous value to have a lama here. Geshe Tenzin Yangton came to us this past summer. Now there is a lot of enthusiasm arising to practice with him and receive teachings from him. For any place that has a permanent center we want to create the opportunity to have a lama there.

I think that is why Lishu Institute is also important. It is not that we should only import lamas to help us, but we should have practitioners who are dedicated and have the desire to go to a three year program. I think the teachings of the Buddhas and the enlightened beings have succeeded in so many places around the world because they adopt the forms of the different cultures. Ultimately, there have to be western lamas and Geshe if Bon is to really establish a permanent foothold outside of Tibet and Nepal.

**When sanghas invite Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche there are always more than one-hundred people coming to the teachings, but when a sangha invites another Bon lama mostly no more than twenty-five to forty people come. From the sanghas who invite a Bon lama I heard that they are very enthusiastic with the teachings which are traditional. Do you think that their popularity will grow in the future?**

Rinpoche has been teaching for twenty-five years, has a relentless travel schedule, is every month in the magazine *BuddhaDharma* in the section [Ask the Teachers](#), and his command of English is so complete that people really find him accessible. Almost none of the other lamas have this extensive immersion in Western culture. Twenty-five years from now our resident lamas may very well be the ones who have hundreds of people coming. When His Holiness came the first time





there were only thirty or forty people, and now three or four-hundred want to attend!

**Can you tell how you met Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche?**

My wife and I teach yoga and we were not only interested in the physical movement, but also the *prana* yoga (the breathing), the meditation, the concentration. In yoga there are references in certain texts to inner fire, *Tumo*, but no one teaches *Tumo*. Most senior yoga teachers even

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche the first time, and I knew I had found my teacher. I have been going to his teachings ever since.

**When people want to support Ligmincha, what is the best way to start, on a national or international level?**

When you have a special idea how to help the international community you can reach out to a executive director or any member of the board. But for most people the best place to start is a



have not heard of it. We talked about how wonderful it would be if somebody could teach us *Tumo*, because it sounded like a powerful practice. One day I decided to Google '*Tumo teaching*,' and one result came up in English: Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche teaching two hours away from my house *Tumo*. It was the Summer Retreat, and it ended the day before I decided to search for it. And I realized: "Oh, there is a Tibetan lama teaching *Tumo* just a little ways from my home and I did not even know, and he has been doing it for three years. I want to meet this guy!" In 2008 I went to Serenity Ridge when Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche taught Dzogchen, and I did not understand most of what he said even though his English is very good, but I loved the practice and loved his presence and just having the opportunity to sit with him. In 2010 I met

local or national practice group. That's what happened to me and to most of us serving the international community: we got involved in a local sangha and then got more and more involved. As you create opportunities for yourself to serve more, different opportunities will manifest. The organization is amazing, because almost everyone is a volunteer, and all the work that needs to be done gets done. Serving the sangha, at any level of the organization, is an incredible opportunity to practice off of the cushion. Personally it is among the most rewarding things I've ever done.

**Interview by Ton Bisscheroux**

Photos by Martin Schroeder, Oliver Wirtz and Rob Patzig



# LIFE IS A MATINEE

**Lowell Britson started in September 2014 in Shenten Dargye Ling in France a four-year meditation cycle. Here is his report from his experiences at a Bon meditation school during the first retreat.**

Shenten Dargye Ling, a monastery in Blou, France, established a Bon meditation school in 2008, to offer practitioners an opportunity in depth study and practice of Dzogchen texts under the guidance of a Bon lama. Called *Gomdras*, these retreats meet seventy days for four consecutive years. The third Gomdra at Shenten began in November 2014 with the Bon text *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* and Geshe Gelek Jinpa as head teacher. There were twenty-seven participants from all over the world. I was one of three Americans.

Why spend seventy days in a Bon monastery chanting, memorizing and practicing ancient Tibetan texts isolated from the regular world? For me, it was an extraordinary opportunity to deepen my practice. A practitioner for over thirty years, studying any Bon text with a lineage holder was indeed a precious opportunity. One makes a written application and then waits. Three months later I received an acceptance email from the Shenten administrator. I was thrilled.

Organizing that much time off required me to leave my job. There was not a doubt in my mind what to do. The first program would run from September 5 – November 13, an excellent time to be in the Loire Valley of central France. And so, I am keeping a diary of my experiences for the next four years at Shenten. I hope you will find it interesting.

With all the different languages and habits, the settling in took a couple of weeks. The daily schedule was arranged similar to the parent monastery, Triten Norbutse Monastery, in Nepal. Morning chants began at 7:00 am and evening chants finished at 9:30 pm. During the day we spent five hours in meditation, an hour lecture, two hours of work, i.e. food services, cleaning halls, restrooms, and the remainder of the time in private practice. Private time could be chanting,

Lowell Britson is a senior student of H.E. Yongdzin Rinpoche. His previous teachers include Suzuki Roshi and Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche. He was past president of Olmo Ling Bon Center and Institute in Pittsburgh, PA, USA.



more sitting, walking, writing, contemplating or learning Tibetan. All lights were out at 10:00 pm.

The retreat was not silent. Some participants chose to do so but it was an option. I'd done a month of silence with another meditation group, so I chose to talk to my fellow practitioners. There seemed to be enough silence with only twenty-seven people among the ample Shenten grounds.

We were allowed one free day a week to use our email or to have contact with the outside world. No one was allowed to leave the grounds without permission. One of the Shenten staff arranged for any contact we needed with the outside world. They shopped for us, did our laundry, filled prescriptions, did our banking, and helped all of us in too many ways to mention. Only two people left the premises; one for family health reasons, the other job related. Both returned to complete the retreat. Everyone was assigned a single room. No alcohol, no smoking, and no sex. All meals were prepared for us and served in a dining hall. Meat and vegetarian entrees were available with tea and cookies at all times. No one gained any weight.

Most of the practices were in Tibetan, except for the teachings, which were in English. The French participants had a translator. The ground staff was all French. After seventy days everyone was using some French words, either correctly or not.

Time passed incredibly fast as we integrated our meditation and practice. The pain of sitting long periods also passed after the second week. We became experts in arranging our cushions for pain-free sessions. We shared all the information freely. Potassium and magnesium became key



elements in our diets.

The weather was glorious. The Loire Valley, famous for its good weather, did not disappoint, with beautiful autumn mornings, evenings with clear starry skies, and lovely sunsets. We practiced outdoors much of the time. The light and its shadows were always memorable; the silence broken only by the song of birds. Only eight days were rainy and quite cold. Somehow the hot showers made us forget them.

Geshe Gelek was always with us, leading the chants, guiding the meditation and practice sessions, teaching the Dzogchen texts, stretching our Tibetan vocabulary and providing the answers and support to our practice. On Wednesday mornings, Yongdzin Rinpoche gave the text teachings. With great clarity and compassion, he revealed to us the essence of the Dzogchen text. At eighty-eight, he was always an inspiration to our practice. On his morning walks, he was always willing to support us with our endless questions.



This *Gomdra* covered the Dzogchen preliminary practices (*Ngondro*), which are nine separate practices which require one-hundred-thousand recitations of each practice to purify the mind of obstructions and negative traces in preparation for the text teachings next year. Most of the time was taken up with these practices, either as a group practice or in private. It is our homework for the coming year.

For me, the deepening silence coupled with daily practices and the *Ngondro* practices opened the doors of inner wisdom within my heart. Long neglected with the daily life of work, family and academic challenges, a clear and empty mind was soon revealed. An awareness of my primordial nature slowly opened with a flood of unbounded compassion for myself and others. The changes were slow and subtle but continue to remind me of the importance of my inner life and inner wisdom.

These experiences were a result of practice and

the prayers and blessings of our teachers and lineage masters. The first day began with hours of sitting, daily chanting, intense morning teaching sessions and words and energy of these practices which never really ended. They were in my mind when I woke up in the middle of the night and when I boarded the plane to return home. They are still with me as I write this article.

The powerful Dzogchen teachings delivered by dedicated and accomplished Bon masters also awakened in my heart and mind great reserves of energy and joy. The nature of mind was always there. I just didn't know it. All one needs to do is relax and experience it. No effort required. It's ridiculously easy. It is our freedom from pain and suffering.

The Dzogchen teachings are all about discovering and remaining in the nature of mind. As a precious jewel we care for, it enables us to be joyful, happy and yes, even satisfied. Slowly our craving mind stops. No more wanting. Driven by this newly discovered awareness, negative emotions

also begin to decrease. Clouds of doubt may appear, but our nature of mind is pure and the winds of awareness, along with our daily practices, reveal an open sky with a blazing sun. It is the Dzogchen path.

It is helpful to know the nature of mind will never leave you. It's always there, 24/7. All beings have it. It is spacious, changeless, and limitless. No actions are needed but to experience it, no extra effort to comprehend it. No thinking required, just relax and enjoy. Like the lotus flower, our nature of mind is pure, fresh and strong; growing from the mud of our *samsara* and yet not affected by it. We are indeed fortunate.

My awareness is always moving, it is the wisdom of our nature of mind. It is our intention; formless, empty and impermanent. It is a vision like a matinee.

**Text by Lowell Britson**

Photos: courtesy of Lowell Britson and by Frits de Vries





## BEST WISHES

Wild and free in all dimensions -  
connected with the space -  
looking to the dharma -  
friendly in a never ending way



*We wish you a happy christmas  
and a funny new year*

Bridget de Claire



# PREPARING TO DIE

This is the first of a series of articles we want to dedicate to an important life event: dying. Frits de Vries has read several books on this issue, and shares his understanding with us.

*Separation of body and mind  
is the definition of death.  
When death happens, the mind continues,  
driven by the lack of recognition  
of the nature of mind.  
This mind endlessly takes rebirth in  
a variety of realms,  
and this is the definition of  
the suffering of cyclic existence.*

**Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche**

## Clear Light

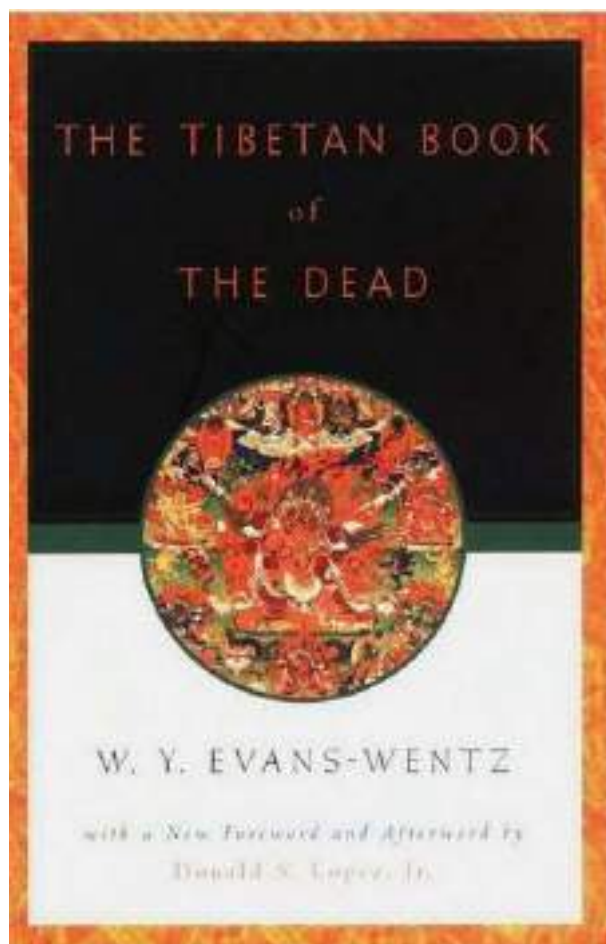
In 1927 a part of a Tibetan text called *Bardo Thödol* was published in English as *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. This title was coined by the editor of the first translation, Walter Y. Evans-Wentz, because he assumed a relationship with the Egyptian Book of the Dead. The meaning of the text was quite a deviation from the prevailing Judeo-Christian view of death in the West.

"Since its first translation into English in 1927, this book has aroused enormous interest among psychologists, writers and philosophers in the West, and has sold millions of copies." (2)

It played a role in the roaring sixties when a book appeared called *The Psychedelic Experience*, subtitled: *A Manual based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead* (3). The manual was dedicated to the writer Aldous Huxley, who experimented with mescaline and has written about it in *The Doors of Perception*. In this famous essay there is a crucial talk on fixing his attention on the Clear Light, as it is called in the *Bardo Thödol*.

After the sixties came a period of silence around the book and only recently, in 2006, appeared a first full translation of all twelve chapters of the *The Great Liberation by Hearing*. From the editor's introduction:

"The Tibetan Book of the Dead includes one of the



most detailed and compelling descriptions of the after-death state in world literature. It is not surprising therefore that when Chapter 11 of our text, 'The Great Liberation by Hearing,' first appeared in English, in 1927, it caused a considerable stir and has remained one of the most well known of Tibet's literary works ever since. In our work for the first time, we are presenting a complete translation of all twelve chapters of the compilation of texts known as the The Tibetan Book of the Dead, which includes nine chapters not translated in W.Y. Evans-Wentz's original publication." (4)

As the title of Evans-Wentz suggests the book is about death, but the editor explains clearly the book is also about daily life:

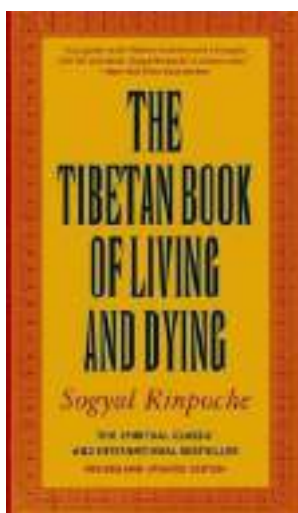
"The compendium of texts known as The Tibetan Book of the Dead contains exquisitely written guidance and practices related to transforming our experiences in daily life, on how to address the processes of dying and the after-death state, and on how to help those who are dying." (4)



In the full cycle of existence, the composer of the *Bardo Thödol*, Padmasambhava, distinguishes six intermediate states (5). In each state you can use the specific meditative techniques you have practiced and developed for recognizing the ultimate nature of mind. And so you can finish the epigraph from above: *“Recognizing the nature of mind is wisdom, when one fully realizes the nature of mind, suffering is extinguished.”* (1) The mind then continues after death and is liberated from *samsara*.

*“The term ‘intermediate state’ (bardo) refers to key phases of life and death identified as: the intermediate state of living, the intermediate state of meditative concentration, the intermediate state of dreams, the intermediate state of the time of death, the intermediate state of reality and the intermediate state of rebirth. During each of these phases, the consciousness of a sentient being has particular experiential qualities, and corresponding to these qualities of experience there are specific meditative techniques conducive to realisation of the ultimate nature of mind and phenomena.”* (6)

The question is: what are these ‘specific meditative techniques conducive to realization’ and how can we learn them? The updated answer comes from Sogyal Rinpoche.



### New Impulse

The *Bardo Thödol* got a fresh new impulse in 1992, when Sogyal Rinpoche stressed the inseparability of what we call ‘life’ and what we call ‘death’ even more in the title of his book *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*. The author wrote: *“I have written ‘The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying’ as the quintes-*

*sence of the heart-advice of all my masters, to be a new Tibetan Book of the Dead and a Tibetan Book of Life.”* (7) This book has been an unprecedented success. The fertile foundation was laid by a growing interest in the West about near-death experiences, owing to the groundbreaking work of Kübler-Ross, *On Death*

*and Dying*, and the germinate connection with Tibetan Buddhism on death and dying, as taught by Sogyal Rinpoche and other Tibetan masters. In his book Sogyal Rinpoche places a strong emphasis on the highest Buddhist teaching called Dzogchen, as found in the Nyingma and Bon traditions.

From the early eighties on, Sogyal Rinpoche had already build an organization called Rigpa, for starting and maintaining retreat centers, organizing conferences, seminars, retreats, etc. The success of the book led to a great expansion in the work of Rigpa.

*“Over 3 million copies have been printed, in 34 languages, and the book is available in 80 countries. It has been adopted by colleges, groups and institutions, both medical and religious, and is used extensively by nurses, doctors and healthcare professionals.”* (8)

Spiritual teaching and practice groups are well-organized and found all over the world. According to their website [www.rigpa.org](http://www.rigpa.org): *“Rigpa aims to present the Buddhist tradition of Tibet in a way that is both completely authentic, and as relevant as possible to the lives and needs of modern men and women.”*

With the spreading of the message of the *Bardo Thödol* all over the world, in a language everyone can understand, through a solid organization called Rigpa, accessible for everyone, with practice groups, teachings and trainings, the death-and-dying movement has been definitely put on the map. You can order online prayers for someone sick or deceased with suggested offering prices. With the twentieth anniversary of the book of Sogyal Rinpoche 1992-2012 even a special congratulation website was maintained. What can be added to the groundbreaking work of Sogyal Rinpoche?

### More practical and applicable

In 2013, Buddhist practitioner, teacher and writer Andrew Holecek published *Preparing to Die: Practical Advice and Spiritual Wisdom from the Tibetan Buddhist Tradition* (9). What can be added, what is missing, was the first question Helen Tworlov, Tricycle founding editor, asked Andrew Holecek in an interview on his latest book (10). Holecek answered that what he adds to



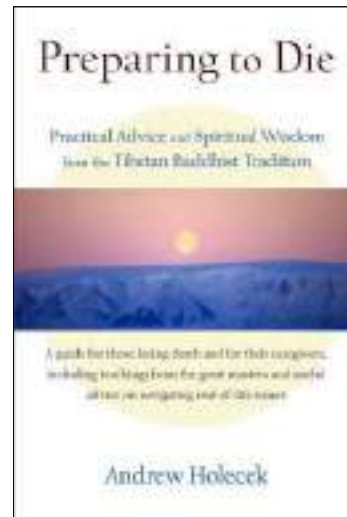


Sogyal's book is that he wanted to synthesize the dozen or so books that had been published on the subject since the publication of *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying* in 1992, but in particular trying to put it into a format that would be practical and applicable for people: *"What I thought I would do was create something that would give people really highly helpful tips, things that they could use now, things that they could use to help others now, that would help them and others through this otherwise challenging time."*

He adds no new material, but puts the existing material in a conveniently arranged structure. This objective is clearly reflected in the structured organization of the main part of the book 'Spiritual Preparation.' This first part is arranged in a threefold time-sequence:

1. what can you do *before* dying,
2. what can you do *when* dying,
3. what can you do *after* dying.

Each episode is put in a social dimension and is subdivided into: what you can do for *yourself* and for *others*. You have then the practical arrangement of the first six chapters.



Next to the main part the book of Holecek contains a well-organized arrangement of two other parts. The second part has three chapters about all practical preparation: before death, stages of dying and after death. So the next three chapters of part two fit seamlessly to the same time sequence with a third subdivision added as: *practical matters*. You thus get a 3 x 3 table for the first nine chapters of the book. In the following table the main topics of the first nine chapters *Preparing to Die* are conveniently reflected:

| 9 chapters                          | before death   | during dying  | after death   |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| what can you do for <i>yourself</i> | <b>1. what can you do for <i>yourself</i> before you die:</b><br>practices and meditations, like: <i>tonglen</i> ; reverse meditation; pure land practice; <i>phowa</i> ; <i>shitro</i> ; etc., but also dharma wills and the dharma box | <b>3. what can you do for <i>yourself</i> as you die:</b><br>knowing the signs of outer and inner dissolution, <i>tukdam</i> , peaceful and wrathful visions    | <b>5. what can you do for <i>yourself</i> after you die:</b><br>the view, first step, advice from the <i>Tibetan Book of the Dead</i> : bright and soft lights  |
| what can you do for <i>others</i>   | <b>2. what can you do for <i>others</i> before they die:</b><br>shortly:<br><i>"keep your views about death for yourself unless there is an invitation"</i>  | <b>4. what can you do for <i>others</i> as they die:</b><br>sacred listening, holding environments, advice from Sogyal Rinpoche: saying goodbye, peaceful death | <b>6. what can you do for <i>others</i> after they die:</b><br>the view, power of merit, reading the <i>Tibetan Book of the Dead</i> , monastic rituals         |
| practical matters                   | <b>7. before death</b><br>legal issues, wills, disposition of property, demystifying hospice, managing pain  | <b>8. when dying</b><br>caring, need of the dying, stages of dying, signs and symptoms of death, spiritual matrix (Holecek)                                     | <b>9. after death</b><br>funeral directors, care for the body, unexpected death, odors and changes, disposition, working with grief from a Buddhist perspective |

The main topics of the first nine chapters of the book *Preparing to Die*.



Part two ends with Chapter 10 on several difficult issues, like organ donation.

The third part are heart advices from eighteen contemporary spiritual masters, i.e. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. The book ends with several useful checklists: spiritual, farewell, practical.

#### FAREWELL CHECKLIST

Think about the holding environment you want as you die. Do what you need to do to prepare that sacred space. If you don't have a dharma will, you could dictate your wishes to your spiritual friends when you realize you are going to die. Ask them for help in implementing your wishes. Here are suggestions for what to put into your dharma will:

- Who do you want to be with you when you die? Is there anyone you feel may disturb your death and should therefore stay away?
- Do you want many people coming through, a very quiet space, or something in between?
- What do you want the space to look like – a shrine, photos of your teachers, of Loved ones? What other sacred objects do you want? Do you want candles or incense?
- Do you want people to be able to say goodbye in ways other than a funeral or memorial service? How?
- If you are a great lover of nature, would you like your friends and family to gather outdoors, at one of your favorite locations?
- Is there anything you want said or read at your funeral?
- Would you prefer silence?
- Do you want someone in particular to lead the gathering?
- Is it to be a party or some other form of celebration?
- Are there particular values or human qualities you want emphasized?
- Is there an important cause or charity you want to benefit?
- If you want to be cremated, where would you like your ashes to be scattered?

Part of the Farewell checklist; (9) p.313

As compared to the *Tibetan Book of Living and Dying* by Sogyal Rinpoche, the new book by Andrew Holecek does improve the structure and choice of what to do: in the dimension of time; in

the social dimension, specified as for *yourself* or for *others*; in the practical dimension. Many death and dying situations are possible in these dimensions. The book by Sogyal Rinpoche is more a narrative on his own life story and also tailored to teaching and explaining the Dzogchen perspective. The book of Holecek is indeed more practical as it intended to be.

#### Dimension of experience

The book of Holecek offers countless helpful possibilities for what we can do for ourselves and others in the three time-stages: before death - when dying - after death. In the interview (10) he makes a division of death and dying related to your meditation experience in three levels of practitioners: 1. going to enlightenment, 2. having no fear, 3. having no regret. We may hope to belong to the second category when dying as Buddhist practitioners.

Sometimes Holecek gives a clear advice for practitioners. Like in chapter 4 'What to do for others as they die,' where in the section 'Looking Forward' a dying practitioner is presented. He suggests one of the best things we can do is to help them to look forward:

*"Tell them that the relative is dying, the ultimate is not dying. Give them hope that they can recognize the ultimate, the nature of their mind, the mind that is unchanging and undying. You have to give a little promotion on the deathless side."*(11)

But, I missed in the chapter "What can you do for *yourself* as you die" some practical advice for Buddhist practitioners, which I found in other books.

In the book *The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep* Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche advises practitioners having a problem with focusing:

*"Often practitioners say they have a hard time maintaining the visualization, or that the visualization interferes with sleep. (...) The teaching also prescribes this kind of focus at the time of death. When presence is maintained during death, the whole process is very different. Maintaining this presence is really the essence of the practice of the transference of consciousness at the time of death (phowa). (...) If successful, the practitioner does not experience the turbulence and distraction of the after-death experience but instead is liberated directly into the clear light."* (12)



Since *Guru Yoga* is an important part of our meditation practice, we can use it on the moment of our dying. Namkhai Norbu emphasizes on the relevance of *Guru Yoga* when he gives an elaborate, almost three pages commentary on the *Seventh Word of Advice of Longchenpa*,  
*"You may have subjects, wealth, retinue, merits and your fame  
 May fill the entire world;  
 Yet at the time of death these things will be of benefit whatsoever  
 Be diligent in spiritual practice! This is my advice from the heart."* (13)

Here is the central part of Namkhai Norbu's comment:

*"As soon as you recognize that you are dying, you should enter the state of Guruyoga. In that way you are beyond time. You notice what is occurring in your body at that moment, such as the dissolution of the elements, but since you are in the state of instant presence, you do not experience suffering in the ordinary way. In that state, death also poses no problem to you. We should dedicate ourselves to the practice of Guruyoga and become good practitioners of that."* (13)

Still, the book of Holecek offers you a lot to think about: How ambitious do you want to be before death in your practice? Do you want to change your Western look on dying in a Buddhist view on dying? What kind of help do you set-up for the after-death period?

To conclude, Holecek's work is a well-organized reference work for Death and Dying, it is more than a supplement to the book of Sogyal Rinpoche, which in itself is the contemporary mouthpiece of the *Bardo Thödol*. Chapter 4 of the *Bardo Thödol, The Introduction to Awareness: Natural Liberation through Naked Perception*, based on one of the two key aspects of the Great Perfection teachings, Cutting through Resistance, counts only twenty pages and ends with:

*"So it is that, for the purpose of nakedly perceiving the manifestly present intrinsic awareness, This Natural Liberation through Naked Perception is most profound.*

*Thus, [by following this instruction], one should familiarise oneself with this intrinsic awareness."* (14)

**Text by Frits de Vries**

**This is the first article on 'Preparing to Die.'**  
**We would like to invite you to share with us your experiences with death and dying, which can be personal or professional, or an inspiring text you have read. You can also send us questions you want to ask Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. Contact us at:**  
[magazine@ligmincha.eu](mailto:magazine@ligmincha.eu).

## Notes

- Epigraph, (1): Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, *Ligmincha Europe Magazine # 12*, Spring 2014, p. 17.
- (2) Sogyal Rinpoche, *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*, 1992, HarperCollins Publishers, p. 102.
- (3) Timothy Leary, Ralph Metzner, Richard Alpert, *The Psychedelic Experience, A Manual based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead*, University Books, 1964.
- (4) Editors introduction, p. xxix, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, 2006.
- (5) Root verses of the Six Intermediate States, p. 29 – 34, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, 2006.
- (6) Glossary of Key Terms, p. 479, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, 2006.
- (7) [wikipedia.org](http://wikipedia.org)
- (8) [www.living-and-dying.org](http://www.living-and-dying.org)
- (9) Andrew Holecek, *Preparing to Die: Practical Advice and Spiritual Wisdom from the Tibetan Buddhist Tradition*, Snow Lion Pub., 2013.
- (10) [www.tricycle.com](http://www.tricycle.com)
- (11) Andrew Holecek, p.101.
- (12) Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, *The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep*, Snow Lion, 1998, p. 115.
- (13) Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, *Longchenpa's Advice from the Heart*, Shang Shung Pub., Arcidosso, 2008, p. 57-60.
- (14) p. xxxviii and p.57, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, 2006.

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*The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, The Great Liberation by Hearing in the Intermediate States, composed by Padmasambhava, translated by Gyurme Dorje, edited by Graham Coleman with Thupten Jinpa, Viking Penguin USA Pub., 2006.

Walter Y. Evans-Wentz, *The Tibetan book of the dead*; or, The after-death experiences on the Bardo plane, according to Lāma Kazi Dawa-Samdup's English rendering, London, Oxford University Press, H. Milford, 1927.





# ACCEPTING IMPERMANENCE

In the **Buddhadharma Winter 2007** issue a question about impermanence was raised in the section 'Ask the Teacher.' Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche gave an answer.

## QUESTION:

I received a breast cancer diagnosis in January and have almost finished chemotherapy, which will be followed by radiation treatment. Many cancer survivors say that attitude is key to survival. I understand that having hope and a good attitude, eating the right food, exercising, and so on can probably help, but there is always the possibility that the cancer will recur. Some of this disease is purely genetic; good diet and attitude may make no difference. So I'm confused about where to stand between accepting impermanence and having the hope and desire to live until my old age, which may help my recovery.

## TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE:

Open awareness is our natural state of mind, which allows all positive qualities to be experienced and expressed in life. When facing challenges such as living with a lifethreatening illness, openness can be easily obscured by our fears as well as our hopes. Even when using the word "openness," we need to observe whether we are creating expectations only to become disappointed when those expectations are not fulfilled. That is expectation, not openness. With openness, whatever the outcome, we are fine. Openness creates a dynamic other than hope and fear.

We become familiar with the power of openness through reflecting upon impermanence and death. This is part of dharma practice throughout one's life and not only when one is sick or dying. The moment one is born is the moment to realize impermanence is true.

In the West, impermanence often has a negative

association. While the initial reflection on the truth of impermanence or the inevitability of one's death might be unpleasant or even shocking, deeper exploration leads to the freedom to live life fully in the present moment. If you become sad or depressed while reflecting on impermanence, look closer at your experience. You'll discover it is your attachment that causes you to suffer. Once you recognize that attachment, notice how you experience it in your body, your emotions, and in your mind. You may notice tensions in your body, restrictions in your breathing, or agitation in your mind. Through gentle physical exercise, skillful *pranic* breathing exercises, and mindfulness-awareness practices, you can release those negative habits.



We are often more familiar with our tensions, sadness, and negative thoughts; we need to release them and become more familiar with open awareness. As you experience more clarity and openness in your body, breath, and mind, rest in the space that has become clearer. Bring clear attention to that opening. In that openness you can discover peace and freedom. That openness is the source of limitless positive qualities. This discovery is the real purpose of impermanence practice. Each one of us can

realize: "Yes, it is true, I am dying. Not only am I dying, but thousands are dying at this very moment." Death is not personal. It is not a failure. It happens to all living beings. Acceptance is important, and that is why a daily prayer in Buddhist liturgy concludes with the line: "Bless me to understand impermanence deeply."

Once we understand and accept the truth of impermanence, the power of that acceptance supports us to continuously expose hidden fears and attachments and release the restrictions of those hopes and fears, allowing each of us to live fully and well in this moment, whatever the





conditions of the moment present. Genes are also conditions and are not primordially true. Don't limit your experience by thinking that your condition is genetically determined and that's it. Release that view into openness.

If you are modifying your diet, don't think, "I have cancer and I might die, so I need to eat this food." Instead, allow what you eat to nourish you as you live fully and well in this moment.

At the very moment you discover anxiety or fear,

release it through the support of your dharma practice. Each moment you release tension and anxiety or abandon negative thoughts, you can experience a glimpse of open space in you. Recognizing and resting in the space that has become clearer, you develop increasing familiarity with the openness of your natural mind and cut the habit of hope and fear that binds all living beings in suffering. This open awareness is the best medicine for living and for dying.

**Text selected by Ton Bisscheroux**



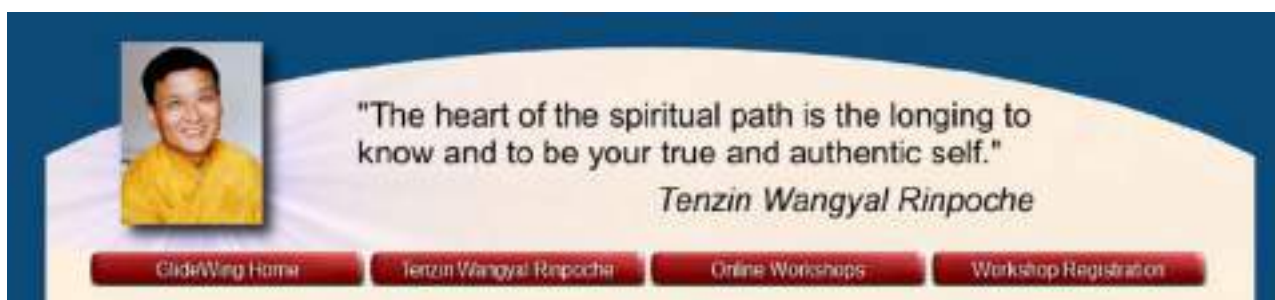
# TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE'S ONLINE WORKSHOPS



**Ligmincha Institute** offers excellent online meditation instruction drawn from the wisdom traditions of Tibet. Each meditation course is crafted by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche working with experts in educational technology to provide clear

and authentic experiences of Tibetan meditation. Courses feature beautiful video teachings, guided meditations, readings, journal writing activities, and the opportunity to interact with senior mentors and classmates from around the world.

| When                     | Where         | What  | More information   |
|--------------------------|---------------|---|--|
| January 10 – December 31 | Your computer | Free Course in Soul Retrieval: The True Source of Healing | <a href="http://www.ligminchalearning.com">www.ligminchalearning.com</a> |
| February 6 – March 14    | Your computer | Online course: The Three Heart Mantras                    | <a href="http://www.ligminchalearning.com">www.ligminchalearning.com</a> |



## Online Glidewing Workshop Features

- Three weeks of personal guidance are provided by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche as you work with the practices.
- Instruction is via Internet-based video.
- No set class times – instructional videos remain available throughout the course.
- Practice in the comfort of your home, on your own schedule.
- Easy to use and navigate course site.
- All you need is a broadband Internet connection such as DSL or cable.

| When                      | Where         | Subject  | More information   |
|---------------------------|---------------|--|--|
| January 10 – February 1   | Your computer | Interactive online course: Awakening the Sacred Body: The Tibetan Yogas of Breath and Movement | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a> |
| March 7 – April 5         | Your computer | Interactive online course: Tibetan Dream Yoga  | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a> |
| May 9 – 31                | Your computer | Interactive online course: Tibetan Meditation: Achieving Great Bliss Through Pure Awareness    | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a> |
| July 11 – August 9        | Your computer | Interactive online course: Awakening the Sacred Arts: Discovering Your Creative Potential      | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a> |
| September 19 – October 11 | Your computer | Interactive online course: Tibetan Sound Healing   | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a> |





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

| When                                    | Where                                   | What   | More information   |
|---|---|--|--|
| January 10<br>15.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)  | Your computer                           | Full-Day Live Webcast:<br>Reconnecting with Your Joyful<br>Essence: An Introduction to the<br>Tibetan Practice of Soul Retrieval | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a> |
| February 14<br>21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.) | Your computer                           | Live Webcast:<br>The Five Natural Elements: Finding<br>a Healthy Balance   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a> |
| March 14<br>21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)    | Your computer                           | Live Webcast:<br>Discovering the Deepest Needs of<br>Your Soul   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a> |
| April 4<br>21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)     | Your computer                           | Live Webcast:<br>The True Source of Healing  | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a> |
| April 11<br>21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)    | Your computer                           | Live Webcast:<br>Communing with Nature to<br>Nourish Your Soul   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a> |
| April 17 – 19                           | Paris, France                           | Weekend seminar:<br>The True Source of Healing   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.fr">www.ligmincha.fr</a>   |
| April 24 – 26                           | Las Palmas de Gran<br>Canaria, Spain    | Weekend seminar:<br>The True Source of Healing   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.es">www.ligmincha.es</a>   |
| May 1 – 3                               | Vienna, Austria                         | Weekend seminar:<br>Awakening Sacred Art: Discovering<br>Your Creative Potential   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.at">www.ligmincha.at</a>   |
| May 8 – 10                              | Berlin, Germany                         | Weekend seminar:<br>Inner, Outer, and Secret Tsa Lung  | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.de">www.ligmincha.de</a>   |
| May 9<br>21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)       | Your computer                           | Live Webcast:<br>The True Source of Healing: Your<br>Own Inner Refuge  | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a> |
| May 15 – 17                             | Gruyères,<br>Switzerland                | Weekend seminar:<br>Sherap Chamma  | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.fr">www.ligmincha.fr</a>   |
| May 22 – 24                             | Amsterdam, The<br>Netherlands           | Weekend seminar:<br>A-tri, Part 3  | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.nl">www.ligmincha.nl</a>   |
| June 13<br>15.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)     | Your computer                           | Full-Day Live Webcast:<br>Tapping Into Relationships to<br>Nourish Your Soul   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a> |
| July 11<br>21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)     | Your computer                           | Live Webcast:<br>Overcoming Loneliness: Finding<br>the Friend Within   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a> |
| August 10 – 16                          | Buchenau,<br>Germany                    | European Summer Retreat:<br>The Twenty-One Nails,<br>Part 1 (of 3)   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.de">www.ligmincha.de</a>   |
| August 15<br>21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)   | Your computer                           | Live Webcast:<br>Nourishing Your Inner Being: The<br>Heart of Soul Retrieval   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a> |
| August 18 – 23                          | Chamma Ling<br>Poland, Wilga,<br>Poland | Retreat:<br>The Twenty-One Nails,<br>Part 3 (of 3)   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.pl">www.ligmincha.pl</a>   |





# Ligmincha Europe Magazine

# 16 – Spring 2015

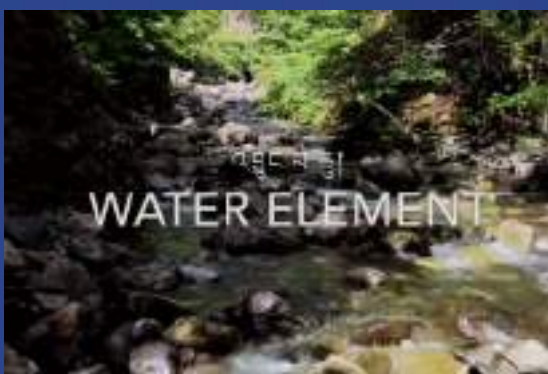


Meet the Italian sangha

Meeting of the Bon lamas

Lishu Spring Retreats

*Soul Retrieval* internet course



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## THE LIGMINCHA EUROPE MAGAZINE

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

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# GREETINGS AND NEWS FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Readers, Dear Practitioners of Bon,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ence in the teachings?

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

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

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

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



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

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



## SECOND MEETING WITH BON LAMAS

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

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

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

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

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

**What did you talk about?**

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







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

**Who participated in this years' meeting?**

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

**What are the fruits of the meeting of last year?**

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



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

**Interview by Ton Bisscheroux**

Photos: courtesy of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche





# GRASS PUT IN OUR HEADS

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

## The Sights and Sounds of Lishu Institute

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

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



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

## On *Phowa* and *Kusha* Grass

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

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





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

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

### Tibetan Language Retreat 2015

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

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

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

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

**Text by Jennie Makihara**

Photos by Lishu staff and participants



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



# APPLICATIONS OPEN FOR THREE-YEAR LISHU PROGRAM

**Lishu Institute is the fulfillment of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's vision of providing a retreat center and study program for Western students to do long-term, in-depth study and practice of the Bon teachings. In September 2015 the first Three-Year Residential Program will start.**

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



Sangmo Yangri and Geshe Thupten Negi.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Visit [www.lishu.org](http://www.lishu.org) for all of this information and more.

Please send questions or comments to:  
[director@lishu.org](mailto:director@lishu.org)

**Text by the Committee**





# FOURTH MEETING OF NON-SECTARIAN LAMAS

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

## What is the group of non-sectarian lamas?

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

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

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

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

## Do only lamas who live in the United States participate?

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

## Can you tell us about the organization?

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



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

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

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

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

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

## Interview by Ton Bisscheroux

Photo: courtesy of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche



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

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

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

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

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

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



Renee Daily

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

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

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





# THE 3 DOORS

TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH MEDITATION

## Interested in joining a 3 Doors Academy?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Please Email us at [info@the3Doors.org](mailto:info@the3Doors.org). We look forward to hearing from you!



## An Invitation from John Jackson

3 Doors Senior Teacher, European Academy

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





# THE STORY OF THE TAOIST FARMER

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

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

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

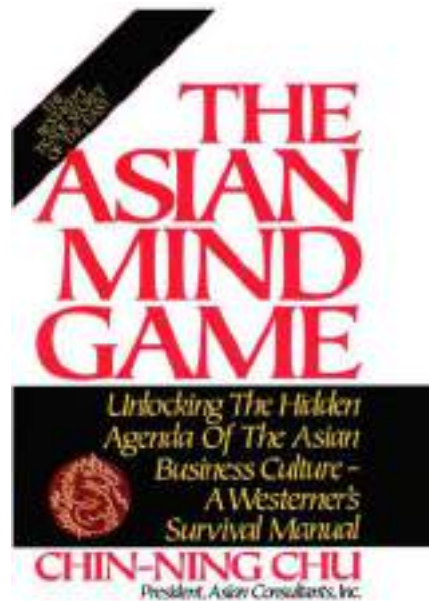
Some time later, Sei Weng's only son, while riding the stallion, fell off and broke his leg. The village people once again expressed their sympathy at Sei Weng's misfortune. Sei Weng again said, "That's the way it is."

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

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

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

Foto from: [www.ukiyo-e.org](http://www.ukiyo-e.org)



# FINDING A TRUE TEACHER

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

## **Where did you meet Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche the first time?**

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

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



Lidia Castellano with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in Berlin, Germany.

## **Was he special?**

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

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

## **Can you tell us how it changed your life?**

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

## **Can you tell something about the structure of Ligmincha Italia?**

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







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

**When did Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche come to Italy?**

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

**Do you have any practice groups in Italy?**

Sometimes, not on a regular basis at present.

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

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

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

**Can you share some experiences from The 3 Doors Academy?**

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

**Is there something you want to share with the sangha?**







The practice group meeting in Pantelleria, in 2012.

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

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

**Interview by Ton Bisscheroux**

Photos: courtesy of Lidia Castellano



Geshe Nyima Woser Choekortshang in 2015.



# WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN EUROPE

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



**April 24 – 26:**

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught *The True Source of Healing* in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain.



**February 20 – 22:**

As every year, Sangha members took the opportunity to celebrate *Losar* together and gathered at 'Schloss Buchenau,' at the heart of Germany. Ten practitioners followed the invitation to come together in order to connect and deepen their practice. They continued a happy tradition as this was already the ninth retreat of its kind.

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



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

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

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







**April 17 – 19:**

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



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

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



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



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

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

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

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







**May 8 – 10:**

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



**Begins January 10, 2015**

## The True Source of Healing

A yearlong Internet course in Soul Retrieval  
with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

**FREE and open to all!**

Register for Jan. 10 all-day webcast: [ligmincha.org](http://ligmincha.org)  
Full course materials: [ligminchalearning.com](http://ligminchalearning.com)

**You can watch the recordings here:**

- [The True Source of Healing, Part 1: Reconnecting with Your Joyful Essence. Session 1 — Teaching](#)
- [The True Source of Healing, Part 1: Reconnecting with Your Joyful Essence. Session 2 — Guided Meditation](#)
- [The True Source of Healing, Part 1: Reconnecting with Your Joyful Essence. Session 3 — Teaching](#)
- [The True Source of Healing, Part 1: Reconnecting with Your Joyful Essence. Session 4 — Guided Meditation](#)

**Free Live Webcast**

## The Five Natural Elements: Finding a Healthy Balance

with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

**March 14, 2015**  
20:00–21:30 C.E.T.

Register for the webcast at [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)  
This is Part 2 of a FREE yearlong course in soul retrieval.  
Learn more at [www.ligminchalearning.com](http://www.ligminchalearning.com)

**You can watch the recording here:**

- [The True Source of Healing, Part 2: The Five Natural Elements: Finding a Healthy Balance](#)



**Free Live Webcast**  
Live teachings from the Tibetan Bon Buddhist tradition

**The True Source of Healing**

with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

**April 4, 2015**  
21:00–22:30 h C.E.T.

*Translations in multiple languages available*

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




You can watch the recording here:

[The True Source of Healing — Live From Serenity Ridge](#)

**Free Live Webcast**

**Discovering the Deepest Needs of Your Soul**

with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

**April 11, 2015**  
21:00–22:30 h (C.E.T.)

Register for the webcast at [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)  
This is Part 3 of a FREE yearlong course in soul retrieval.  
Learn more at [www.ligminchalearning.com](http://www.ligminchalearning.com)




You can watch the recording here:

[Discovering the Deepest Needs of Your Soul](#)

**Free Live Webcast**

**Communing with Nature to Nourish Your Soul**

with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

**May 9, 2015**  
21:00–22:30 h (C.E.T.)

Register for the webcast at [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)  
This is Part 4 of a FREE yearlong course in soul retrieval.  
Learn more at [www.ligminchalearning.com](http://www.ligminchalearning.com)




You can watch the recording here:

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





# PRACTICING FORTY-NINE DAYS IN THE DARK

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

## Gerry, can you introduce yourself?

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

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



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

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

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

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





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

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

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

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



H.E. Menri Lopon Trinley Nyima Rinpoche.

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

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

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

**Gerry:** (laughter) “E MA HO!”



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



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

### **Can you tell what a dark retreat is?**

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

### **Have you done dark retreats before?**

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

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

### **Can everybody do a dark retreat?**

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

### **How do you prepare for a dark retreat?**

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche.

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

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

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





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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

**Interview by Ton Bisscheroux**

Photos: courtesy of Gerry Heikes



# FOUR YEARS PROGRAM OF *TRUL KHOR* IN POLAND

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

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

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

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

## About *Trul khor*

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

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



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

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

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





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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### **Between retreats:**

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







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

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

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

Anna-Kaisa Hirvanen



*Trul khor* master Lhundrup Muthur.



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

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

Darek Orwat



# TWENTY YEARS OF BON TRADITION IN POLAND

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

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

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

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



A short history of the Bon tradition in Poland:

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

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

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

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

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







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

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

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

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

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

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

**Text by: Przemysław Dębowski**

Photos: courtesy of Ligmincha Poland



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





## TWO HEALING PRACTICES

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

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

### **Red Garuda**

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



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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **The Five Warrior Sounds**

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



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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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





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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



#### Notes

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

**Text by: Jantien Spindler**

Photos: Esther Drielsma and from [www.kwling.org/bon/dieties](http://www.kwling.org/bon/dieties)



# PRAYERS AND FUNDS REQUESTED FOR THOSE AFFECTED BY NEPAL EARTHQUAKE

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

**Dear Sangha and Friends,**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

## **Update:**

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

Yours in Bon,

**Rob Patzig,**

**Board Chair, Ligmincha International**



# FROM A LAMENTING HEART

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



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





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



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

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

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



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

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

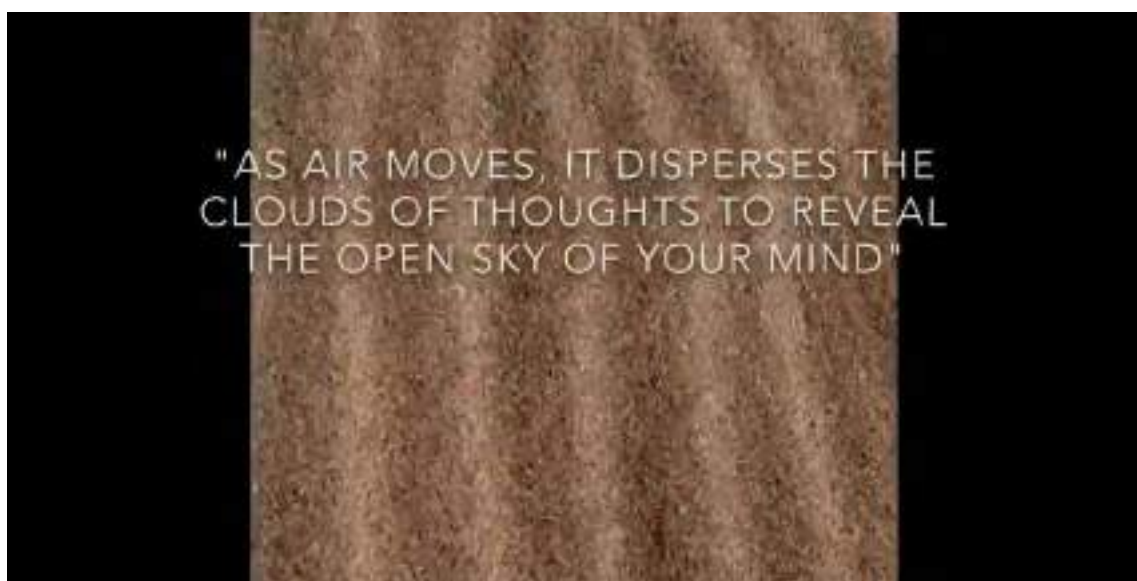
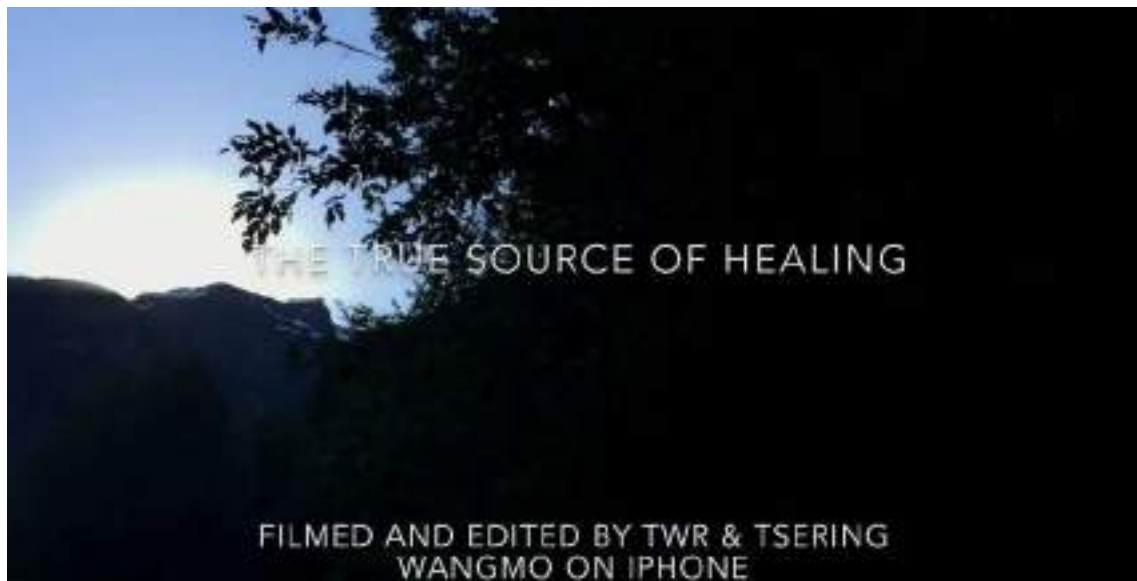
**This earthquake is a master of appearance.  
If you still have difficulty understanding the essence of the teachings  
After a lifetime of listening,  
Perhaps now your heart has been moved.  
If your mind is still unripe  
After completing nine hundred thousand preliminary practices,  
Perhaps now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

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

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

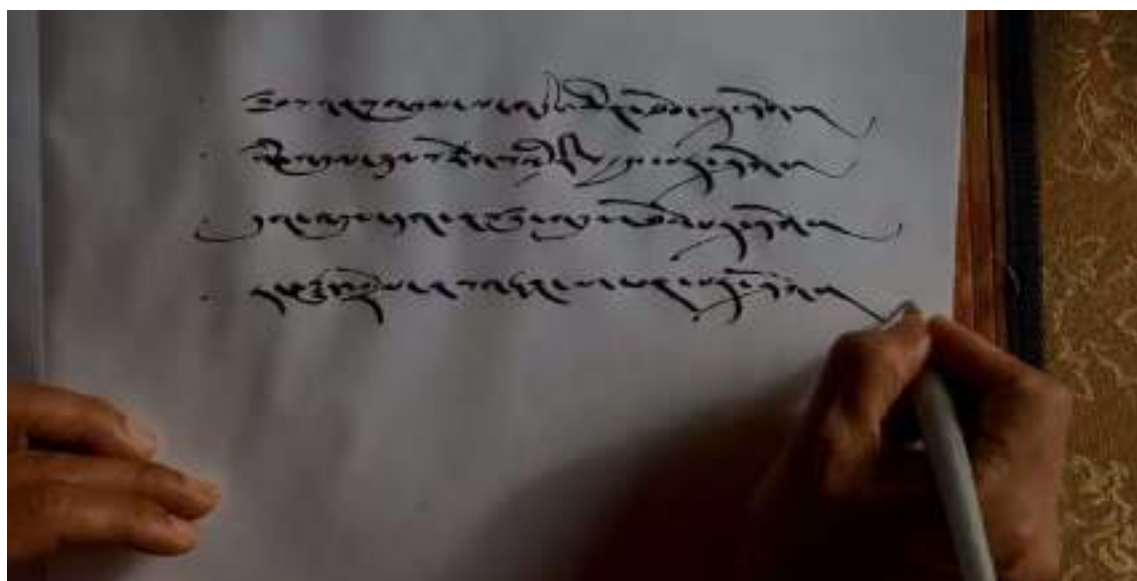


# THE TRUE SOURCE OF HEALING





You can watch this video on: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=ir7hmu1l7my](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ir7hmu1l7my)



# MAY LIGHT ALWAYS SURROUND YOU

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

***D. Simone***



# LEARN *DREAM* YOGA TO PREPARE FOR DEATH

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

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

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

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

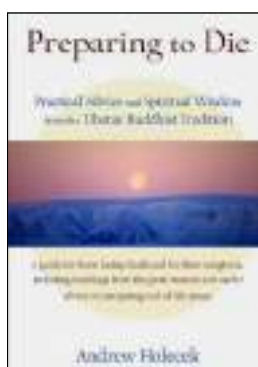
## What's the best thing to do during the bardo of dying?

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



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

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



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

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

Text selected by Ton Bisscheroux





# DON'T RETURN EMPTY-HANDED

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

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

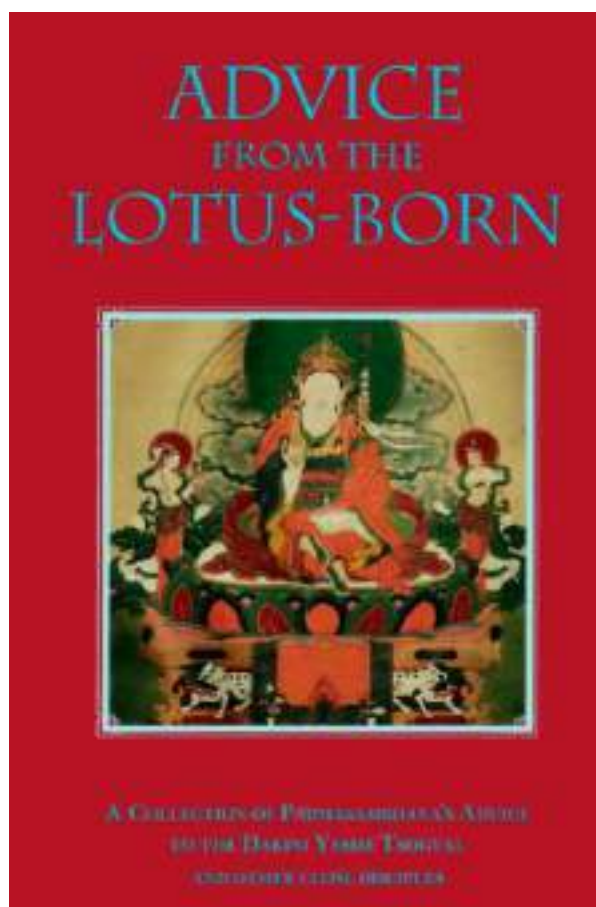
In the introduction to the chapter “A Spur Towards Spiritual Practice” I found the following text on page 126-128:

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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





Dakini Yeshe Tsogyal.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Bibliography

*Advice from the Lotus-Born – A Collection of Padmasambhava's Advice to the Dakini Yeshe Tsogyal and other close disciples*, Translated from the Tibetan by Erik Pema Kunsang, Rangjung Yeshe Publications, 1994.



Padmasambhava — The Lotus-Born.

Text by Frits de Vries



# WORKING WITH THE ELEMENTS IN NATURE

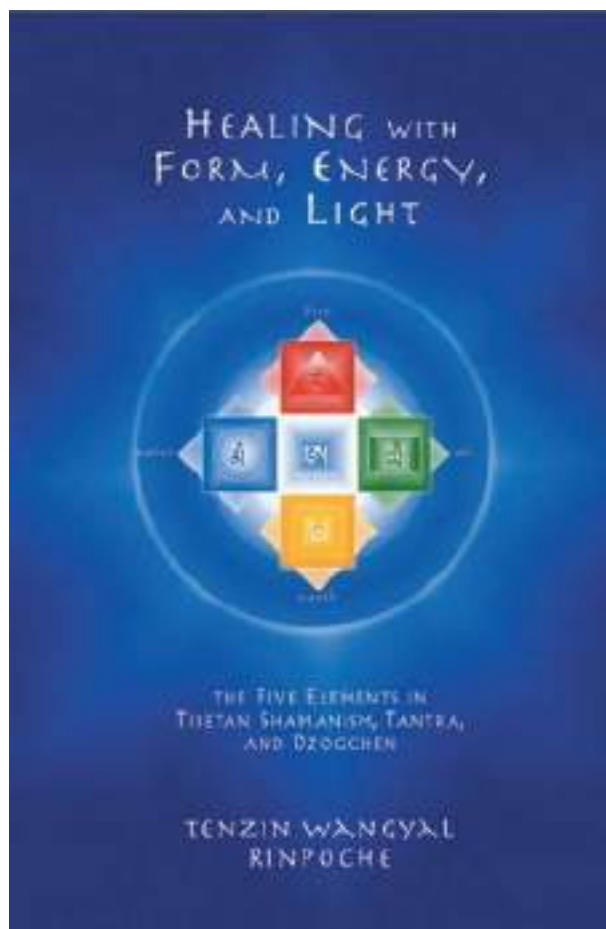
This year Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche introduced a free, yearlong internet course in *Soul Retrieval*. In the Tibetan Bon tradition, the soul is understood as the balance of the subtle energies and related qualities of the five elements: earth, water, fire, air, and space. The following excerpt, from Rinpoche's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

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

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

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

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



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

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





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

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

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

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

(...)

### Earth

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



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

(...)

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

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

### Water

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



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

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

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

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

### Fire

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



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

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

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

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

### Air

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



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

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



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

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

### Space



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

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

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

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

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

**Text selected by Ton Bisscheroux**

## The free internet course in *Soul Retrieval*

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

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

When you want to watch the live broadcast register here: [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org).

You can find all the recorded internet teachings at: [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org).

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

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





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

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

**# 17 – Summer 2015**



Meet the Serenity Ridge sangha

Chamma Ling in Valle de Bravo

Living a Worthwhile Life

The True Source of Healing



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

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# GREETINGS AND NEWS FROM THE EDITORS

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

In this edition we hope to surprise you with interesting articles, news, background stories, poems and beautiful photos.

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche always invites us to make our practice personal. So, in these greetings I connected some personal experiences with the content of this magazine.

It is about ten years ago that a friend told me that she had met a wonderful Tibetan lama who was teaching about the elements, and she thought that I might be interested. But I was not so much interested in 'the elements.' But, two years later, when somebody else told me that she was going to a Dzogchen meditation group, I was immediately interested, and a few months later I went to a seminar in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. And when I told my friend later that I had found a very special Tibetan lama, it proved to be the same one she had been going to: Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche... You can read three more stories of how

people met Rinpoche the first time, in the article about Serenity Ridge. Since we have introduced all the European Ligmincha sanghas we will introduce the other sanghas worldwide, starting with the headquarters of Ligmincha International.

We want to share with you what Rinpoche said, when he was teaching in Amsterdam, about options that are offered in the sangha. There is no good or bad choice: you can choose to study the traditional Bon texts at Lishu Institute, do a more personal work program offered by The 3 Doors

Academy, visit seminars, or watch the free internet teachings. You also can read reports from participants of some of these activities.

We have another article on Holecek – a Buddhist, spiritual teacher and author of the book *Preparing to Die*. I think he hit the nail right on its head, when he says "Death is bad news for matter, but great news for spirit" (*Preparing to Die*, p. 87). I am always amazed what happens when some-

body close dies: I open up, and talk about how important it is to make preparations for my own death, but after a few weeks life is business as usual. At the next funeral it's the same old story. To remind us all of what we can do, we bring you excerpts from a free internet teaching by Holecek.

Recently I bought a digital download of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's latest book, *The True Source of Healing*, and put it on my smartphone. Since then I do not mind when I have to wait somewhere, because I can read the book on my phone. I am very excited about this book, but at some point I

realized that it is important not only to read the book, but also to practice the Inner Refuge, or 'making a date' with (one of) the elements. I also discovered, that when it is hard for me to connect to stillness, silence and spaciousness, reading a book inspires and opens me. So, again there is no good or bad.

Enjoy reading this magazine.

In Bon,

**Ton Bisscheroux, chief editor**



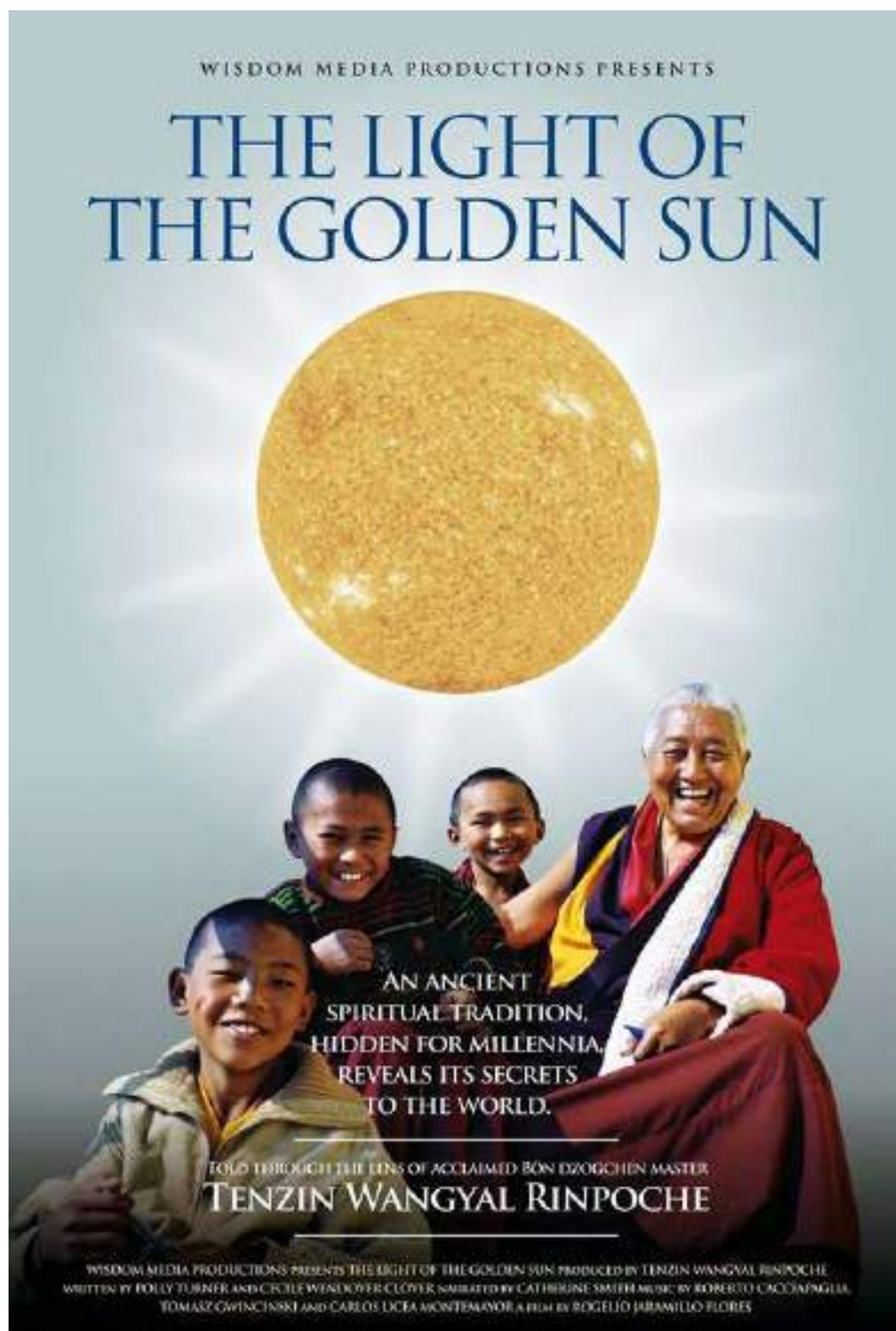
Ton Bisscheroux carries Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's book always with him on his phone.



# THE LIGHT OF THE GOLDEN SUN

This film by Rogelio Jaramillo Flores, and produced by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, tells the story of Bon, a rich spiritual heritage, hidden for millennia, whose

secret teachings are only now becoming known to the world. Since *Losar* (February 2015) you can watch this beautiful film on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com).



# OPENNESS, OPTIONS, AND LIVING A WORTHWHILE LIFE

During a seminar on *A-tri* in Amsterdam in May 2015, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche talked about openness and sangha and the options that are offered. Here is an excerpt, edited by Marcy Vaughn.

I want to talk about sangha and openness. I have been teaching in the West for the last twenty-five years. And one of the things that I have learned from my teaching is to be open to those who are learning from me. To be open means to be open to both the student's level of familiarity and lack of familiarity; to the student's ability to understand and to not understand; to the student's readiness to commit or not to commit. I developed a deep respect for those who are learning from me, for who they are. For me, the role of the teacher is not to teach what I think is right, but to pay attention to what the students are experiencing and how they are relating to the teachings. This is more important than my opinion of the right way and the wrong way. Trying to push everybody into the *right* way is not my style. At the end of the day, my intention is to help, and you help more people by being open. There are people who don't want to agree with you. Be open to them. Whatever they understand, meet them at their level of understanding.

You might ask, *but what is the right way?* Different people need different things. *But what is the right way, the best way?* There is no right way; there is no best way. Right is what transforms *you*. Best is what elevates *you*. There are a lot of people suffering with their Buddhist practices in the West. Buddhism is bringing more suffering into their lives, not because of the practice being done but because of their relationship to their practice.

The main point in teaching and in practice is to be open. What does that mean? I am bringing different opportunities to the West. At Lishu Institute in Dehradun, India, I offer people the possibility to study the texts as you would study in a university or as I did when I experienced my geshe training. In the beginning, I tried to make it a five-year program, but it did not work. So I made it a three-year program, and still that was difficult. Finally I said *Ok, I will give you the flexibility of coming*



*every six months.* I have been trying to accommodate and accommodate even more, and still it is difficult. But at least I am not stepping back. If there are only five people or even only one, we will do it! In September 2015 we will start. And if there are dedicated people who don't have any money, I'll find the money for them to do it. Money should not be the obstacle, because it matters; it is important. And above all, it is special to those who feel they want to do it. For those who have that level of dedication, they now have a place where they can do it.

On the other side is The 3 Doors program. This is very much about personal work. Several years ago there was a big conference in North America called "Buddhism in the West." H.H. Dalai Lama and many lamas from other schools were there. I was also invited, and so I went. One of the big discussions was "Teaching in the West." I found it was rather strange that there were extreme opinions being expressed. There were people saying: *This is right!* And: *That is wrong!* How you can have that? Buddha never said that one way is wrong. In the Bon tradition there are nine ways, and each of these ways exists because the capacities and needs of people differ. It is not that one





approach is right and another approach is wrong. It took me a little time to articulate my position for myself before talking to anybody else about it. It seemed like the wrong thing to say of a particular approach that it is not right, because that particular approach is right for some people. And that particular approach is wrong for some people. But in and of itself, it is not appropriate to say that an approach is not right. A fundamental principle of Bon Buddhism is that there is nothing *inherently* wrong.

Many things come from openness in my life. If I thought that only one approach to the path of liberation was right, then my walls would be very small and narrow. My ability to help people would be very limited. And my ability to touch people's hearts would be very limited, because then every heart should be like my heart, and that is a problem because it is simply not like that. The whole motivation to create The 3 Doors came from openness. The purpose of The 3 Doors is not studying texts, but working with practices to change yourself. Is working with yourself easier or is working with a text easier? Is working with yourself more interesting or is working with a text more interesting? Are both equally interesting? Are both equally important? It depends on who you are. We already have over one-hundred people who have graduated from The 3 Doors Academy. I do not have to evaluate or promote the program as good or bad, because you can talk to the graduates themselves. Every time I meet them, they are a little crazy, exclaiming, "Oh, it is so good!" It's amazing for me to witness the expressions of their gratitude and their transformations and how deeply their journey in The 3 Doors has touched them. Their experiences are much richer than my explanations could ever be. Sometimes people will ask me to say something about The 3 Doors. Why should I talk about it? Those in the program or who have graduated can tell me and others what they feel. This is far more alive than what I have to say. They are talking about real transformations. And one important thing is that they have touched the areas of their lives which are difficult. They are able to go in their practice to the exact places that need to be acknowledged and respected and transformed. They go to those areas and they have a lot of support to do so within their practice and from the collective presence of others in the program.

So we have Lishu and we have The 3 Doors, and in between we have all the activities in the Ligmincha sangha. Each person is trying to relate to the teachings and the practices from their own level and in their own way. This weekend is a wonderful example. We have the *A-tri* text. And within this text are many details. Some of these details are not all that necessary. So here we put more emphasis upon the core aspects and our experiences with those aspects. So 70% of our focus here is upon practices and experiences, and about 30% is on the teaching of the text. I think that balance is better. You might not understand every word, but I hope you have some concrete and valuable experiences during this weekend. Of course it is somewhat difficult to experience everything in two days! That's why if you feel you want to study a lot more, go to Lishu Institute!

Ligmincha, as an organization, is inviting more resident teachers. In Europe we have a lama living in our center in Poland, and a lama in living in Paris — Geshe Khorden Lhundup Gyaltzen. In the past I have encouraged the sangha here that it may be a good idea to have a resident teacher. I don't know if they did not hear it, or if they forgot about it, and so I'll keep reminding them. To invite a teacher from Nepal or India is not that easy. The immigration takes months and involves dealing with lawyers and a lot of paper work. And the responsibility when you invite somebody includes health insurance and a lot of other things. But now, you have to do very little. Paris is a three-hour train ride from here. That presents an opportunity. You have to be open to it, and you have to see it. If you see it, there is no way you cannot take action. So I am encouraging the sangha here to come together and to take advantage of this.

I have been reflecting on what to do. For three years I have been teaching the *A-tri*. It is a Tibetan text and there is an English translation, so it would be great if Geshe Khorden Lhundup Gyaltzen could come and go through the text with you. Those of you who are very new here might wonder why you have to study the *A-tri* text. But if you ask me — which perhaps you are not — then I say: *Yes! Go for it!* Take advantage of that great teacher and learn a little bit more. You will be meditating anyway, so it is best to learn a little bit more. I encourage you to do that. And organizationally, I am encouraging this, too. So perhaps



you can invite him every three months, and he can come to different parts of the Netherlands. I encourage everyone to be part of it. And for those who want to be part of The 3 Doors Academy, the opportunity exists. And for those who feel that The 3 Doors is too much and that studying Tibetan is too much, then you have a free webcast every month coming to your home. These are the options.

But please don't think that one option is better than the other. There is nothing like that in the dharma. So when anybody — including a lama — says that one approach is a little better than the other one, that attitude itself is fundamentally wrong. That is the lack of openness that we are talking about here. In saying that one approach is better than another, you are basically disrespecting someone, for there is someone who needs that approach, and you are not respecting that person. Imagine that I love carrying a mala and I try to convince everyone to carry a mala. Now someone says to me: *This mala is too heavy to carry!* And I say back to them, *No, you must have a mala; it is important.* So now we are getting into a discussion, and I am feeling a little bit rejected and a little angry, and I end up saying: *You are not a serious practitioner. Come on, you must have a mala.* And even further: *I think you are a bad practitioner!* Maybe even: *You are not even a practitioner because you don't carry a mala!* People say these things. It shows a lack of respect.

So be open to the teachings and learn whatever you can learn. And don't punish yourself or punish other people for having different paths. Know that the only spiritual practice worth doing is the practice that leads you to openness. Otherwise, even a spiritual practice is not worth doing. Unfortunately, for some people, so-called spiritual practice is nothing more than honoring their own painful patterns. Nothing changes. It is exactly the same product with a nicer label. If nothing has changed, you are fooling yourself in your practice. And when your spiritual practice does lead you to openness, do not simply experience that openness in your practice, but bring it into your life. The real meaning of openness comes in living with openness and sharing your life openly. Do what you can do with openness, not with blocks. Express your life with joy, not with fear. Express your life with creativity, not with pressure. Live your life with openness, for openness is the only

way to live a worthwhile life.

**Transcript by Jantien Spindler**

**Edited by Marcy Vaughn**

Photo by Anneke Dekkers



## The 3 Doors: Upcoming Programs in Europe

### *Transforming Your Life through Meditation*

Led by Senior Teachers John Jackson and Raven Lee, this 5½ day residential retreat is open to everyone. Participants arrive on location in Pauenhof, Germany, outside Düsseldorf, on November 8, 2015 and depart on November 14, 2015. Please find registration details and other information [here](#).

At this retreat, you will be introduced to the stillness of body, silence of speech, and spaciousness of mind as the three doors that connect you to the transformative power of this refuge. Through the daily practice of yogas of movement and breath you will explore the sacred architecture of the subtle energy centers and channels. Singing sacred syllables, you can clear blockages and open to the genuine warmth of being. You will be guided to reflect upon challenges that limit the fullness of your life, and learn how to bring these challenges to your practice in order to release them. Join us for this unique opportunity to deepen your relationship with yourself while being supported by the collective presence and companionship of the group.

### *The 3 Doors Academy*

The next European Academy, led by Senior Teachers John Jackson and Raven Lee, will begin in June 2016, pending a total of 30 accepted applicants. Please find information about the program, curriculum, how to apply, and logistical details [here](#).



# LIVING AND LEARNING AT LISHU INSTITUTE

Anna-Kaisa Hirvanen wrote a blog while at Lishu Institute for the first Spring retreat in 2015. More photos of Lishu Institute can be seen at [www.ligmincha.fi](http://www.ligmincha.fi).



Lishu Institute's main building.

## Arrival in Lishu Institute

I arrived at Lishu Institute on March 18, 2015, after nineteen hours of fluid travelling through Helsinki – Delhi – Dehradun flights and a taxi ride to Lishu Institute. As before, my experience of arriving at Lishu Institute is like arriving home. I noticed that it is now the fourth time I am staying here, four months spent here already during the last three years!

Lishu Institute is built on a high hill, with open sky and beautiful nature around it. Arriving at Lishu Institute from the noise and dust of India is a nice big sigh – pure air, a peaceful rhythm of life and feeling of space. The rooms are clean and really comfortable, food is delicious and people friendly.

It was great to spend first few days upon arrival at Lishu Institute, resting, getting settled and orienting myself to the upcoming language retreat.

Our teacher Dr. Sangmo Yangri grew up immersed in the Bon-tradition from early childhood. Her father had a close relationship to H.E. Yongdzin Rinpoche and took her to meet Rinpoche every

day at Menri monastery. They walked a long distance to the monastery over very steep roads. Sometimes little girl Sangmo felt so tired walking to the monastery that she wished she would have wings to fly! One day she asked Yongdzin Rinpoche if he could give her these wings so she could fly. Yongdzin Rinpoche replied that of course, it is possible. Then he taught her meditation posture and the practice of *Kuntu Zangpo* and told her to do the practice every morning. So she did! After one week she was ready to try her wings by the nearby field – ending up getting her clothes dirty and feeling disappointed because the wings didn't work yet! Many years later, when she was finishing her M.A., she went to see Rinpoche once again. Rinpoche asked her with a big smile on his face, if the two wings had been growing yet! (In

Buddhist traditions, the two wings represent wisdom and compassion, and that the practitioner is ripening oneself through practice.)

Buddhist traditions, the two wings represent wisdom and compassion, and that the practitioner is ripening oneself through practice.)

After twelve years of study at the University of Banares (Varanasi), Sangmo received her Ph.D. in Bon-Buddhist studies, as the first Tibetan woman to do so.

The first week of studies was full of laughter, challenges and we learned a lot. In the morning we had Tibetan language class, and the afternoon was for Bon-prayers, their meaning and pronunciation. In the evenings we dove into the



Dr. Sangmo Yangri and the heart of Lishu, Geshe Thupten Negi.





art of speaking Tibetan in everyday life. We are learning by baby-steps and, what is important, learning with joy!



Cham-dances in Clement Town, Dehradun.

On Sunday March 29 we headed to see traditional *Cham* dances in Clement Town, a Tibetan settlement in Dehradun, and a big monastery area. Rain and storms were accompanying the performances, but we fully enjoyed the color and strength of it all.

During the second week of studies we enjoyed the company of 7<sup>th</sup> Kundrol Namkha Thinley Wangyal Rinpoche for the whole week at Lishu Institute. On Friday we were happy to receive 9<sup>th</sup> Mingling Khenchen Rinpoche as a special guest. What a blessed week. There is magic within the silence of Lishu Institute!

### Lishu Institute life

The past weeks in Lishu Institute seem to have flown fast. The simple and steady rhythm of life sets one's mind to rest and at the same time open for learning.

The nature around us has shown its power and strength, the weather changing quickly from cozy heat to big

strong rainstorms. And now, hearing the news from Nepal earthquake – which was also felt here as a subtle shaking, it is possible to really feel the crisis of the Mother Earth and its inhabitants.

On the weekend April 10 to 12 we received guests from Menri Monastery as Menri Lopon Thinley Nyima Rinpoche arrived for his first visit to Lishu Institute together with Menri Shedrub Kenpo who is the brother of our teacher, Dr. Sangmo Yangri, and two other Geshe from Menri.

Menri Monastery is located about five or six hours drive from Lishu Institute, so the institute will be enjoying the visits of skillful Menri teachers during the full-time study program that is starting in September 2015.

The small road that goes up the hill to Lishu Institute used to be a bit bumpy and rocky, but thanks to the efforts of Geshe Thupten, a new cement road is now being constructed by the Indian government. Things take time in India: this road was applied for more than one and half years ago. Finally things are happening, and the new road will be finished within a few days.

Even though learning Tibetan is challenging for me, I can clearly see improvement happening after these weeks of classes. I am now able to



After Mingling Khenchen Rinpoche's teachings.



recognize and write the alphabet, pronouncing the letters more clearly, speaking a few sentences here and there and even spelling out and reading some short pieces of texts and prayers or mantras. This is, of course, thanks to our great teacher Sangmo-La who is guiding us skillfully, making learning this complicated language to be a joyful and natural process.

Learning the language is opening the meanings within it, and as the language is carrying the whole Tibetan culture, it is also a doorway to a whole body of knowledge.



Tibetan language class.

studying and practicing in this peaceful environment. Within its simplicity, life at Lishu Institute is very rich.

The sentences below, picked up nearby the World Peace Stupa in Clement Town, Dehradun where we visited during the first week of our stay, says it all for the moment:

***In the end, these things matter most:  
How well did you love?  
How fully did you live?  
How deeply did you let go?***



Yangchen, the Master of Lishu's kitchen.

**Text and photos by Anna-Kaisa Hirvanen**

The language has depths of wisdom in it, earth bounded playfulness and many, many layers to be learned. Most of all I enjoy the translations that we've been working on during the prayer classes. Going through the mantras and prayers word by word, opening their meanings and doing our best to find words to express in English is an inspiration for all of us, including Samsung the Lishu Institute dog, who has been eagerly wanting to attend the classes every day!

Our language retreat finished with a small ceremony on April 30. In the evening we burned butter lamps and candles to relieve the sufferings of all beings, especially those affected by the earthquake in Nepal.

Today, preparing to depart from Lishu Institute, there is already a feeling of missing the place, the people and the precious opportunity to focus on





# CHAMMA LING IN VALLE DE BRAVO MEXICO

Elena Ochoa-Villasenor reports from the retreat in March in Chamma Ling Valle de Bravo, Mexico. This article was also published in the *Voice of Clear Light* in June 2015.

As many of you know, we held the consecration of *The Great Stupa for World Peace* in Valle de Bravo in 2010 with the presence of our beloved teachers, Venerable Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche, Tenzin



Photo from 2010







Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche in 2010.

Wangyal Rinpoche and other teachers and monks. [You can read more about this consecration in the [Ligmincha Europe Magazine # 1 - Spring 2011.](#)]

Thanks to the generosity of one of the members of the sangha the interior of the stupa was remodeled using a new age-design. And we now have a truly amazing and beautiful *Ma Gyud* mandala created by lama Yungdrung Lodoe covering the space above us.

Many new additions have been completed that



we all enjoyed at our recent retreat held in March 2015. We inaugurated the kitchen and the dining room, and Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche stayed for the first time in the lama house.

Last but not least, we 'planted' the first *Bodhi* tree, designed to be similar to the original one in Bodh Gaya, India, but made out of iron and copper. This project is going to give us the resources to begin the building of dormitories.

The tree has 108 leaves, and each contains the name of a family or individual who donated \$ 108 dollars. We are beginning the second of hopefully many more trees, with the idea of having members of all our sanghas around the world be pre-



The *Ma Gyud* mandala created by Lama Yungdrung Lodoe.





The *Bodhi* tree with the names of the donators.

sent in this beautiful woods of trees surrounding the *Stupa* and receiving the blessings. We invite you to be there with us!

If you'd like to learn more about the Bodhi Tree project and how to help, please email [Elena](#)

[Ochoa](#). It would be nice to have a "European tree." Learn more about Chamma Ling Valle de Bravo at [www.ligmincha.mx](http://www.ligmincha.mx).

**Text by Elena Ochoa**

Photos by Anja Benesch and Salvador Espinosa



Lama Kalsang Nyima.





# HEAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUR ANCESTORS

**Marlies Cober, one of the graduates of The European 3 Doors Academy, shares with us some of her experiences.**

“Do you want to be the one who can heal relationships with your ancestors?” This is what I heard Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche say in 2011. I had been thinking about starting The 3 Doors Academy, but the moment I heard these words there was no longer any doubt. Yes, this was and continues to be my deepest wish.

I started the European Academy that summer and didn't really know what to expect. Completing the Application was the start of learning more about the Academy process. I already knew about the

like the practice itself. As we hosted each other, we could see and hear our differences and also discover how much we were all the same. We shared our thoughts, words, and feelings. We sat in silence and in laughter or tears. Most powerful was the open space in our hearts as we hosted any pain that we shared by listening, being aware, and being present with each other. The power of the group circle was initiated by our teachers, who gave examples from their own lives in which they expressed their wisdom and experience.

I discovered that inside my body there are many layers of feelings. As I looked at these feelings I could allow space or could contract. When I chose to allow space, I could taste what was there. A deep connection with my ancestors awoke. It took



sixty-three transformations we would work on and was familiar with all the practices that would be introduced in the Academy. However, I could not have expected how deeply they would touch my feelings during these coming years. I had practiced the *Tsa Lung* and the *Nine Breathings* for a long time as well as the *Warrior Seed Syllables*. However, the way the Academy teachers guided us through these practices during our group retreats was fascinating because of what was coming up from my body and my inner speech. It really helped me become aware of how painful my thoughts could be. After some time, I could experience that what we were being taught was true, *really* true: in allowing the pain to be there, virtuous qualities can arise and healing will find its way.

The atmosphere inside the Academy group was

many moments and sessions of practice to just allow this to arise and it became clear to me that in healing my own pain, I was able to heal the pain of my ancestors as well. Time didn't exist. The very moment I got a clear insight, the moment inner warmth arose, I could feel that something had healed. This process is going on today. It seems to me that there is no limit to what can be healed. More and more I am aware of what is meant in the dedication poem: “In liberating my own being, may I benefit others.” When I'm able to look with a wider view, people and situations change. That is the power of The 3 Doors Academy. May we all benefit from these healing teachings and practices.

**Text by Marlies Cober**

Photo by Anja Benesch

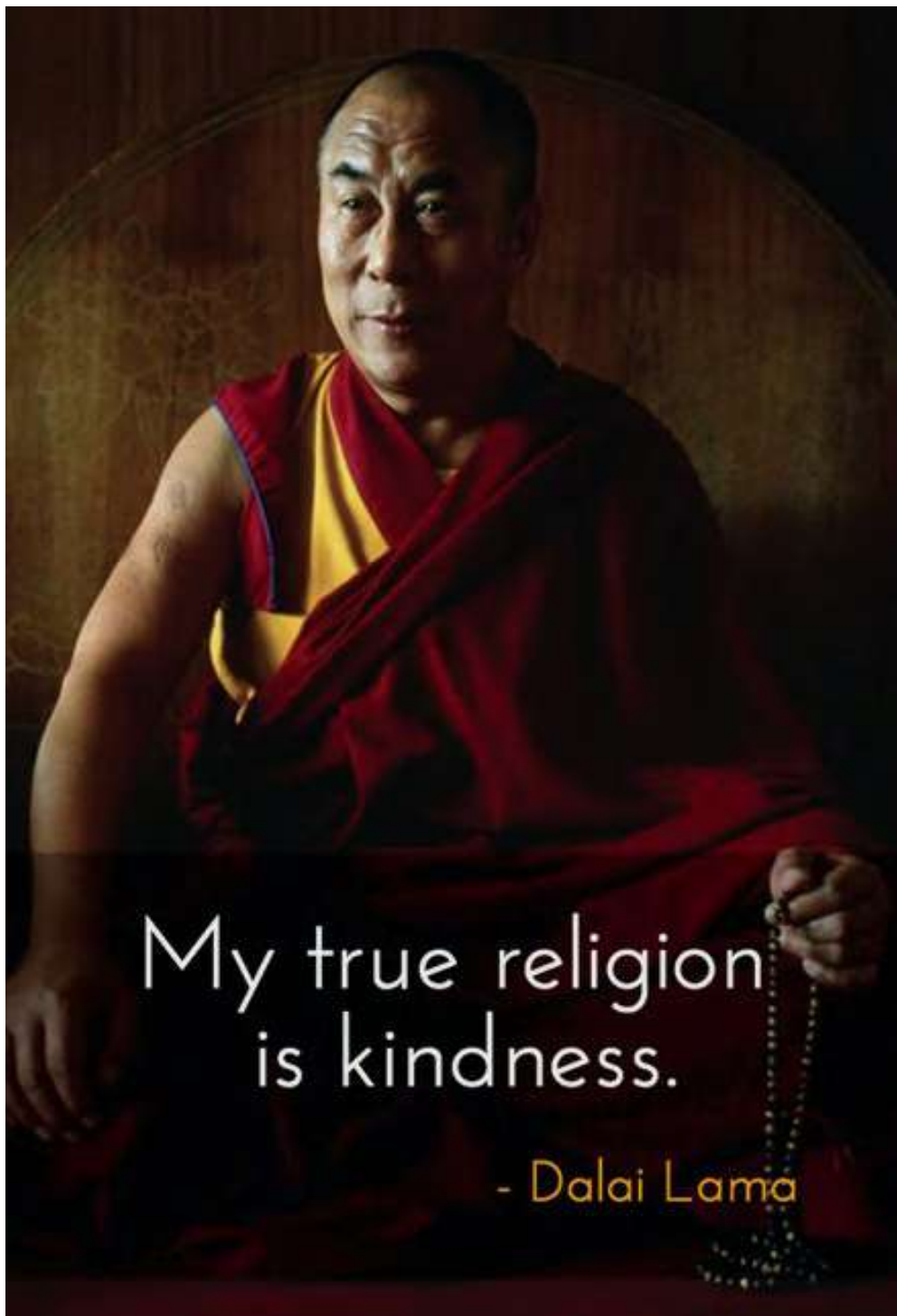




# MY TRUE RELIGION IS KINDNESS

We want to share inspiring texts from other Buddhist streams and religions. This time Esther Drielsma chose a statement by H.H. The Dalai Lama, who recently celebrated his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. Esther likes this message because it includes everybody, and goes beyond religion. And everyone can endeavour to

kindness at any time. You don't need to have studied to understand this. It is what everyone needs. When you realize this, in a split second it makes a situation or contact of a better quality. So many people love him, because he embodies kindness. He is kindness in everything.



# SERENITY RIDGE: THE HEADQUARTERS OF LIGMINCHA

Since we have introduced all the European sanghas, we are going to introduce the other sanghas abroad, starting with Serenity Ridge. Ton Bisscheroux talked to first Sue Davis-Dill (Executive Director of Ligmincha International), Stella Richards (Operations Manager of Serenity Ridge) and later with John Massie (Retreat Center Developer).

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

**Sue:** I first met Rinpoche in 1996 when I was living in California. I had been on a spiritual search for some time, had been going to different meditation groups from different lineages and somebody told me that I might be interested in Dzogchen. Around that time I got my first computer, and when I went online for the first time I typed the word “Dzogchen” for search, and up came [www.Ligmincha.org](http://www.Ligmincha.org). It said that Rinpoche was going to teach in Berkeley a couple of months later, and I decided to go there.

**Stella:** The head cook at Serenity Ridge is a good

friend, and when she was short of staff four years ago she asked me to help out. So I came here as a cook a few times a year and loved it. I have a background, though, in both economics and psychology. After some time I realized that my economics background might be helpful for the center, and I pounded on Sue's door, saying “You have to let me help you with your books!” Last fall, I became the Operations Manager.

**Ton:** What changed for Serenity Ridge when Rinpoche moved to California in 2012?

**Sue:** Up until then Rinpoche lived in Charlottesville – that is about a forty-five minutes drive from Serenity Ridge – and Rinpoche came out here only when he was teaching, so in one sense, not much has changed. We used to have a center in Charlottesville, and Rinpoche had his office there. The biggest change was in 2009 when we closed the Charlottesville center and its Tibet Shop and moved our offices to Serenity Ridge. This meant we no longer had a central location in the city where sangha could meet.

**Stella:** Probably not so much changed, since only a small percentage of our retreatants tend to be



Serenity Ridge: the Gompa and the Garuda House.





Sue Davis-Dill.

local. You may be interested in knowing that perhaps even as many as a quarter of the people who come here for our longer summer and winter retreats come from abroad. People come here from Ukraine, Russia, Thailand, Indonesia, Japan, as well as from most countries in Europe and Latin America.

**Ton: Can you tell about the sanghas in Charlottesville and Serenity Ridge?**

**Sue:** Altogether there are about seventy-five sangha members who live nearby, some of whom are very active volunteers. We have a local email list that includes the sangha who live in Charlottesville as well as the area around Serenity Ridge and we use this to let everyone know about upcoming retreats or special events. Our resident lama, Geshe Tenzin Yangton, leads monthly practice in Charlottesville. We have plans for him to give more teachings at Serenity Ridge as well as perform rituals that the sangha can attend. We have some newer sangha members who would love to see the sangha in Charlottesville become more active. They are asking people what they would like to see in the sangha, and from there

will see what can be organized.

**Ton: A few years ago the names of all the retreat centers were changed to Chamma Ling. Why did the name of Serenity Ridge not change?**

**Sue:** When this property was purchased in 1998, there was a sign out front from the previous owners that said "Serenity Ridge." The people who built the house and barn named it this way, and Rinpoche decided to keep this name. When he changed the names a few years ago and asked all of the centers to take on the name Ligmincha and all of the retreat centers to take on the name Chamma Ling, the decision was to keep the name Serenity Ridge. He felt it could remain with this name because it also is unique in that it is the headquarters and houses the offices of Ligmincha International.

**Ton: Can you tell about the teachings in Serenity Ridge?**

**Sue:** Rinpoche teaches here four times a year, one time each season for from a weekend to two weeks. The teachings vary from Dzogchen teachings to teachings from the *Mother Tantra*. Marcy Vaughn does a wonderful job supporting Rinpoche with preparing support materials. So, when Rinpoche teaches at other locations the materials are already prepared, and they can be sent to where ever he is going. This year he taught *Dream Yoga* during the Summer Retreat, and next year he will teach *Sleep Yoga*. This fall he will be teaching on the *Five Elements*.



Stella Richards.





**Ton: Can you tell about the resident lamas at Serenity Ridge?**

**Sue:** From 2007 till 2010 Lama Kalsang Nyima was the resident lama. First he lived at our Charlottesville center, and in 2009 he moved to Serenity Ridge. In 2010 he left for Mexico, and became the resident lama for Ligmincha Mexico. Since May 2014 Geshe Tenzin Yangton has been the resident lama at Serenity Ridge Retreat Center. He teaches here, and also has been going to different locations nearby to teach, and is available to do rituals.

**Stella:** Geshe Tenzin Yangton is very popular, he is a young man with a lot of energy. His contribution to Serenity Ridge is extraordinary.

**Ton: What goes on the rest of the year at Serenity Ridge?**

**Stella:** We share our facilities with other like-minded groups throughout the year, at an increasingly busy pace. The folks in these groups have been unfailingly conscientious, grateful, and hard-working in their own practices; it is an honor for me to interact with them.

**Sue:** We have a very beautiful property and we want to use that as much as possible, and Rinpoche encourages that. When other people come we want them to feel welcomed, and they appreciate their stay here, the silence, the sacred space of the Gomba. It's amazing who finds us,



Geshe Tenzin Yangton.

and every year we are getting a bit busier. Stella is doing a great job running the facilities and caring for all the people who come here.

**Ton: What are your plans for the future?**

**Stella:** Right now we're expanding the possibilities for people who would like to come here and stay, helping us run our facility and having time for their own spiritual practice. It will probably be possible to stay for as little as one month, or as long as a year. Geshe Yangton has also graciously offered to help support residents in their Bon practice.

**Sue:** Relative to our future plans, we are planning to build a new building to house both the interna-



Many rituals are done at Serenity Ridge.



tional and Serenity Ridge offices, a new kitchen and dining room and media room. There will also be space for people working on international projects.

**Ton: Can you tell something about the structure of Serenity Ridge?**

**Sue:** Serenity Ridge is now headquarters of Ligmincha International, which was previously named Ligmincha Institute. The Ligmincha International Board created a committee called the Serenity Ridge Executive Committee, that is in charge of oversight for the overall activities and policy making for Serenity Ridge. Our Ligmincha President, Rob Patzig, is on this committee, as well as Ligmincha International board members Gabriel Rocco and Pam Rodeheaver, as well as our Retreat Center Developer, John Massie and me. We have weekly meetings, where Stella joins us, and focus on the amazing number of details that come with running a retreat center. This committee reports to the International Board. Ligmincha International, and therefore Serenity Ridge, is a non-profit religious educational institute. We also have Serenity Ridge Council, and we have many volunteers who have a significant role at the retreat center from retreat coordinators, sangha members who assist our resident lama and Rinpoche when he is in residence, to volunteers who come help with creating walking trails.

**Stella:** The Executive Committee's general oversight is much like other Boards: it is primarily focused on policy and procedures and also helping to ensure a sense of continuity. In terms of the day to day operations of the center, I serve as the Operations Manager, and oversee the Center's staff. We have a mix of part-time staff, residents who live on site and volunteer their time to maintaining the center, and traditional volunteers who help with all manner of activities, from helping teach Geshela English to coordinating retreat activities.

**Ton: How can people ask the resident lamas for prayers or to do rituals?**

**Sue:** We have a link on the website where people can ask for prayers or rituals. At this time we only have a link for Lama Geshe Tenzin Yangton, but we are going to make links for the Geshes who reside in Europe. And people can always contact any center with a resident Lama directly.

**Stella:** Many people ask for rituals; it keeps Geshe Yangton quite busy.

**Ton: Is there something you want to share with our readers?**

**Sue:** We warmly welcome members of our international sangha to come to Rinpoche's retreats at Serenity Ridge.

**Stella:** I think we have an amazing group of people working here together to support the needs of retreatants. Please do come to one of our retreats. We'd love to have everyone visit.



John Massie.

**Ton: John, you're involved from the first hour. When did you meet Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche the first time?**

I first met Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and his teacher, H.E. Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche at a small house in the western Virginia mountains in the summer of 1993.

In autumn of 1992 I trekked with Australian friends through lower Dolpo from Dhorpatan to Jumla via Dunai and Ringmo. I frequently encountered the image of *Tapihritsa* for the first time in that magical landscape. Since 1980, I made many trekking trips to Nepal, spent a lot of time in high altitude Tibetan Buddhist culture areas and had seen graphic representation of many Tibetan Buddhist deities. This image was new to me and noteworthy for the distinctive simplicity with which *Tapihritsa* was represented. It made an impression but I must confess, in my ignorance at that time, I viewed it as a primitive graphic style of rural artists. I had never seen it in Kathmandu. I had only heard of Bon, knew nothing of it and had



never heard the word Dzogchen. Qualities of Emptiness and Naked Awareness were little more than words encountered in general reading on Buddhism.

That winter I returned home to my life and work designing houses and gardens near my home in the Shenandoah Valley.

The following summer I attended the annual *Tai Chi* festival, a Taste of China, in my small town, Winchester, Virginia. On the last day, we went to a park on top of the Blue Ridge mountains to practice in a final session. In saying goodbye to those departing, I casually asked a couple traveling in a van where they were headed next. They replied that they were going to receive teaching from some Bonpo lamas a couple hours away. I was immediately interested as only nine months previously I had been walking thru lower Dolpo, a Bon region of Nepal. Now I hear of Bonpos near my home in Virginia. I got directions and knew exactly the remote house where the teachings were being held. I coincidentally happened to be working on a job in the same county and had traveled the remote road frequently. In fact, the following week, I was scheduled to be on that job site where I was designing the house, gardens and outbuildings for a large horse farm. Taking this as a sign from the universe, I decided I would stop and see these Bon lamas.

The day was typical Virginia summer: incredibly hot and humid. I turned off the main road and shortly came to a cluster of cars parked at the entrance to a long drive. I could not see the house, but knew this must be the place. I started walking in the heat, up through the trees. At some point I passed into a zone of freshness and comfort out of the intense fire. It felt like going through a sort of force field. Ha, little did I know. I continued on until I saw a small single house in the woods, quiet, empty and oddly, no people to be seen. As I approached the house, a door opened. A beautiful young woman with long red hair in red appeared. She was completely covered in red clothing. That certainly got my attention. As I understand it now, someone who is still a wonderful member of the Sangha, manifested as a Red emanation of *Sherab Chamma*: an appearance to cut thru the dullness of forty-six years in waiting. So I would not miss the point. She

beckoned and invited me to enter the door. The interior was crammed with people sitting on the floor sharing out food from a giant feast that was laid on a table deep in the room. Beyond were two Tibetan lamas and a shrine raised above the floor in a beautifully transformed space. It was clearly the basement room of an American vacation cabin that had been made into a shrine. I sat, received a plate of food and something to drink. At some point we went out into the yard where everyone ate the food and made quiet conversation. Someone took me over and introduced me to the Lamas. We had a brief exchange. That was sufficient. I got the contact information for Charlottesville and then went on my way to the job across the mountain.

That day was the last day of the first summer retreat that Rinpoche led in Virginia. It was the first day I encountered him and Yongdzin Rinpoche. I have no specific memory of the Samsaric things that occurred that day. But the heat, crossing the boundary, the woman in the red dress, appearing for the *Tsok*, and meeting my teachers is still fresh as if it happened today.

I am forever grateful for this meeting in the Virginia woods and may it always lead to benefit for all.

Five years later we found Serenity Ridge, but that is another story.

### **Ton: Can you tell something about your role at Serenity ridge?**

Since that first meeting, I have assisted with the initial land search for Serenity Ridge, designed and oversaw the transformation of the barn into a beautiful *Gompa*, did the architectural design and oversaw the building of the *Garuda House* accommodations building and its library for Tibetan texts. I also oversaw the renovation in 2009 of the lama house. Currently, I am designing a new building for Serenity Ridge that will house the offices of Ligmincha International and Serenity Ridge, a new kitchen and dining room, and media room. I have designed Lishu Institute's main building. In my spare time I continue to walk the mountains of Nepal.

### **Interview by Ton Bisscheroux**

Photos: courtesy of Ligmincha International





# WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN EUROPE

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



**June 17 – 21:**

John Jackson lead a meditation retreat with the *Practice of the Five Elements* in Chamma Ling Poland.



**May 21 – 22:**

Alejandro Chaoul taught in Utrecht, the Netherlands, on the outer, inner and secret *Tsa Lung*. He explained the three levels of practice to about sixty people.



**May 22 – 24:**

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught the third part of a cycle of *A-tri* teachings in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. About one hundred sixty people attended the weekend.





**June 26 – 28:**

Ligmincha Germany welcomed Geshe Khorden Lhundup Gyaltsen at the *Tibethaus* in Frankfurt where he gave his first public teachings in Germany. Nevertheless, he was greeted by many familiar faces, as many of the twenty participants had taken part in the *Losar* retreat in Buchenau, which Geshe supported earlier this year. The weekend revolved around the topics *Tsa Lung*,



*Bodhicitta* and *Refuge*, allowing new students to become familiar with these beneficial practices and long-term students to deepen their knowledge.



**June 19 – 22:**

Geshe Choekhortshang Rinpoche taught *Phowa* from *Mother Tantra* in Budapest, Hungary. Nearly one hundred and fifty people attended the teaching for three days.



**May 9 – 10:**

Geshe Choekhortshang Rinpoche taught the *Dream Yoga* from the *Mother Tantra* in Orte, Italy, to a group of thirteen people – some of whom had already followed his previous teaching there. The atmosphere was friendly and warm.







**Free Full-Day Live Webcast**  
**The True Source of Healing:  
Your Own Inner Refuge**

with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

**June 13, 2015**

15.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)

Register for the webcast at [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)  
This is Part 5 of a FREE yearlong course in soul retrieval.  
Learn more at [www.ligminchalearning.com](http://www.ligminchalearning.com)



You can watch the recording here:

[The True Source of Healing, Part 5: Your Own Inner Refuge](#)



**Free Live Webcast**  
**Dream Yoga**

with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

**June 27, 2015**

18.00–19.15 h (C.E.T.)

Translations in multiple languages available

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



You can watch the recording here:

[Dream Yoga — Live from Serenity Ridge](#)



**Free Live Webcast**  
**Tapping Into Relationships  
to Nourish Your Soul**

with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

**July 11, 2015, 21.00–22.30 h (C.E.T.)**

Register for the webcast at [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)  
This is Part 6 of a FREE yearlong course in soul retrieval.  
Learn more at [www.ligminchalearning.com](http://www.ligminchalearning.com)



You can watch the recording here:

[The True Source of Healing, Part 6: Tapping Into Relationships to Nourish Your Soul](#)





# DREAM YOGA IN BUDAPEST

## Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in Budapest!



## Dream Yoga August 29 - 30

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, the outstanding representative of Bon Buddhism, will visit Hungary by Ligmincha Hungary's invitation. Rinpoche will teach the practice of Dream Yoga, a powerful instrument of Awakening which will help deepen your awareness not only during everyday experiences, but also during sleep, a state in which we spend about one-third of our lives.

*"If we cannot carry our practice into sleep, if we lose ourselves every night, what chance do we have to be aware when death comes? Look to your experience in dreams to know how you will fare in death. Look to your experience of sleep to discover whether or not you are truly awake," writes Rinpoche in his book The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep.*

**Teaching Location:** Hotel Bara, Hegyalja str. 34-36, zip code: 1118, Budapest, Hungary

### Programme:

|                           |               |   |
|---------------------------|---------------|---|
| Saturday, 29 August 2015: | 9.00 – 10.30  | Teachings on Dream Yoga, Guided Meditation            |
|                           | 10.30 – 11.00 | Break   |
|                           | 11.00 – 12.30 | Teachings on Dream Yoga, Guided Meditation            |
|                           | 12.30 – 14.00 | Lunch Break   |
|                           | 14.00 – 15.30 | Teachings on Dream Yoga, Guided Meditation            |
|                           | 15.30 – 16.00 | Break   |
|                           | 16.00 – 17.30 | Teachings on Dream Yoga, Guided Meditation            |
|                           | 17.30 – 18.00 | Questions and Answers                                 |
|                           |               |   |
| Sunday, 30 August 2015:   | 9.00 – 10.30  | Teachings on Dream Yoga, Guided Meditation            |
|                           | 10.30 – 11.00 | Break   |
|                           | 11.00 – 12.30 | Teachings on Dream Yoga, Guided Meditation            |
|                           | 12.30 – 13.30 | Lunch Break   |
|                           | 13.30 – 15.00 | Teachings on Dream Yoga, Guided Meditation            |
|                           | 15.00 – 15.30 | Break   |
|                           | 15.30 – 17.00 | Teachings on Dream Yoga, Guided Meditation, Blessings |

**Donation:** Entire Dream Yoga Course: HUF 21,000 (HUF 16,000 with prior registration).

Prior registration is valid upon receipt of a downpayment of HUF 6,000 if you are interested, we will send you the account number and information about catering options.

**You can register at the following address: [Info@ligmincha.hu](mailto:Info@ligmincha.hu)**

We look forward to the participation of all those interested at this exceptional event.



# EMBRACING THE THREE PERFECTS

## TEACHINGS ON GURU YOGA, BODHICITTA, REFUGE AND DEDICATION AND THE FIVE TSA LUNG EXERCISES

with Geshe Khorden Lhundup Gyaltsen

September 18 – 20, 2015

Ligmincha Berlin Center, Laubacher Strasse 21, 14197 Berlin, Germany

We are very happy to welcome Geshe Khorden Lhundup Gyaltsen as our guest in our new Center in Berlin. From September 18 – 20 he will give fundamental teachings of the Bon tradition. They are called “Three Perfects,” which means the three main principles of practice. The first principle is related to the motivation, connection and devotion to the practice and includes explanations on the Guru Yoga prayer, Refuge and Bodhicitta. The second principle is referring to the meditation practice and the integration of emptiness. The third principle represents the dedication of our practice to the wealth of other beings by which we can secure our merits of practice and overcome our self-referentiality. Geshe Lhundup will give us as well instructions for the Five Tsa Lung and other exercises of Tibetan Yoga for inner wisdom and clarity.

*Geshe Lhundup is a Ligmincha Resident Lama in Europe and lives in Paris, France. He studied many years in our mother monastery Menri in India, where he received his Geshe title.*



This is a wonderful opportunity, to receive teachings from another Yungdrung Bon teacher and to learn the Tsa Lung exercises directly from an authentic source. Newcomers have the possibility to get a profound introduction in teaching and practice. Experienced practitioners can deepen their own practice and clear questions and obstacles in direct contact with Geshe Lhundup.

Lecture: Friday, September 18, 19.00 – 21.30 h / € 5

Seminar: Saturday 19, 10.00 – 18.00 h, Sunday 20, 10.00 – 16.00 h / € 100, red. € 70

Information and registration on [www.ligmincha.de/berlin](http://www.ligmincha.de/berlin)



# THE HEALING PRACTICE OF THE RED GARUDA

## TEACHING AND PRACTICE OF THE RED GARUDA

with John Jackson

November 6 – 8 2015

Ligmincha Berlin Center, Laubacher Strasse 21, 14197 Berlin, Germany



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 us for a weekend and connect with the power, strength and wisdom that lie within our innermost being.

*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 Nyiama Dakpa Rinpoche. He is the director of the Chamma Ling solitary retreat center in the mountains of Colorado, US, ([www.chammaling.org](http://www.chammaling.org)), co-leader of The 3 Doors Academy for Europe, and leads retreats throughout North America and Europe.*



**Lecture: Friday, November 6, 19.00 – 21.30 h / € 5**

**Seminar: Saturday 7, 10.00 – 18.00 h, Sunday 8, 10.00 – 16.00 h / € 120, red. € 80**

Information and registration on [www.ligmincha.de/berlin](http://www.ligmincha.de/berlin)





ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥  
 ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥  
 ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥  
 ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥

*from The Twenty-One Nails,  
a Bon dzogchen text  
(published in: The True Source of Healing)*



# THE SMILE THAT TRANSCENDS AGE



## The Smile that Transcends Age

Within this body that ages by the elements  
of karma,

is the mind of a child which has the joy to play.

Age and time bring this appearance of  
growing old,

But the smile of youthfulness transcends time.

Written by Ababa Albany, CA 6/3/15

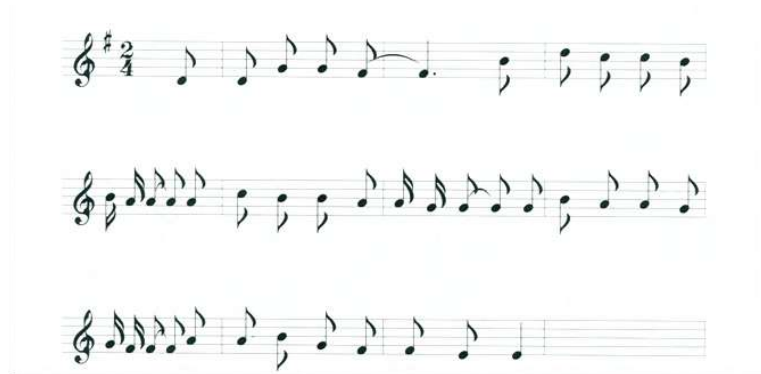
Translated by Raven Cypress Wood



*WeicoNote*



# OPENNESS IS THE KEY



Openness is the key,  
in everything you want to be.  
In miracles, that you'll go to see.  
limitless, that will set you free.  
In sky, in sea, in field and tree.

Openness is the key,  
In bending; I'm one of Thee.  
Solving in this sparkling sea,  
of happiness that glows in me.  
In life as lively as it can be.

Openness is the key  
Openness is the key....

*Text and music by Tonny Maas*





# LEVELS OF LUCIDITY

Frits de Vries listened to a free teaching by Andrew Holecek called “A Proper View on Death” found at [www.tricycle.com](http://www.tricycle.com). He tried to list and unlock all the important points.

In his teaching Andrew Holecek emphasizes the importance of the view. The right view is the first step on the Noble Eightfold Buddhist path. He connects this view to our inevitable journey through the three *Bardos* after death. Of central importance in his teaching is the guidance on this journey provided by a map of the territory through which you will journey. But first Holecek teaches the notion that this journey is not external, but takes only place in our mind.

*“The journey of the Bardo is the journey after death. It is nothing more than a journey of the mind. It's a journey into and through the mind. It's nowhere else. This view alone brings about a tremendous sense of understanding in terms of the power of the contemplative path, and the power of meditation.”*

Holecek goes on to paint a map of the journey for us. Guiding his development of this map Holecek uses two fundamental Buddhist concepts: the *trikaya* and the three *Bardos*.

*“There are two principle doctrines that I think are helpful to understand. These are like the frameworks for the entire Bardo journey. The first is the teachings on the trikaya. (...) By studying the Tri-kaya and the three Bardos all together, we're studying a map of such elegance and sophistication, that when we enter the territory, we'll be able to orient ourselves. Where are we? What do we need to do?”*

Next he expounds the relation between these basic concepts and connects them in what he calls a vertical mandala.

*“The Tibetan Buddhists speak a lot about mandala principal, mandala meaning an organizational template. I like to view this idea or this teaching on the Trikaya as a vertical mandala. It acts as a kind of skeleton upon which we can hang a great*



Andrew Holecek.

*deal of helpful information. The trikaya literally means three bodies; tri meaning three and kaya meaning body.”*

“The doctrine says that a Buddha has three *kāyas* or *bodies*:

The *Dharmakāya* or *Truth body* which embodies the very principle of enlightenment and knows no limits or boundaries;

The *Sambhogakāya* or *body of mutual enjoyment* which is a body of bliss or clear light manifestation;

The *Nirmāṇakāya* or *created body* which manifests in time and space.” ([wikipedia.org/Trikaya](http://wikipedia.org/Trikaya))

| KAYA         | MANIFESTATION | OPPORTUNITY FOR RECOGNITION      |
|--------------|---------------|----------------------------------|
| Dharmakaya   | Formless      | At the end of the bardo of dying |
| Sambhogakaya | Ethereal form | During bardo of dharmata         |
| Nirmanakaya  | Form          | During bardo of becoming         |

Table 1. The three kayas and opportunities for liberation in the three bardos.

(Holecek, *Preparing to Die*, p 44)

These kaya/body names are of Buddha bodies and they are pure. Our impure human bodies are *Nirmanakaya* manifesting in time and space. Of course there is a big difference between the pure *Nirmanakaya* body of the Buddha and our impure *Nirmanakaya* body. I assume Holecek uses ‘*Nirmanakaya*’ when he talks about the painful *Bardo*



process of dying associated with our release of the *Nirmanakaya*.

*"The painful Bardo of Dying is associated with our release of the Nirmanakaya. It's called painful because it's painful for us to let go. It's painful for us to release our grip on all things made of form and of course most are archetypical this body."*

Holecsek presents an interesting explanation of the gradual unfolding and vision of the pure *trikaya* in one's journey through the *Bardos*, leaving the impure *trikaya* behind.

Next to the template of the *trikaya* is the second template, connected to the three *Bardos*. The first *Bardo* is the *Bardo of Dying*. The second *Bardo* is the *Bardo of Dharmata*. The third *Bardo* is the *Bardo of Becoming*.

These three *Bardos* are discussed in detail in Holecsek's book *Preparing to Die*, which is introduced in the in the [Ligmincha Europe Magazine # 15](#), p. 36-40.

Holecsek points to the teaching, "A Proper View on Death" and the contrast between 'experienced practitioners' and 'the rest of us' or 'for the most of us' when we travel through these *Bardos*. As Holecsek explains the three *Bardos* the importance of meditation experience is emphasized as he describes the *Bardo of Dharmata*. Without the proper preparation developed through meditation one's chance of liberation in this *Bardo* are slight for 'the rest of us'. A spur towards spiritual practice is implied.

### I. Bardo of Dying

*"This is the Bardo, or gap, that occurs at the end of life. It classically heads its onset when we become afflicted with a condition that will fundamentally end with our death. This can take place in a matter of seconds if you're involved in a car accident, or years or decades if you are involved in a kind of chronic, debilitating, progressive disease."*

The *Bardo of Dying* is painful for most of us

because it is painful to let go, as we have seen above. For the phases of outer and inner dissolution, a detailed description is found in his book *Preparing to Die*. For 'experienced practitioners' we repeat the clear advice of Namkhai Norbu for the *Bardo of Dying* from *Longchenpa's Advice from the Heart*. (1)

*"As soon as you recognize that you are dying, you should enter the state of Guruyoga. In that way you are beyond time. You notice what is occurring in your body at that moment, such as the dissolution of the elements, but since you are in the state of instant presence, you do not experience suffering in the ordinary way. In that state, death also poses no problem for you. We should dedicate ourselves to the practice of Guruyoga and become good practitioners of that."*

At the end of the painful *Bardo of Dying*, the mind transfers into the *Bardo of Dharmata*.

### II. Bardo of Dharmata

In Holecsek's vertical mandala the *Bardo of Dharmata* is related to the *Dharmakaya* as well as to the *Sambhogakaya*, through a connection he makes between two phases in the *Bardo*. First, one experiences the emptiness phase and then the luminous phase. The first phase is referred to as the emptiness phase or the *Dharmakaya* *Bardo*. This is the phase of the awakened nature, the true formless and therefore deathless nature. Diligent and perseverant practitioners will clearly see the importance of Namkhai Norbu's advice.

*"If we do have some level of familiarity with this deathless nature which we practiced during life, this is referred to in the beautiful phrase of the Tibetan tradition as 'the union of the mother and child luminosity.' The child luminosity refers to your own level of recognition of your deathless nature. The mother luminosity is this primordial mother which gives birth to all manifest reality. If you can identify with this deathless nature while you're still alive, if you can die before you die, then when this deathless nature is revealed, mother*



*and child reunite. The result of that reunion is fundamental awakening. This is the greatest opportunity that we have."*

Holecsek warns us against the most important adversary we have, our ego.

*"Ego dreads it the most because the Dharmakaya, from ego's perspective, is death. We enter this kind of double bind situation on this spiritual path. More than anything we long for liberation of the Dharmakaya or the Dharmata. But on the other hand more than anything, we dread it because from the ego's perspective it's death and the dissolution of all form."*

The second phase of this *Bardo* is referred to as the luminosity phase or the *Sambhogakaya* phase. If you missed your chance, as an experienced spiritual practitioner, in the first phase of this *Bardo*, you get a second chance in this second phase with the possibility of recognizing the appearing deities as part of your own luminosity, as has been written in the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*.

*"This of course is where famous legendary hundred peaceful and wrathful deities of the Tibetan Book of the Dead arise. Now it's well beyond our scope to discuss these, but these hundred deities are simply primordial or archetypal expressions of the awakened mind as it first starts to shine and radiate as the luminosity of emptiness."*

So it is worth studying the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* as a preparation for dying. Even if you see a lot of fleeting images in this phase of the *Bardo*, if only one image stands out it is enough, the keyword is 'recognition.'

According to Holecsek in this *Bardo* as a whole there is not much for 'the rest of us' to do because the first phase lasts merely 'a finger snap' and the second phase will usually be only 'fleeting images of light.' We basically black-out like in a dreamless sleep. But for experienced practitioners, having some familiarity with the 'nature of mind,' there is a chance of liberation. Here is

potentially a very special result of advanced meditative training called *Tukdam*.

*"But if you're a practitioner, if you're a yogi or yogini, fundamentally 'you' can do whatever you want. You can rest in the nature of your heart mind indefinitely. In fact this particular resting in the mind is referred to in the Tibetan tradition as Tukdam, which is kind of a post-death meditative absorption. This is fairly common place in the Tibetan Buddhism."*

Holecsek explains briefly the mission of H.H. the Dalai Lama to let a group of scientists investigate the phenomenon of *Tukdam*. Advanced practitioners have shown post-mortem signs of inner meditative life.



*"(...) Besides their perfect poise, there will be other signs that show they are resting in the state of the Ground Luminosity: There is still a certain color and glow in their face, the nose does not sink inward, the skin remains soft and flexible, the body does not become stiff, the eyes are said to keep a soft and compas-*

*sionate glow, and there is still a warmth at the heart."* ([www.rigpawiki.org/Tukdam](http://www.rigpawiki.org/Tukdam))

This warmth in the region of the heart especially can be truly felt. Western science has no explanation for this result of Tibetan Buddhist meditative training.

### III. *Bardo of Becoming*

As a dream yoga teacher himself Holecsek refers not by accident to experienced practitioners as the ones who practice *Dream Yoga* or *Sleep Yoga*.

*"But a sleep yoga practitioner or someone who's familiar with the luminosity, the emptiness of their own heart mind, they maintain a kind of constant consciousness. A twenty-four/seven level of awareness so that when they drop into sleep, their body might be going into a sleep mode but their mind continues to stay awake in a formless level."*

After the dreamless sleep in the *Bardo of Dhar-*





*mata* for ‘the rest of us,’ we will wake up somewhat bewildered and confused, according to Holecek, in the karmic *Bardo of Becoming*. It lasts on average around forty-nine days. This state is very similar to a normal dream. If you don’t have control over your normal dreams, you don’t have control over this *Bardo* ‘dream’ either.

*“The winds recur and according to the Tibetan description at this point, the very subtle body leaves this physical body and begins this interesting and potentially terrifying journey in the after-death state, which constitutes for most of us, the post-death experience, which according to the Tibetans, on average lasts around forty-nine days. So this state is very similar to an unrecognized dream — a non-lucid dream.”*

Holecek continues his lesson with some penetrating questions. Can you recognize your dreams, while you are dreaming that you are dreaming? Can you be awake in your dreams? Holecek calls it a concordant expression of the karmic *Bardo of Becoming*. The recognition of deep dreamless sleep is even a step further, a concordant expression of the luminous *Bardo of Dharmata*. In short we might say the degree of recognition in the dream and sleep state is a predictor of how much recognition we will have in the intermediate *Bardo* state.

*“Again we can gain some sense of suggestion about how much recognition we will have in these after-death states, by how we relate and recognize what happens every night when we fall asleep.”*

This is where your former training in *Dream Yoga* and *Sleep Yoga* will pay back. The first and foremost book where we can learn about *Dream Yoga* and *Sleep Yoga* is of course the classic of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche: *The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep*. In chapter 10 we find a clear link between dream capacity and traveling in the *Bardo*.

*“Experiencing death is very similar to entering dream. The possibility of remaining present during the intermediate bardo after death, of staying aware and undistracted as the after-death visions arise, depends on the capacities developed in dream yoga. We say that dream is a test for the bardo. This is the integration of the dream state*

*with the intermediate state, understanding that reactions to the phenomena of the dream will be the same as reactions to the phenomena of the bardo. The accomplishment at this point depends on the development of lucidity and non-grasping in dream.”* (2)

Before we can understand this test and we are capable of integrating the dream state with the *Bardo* state, we probably first have to finish the four foundational practices of the Dream Yoga (2, p. 90-96). The first practice is to see daily life as a dream: *“Keep reminding yourself that you are dreaming up your experiences.”* The second practice is to let go more and more: *“Removing grasping and aversion.”* The third practice is to reinforce your intention to recognize that you are dreaming while you are dreaming, it is called *“lucid dreaming.”* The last exercise is, when you wake up in the morning, to strengthen positive thinking about small results of the night. And then,

*“As the practice changes the experiences of the visions of the day, the change is integrated into the dream. Lucidity arises in the dream state. There are successive levels of lucidity, from the first experiences of being aware that the dream is a dream, to a powerful lucidity in which one is totally free in the dream and dream itself becomes an experience of almost shocking vividness and clarity.”* (2)

## Conclusion

The view supported by the map of the territory drawn by Holecek, with the vertical mandala, the *trikaya* and *Bardos*, culminates in your ability to be aware in your dreams and more specifically to the successive levels of lucidity of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. Now it is our task to use this map to support our imagination when we transform our ambition into efforts toward liberation.

## Notes

(1) Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, *Longchenpa's Advice from the Heart*, Shang Shung Pub., Arcidosso, 2008, p. 57-60.

(2) Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, *The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep*, Snow Lion, 1998, p. 139-140.

**Text by Frits de Vries**

Photos: from internet



# THE TRUE SOURCE OF HEALING

We bring you an excerpt of chapter 2 of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's latest book, *The True Source of Healing: How the Ancient Tibetan Practice of Soul Retrieval Can Transform and Enrich Your Life*. Hay House released the book in early July 2015. This book supports Rinpoche's free, yearlong internet course in *Soul Retrieval*.

## Retrieving from Nature

Experiencing the natural world as sacred is a source of nourishment for the soul. Connecting with the elements and retrieving one's soul in this way is an honored approach in Bön. When the sacred relationship with nature is cultivated, true healing is supported.

What is a sacred relationship with nature? I define as sacred anything that brings you closer to yourself, to recognizing the truth of who you are. Imagine two people who visit the mountains for very different reasons. One is a shaman, the other a mountain climber. The shaman approaches the mountain to consciously weaken his ego and strengthen his connection with his inner wisdom. The athlete approaches the mountain as a challenge to conquer. While the mountaineer may be immersed in nature and feel excited and stimulated as he climbs, in relishing achievement he unconsciously feeds his ego. By experiencing his worth as something that can be measured and attained, he is disconnecting from himself. His relationship with nature is not a sacred one.

You can experience nature as a teacher constantly transmitting knowledge and wisdom to you, or simply as a place to engage your ego. When you enter into a sacred relationship with nature, qualities of the elements awaken within you, and you discover and connect with your genuine self.

## Tibetan Roots

Traditionally, the ancient practice of soul retrieval

involves cultivating a sacred relationship with the spirits of nature. The idea of nature spirits may not fully resonate with you, but knowledge of this perspective can help to increase your understanding and motivation for change, because it enters you into a relationship with the natural world that is dynamic and alive.

Like many indigenous cultures, the Tibetans consider the forces of nature to be alive with unseen beings. To Tibetans, cultivating a relationship with the spirit of a tree or rock or stream is no less important than honoring human relationships.

When you connect with the liveliness in nature, you are not lonely. Relaxing in front of a fire and feeling its warmth, you become aware of the spirit

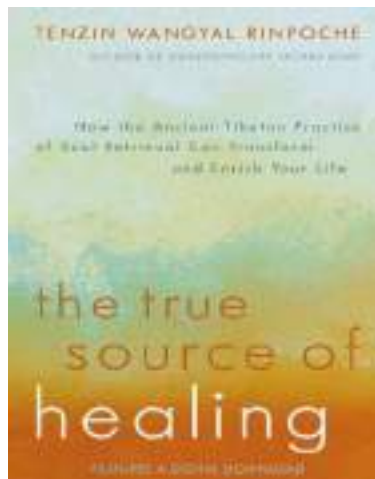
of the fire. Sitting by a river, you can form a relationship with the water spirits. Developing a deeper level of closeness, communication, and respect for an element and its spirit helps you awaken the essence of that element within you.

## Making a Date with the Elements

A friend of mine, feeling old and sick, made a point upon arising each morning to sit on her porch and look at the sky and listen to the birds. This simple addition to her morning routine made the rest of her day go more smoothly. It left her feeling more open. On the mornings she didn't do it, she could feel the difference. Being with the sky didn't involve any complicated meditation postures, visualizations, or mantras, yet it awakened the healing qualities of her inner spaciousness. In a direct way, this illustrates the way nature can nourish us.

Making a special date with the elements is something anyone can do, yet few people think of doing it. It is a matter of finding the time and place to be with the elements and feel their liveliness.

When making a date with nature, you can be assured that, unlike some of your friends and relatives, nature will not judge you, try to convince



you of anything, or expect anything of you. To make the connection, all that is required of you is to be still within yourself, silence your internal chatter, and open your heart. If you can rest in stillness, silence, and spaciousness, you will be open to receiving what nature has to offer.

If you have been feeling that your problems are solid and overwhelming, go to a place where the space element is evident. This might be a mountain overlook, a broad field, or a tall building with a window view. Choose a day when the sky is clear and a time when the sun is not directly in your eyes.

When you can connect long enough, gazing at a clear sky can open your heart and mind, and awaken an experience of inner spaciousness. It can bring you home to who you are, to the true nature of your mind. By the end of your session with the space element, all the challenges that have been weighing on you may seem lighter. You may feel better able to accommodate whatever arises in your life.

So, just as my friend did, consider spending quality time with the space element in a place where the sky is open and clear. Whether you travel to an open area or simply look out your window, use the time to connect with and nurture a feeling of openness.

If you have been feeling stuck and are in need of the air element, you can seek out a windy location. Go to a spot where people fly kites. Consider a high point, such as a hilltop or mountain pass, or visit the beach. In our daily lives there are many opportunities to experience the air element. You can connect with it anywhere the wind blows free — even on a city street. The skyscrapers in a city like New York create a wind-tunnel effect. As the wind blows around you, become aware of your inner playfulness and flexibility.

It's a Tibetan tradition to toss thin papers containing prayers into the breeze, imagining that the air

disperses the prayers throughout the universe. The purpose of this ritual is to raise your *wind-horse*, your life force. A mythical Tibetan creature, the windhorse symbolizes the space element, the subtle energy of inner air. It brings good fortune, ensuring that every circumstance you meet will lead to your success and well-being. As the wind lifts your prayers into the sky, your inner wind raises your energy. You can explore this connection between the outer and inner winds in your practice. The more you connect with the wind element and merge with its qualities, the more flexible and resilient you will be. You will feel yourself opening to new perspectives and will sense your potential for expansion and growth.



Make a date with Nature and discover your True Self.

If you have been lacking energy, vitality, or inspiration and are in need of the fire element, find a place where fire is active. Sit by a campfire or a fireplace, enter a sweat lodge, or simply light candles. A good way to connect with fire is to sit in the sun and feel your skin absorbing its warmth. In Northern Europe, after the long, dark winter, people congregate outdoors to celebrate the return of the sun's rays. There is even more power in remaining aware as you actively engage with the fire element.

The point is not to become so absorbed in the fire that you lose yourself but rather, through connecting with fire's energetic warmth, to find yourself. As you become more receptive to and engaged with the qualities of fire, feelings of joy are likely to replace sadness and depression. In your innermost being, you *are* joy. Fire awakens this in you. Even when the flames subside or the sun disappears behind a cloud, the warmth and joy remain.

Make an appointment with the fire element. Whether you sit by a campfire or in a sunny spot by a window, feel fire's blissful vitality arising within you.

**Text selected by Ton Bisscheroux**  
Photo by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche





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

| When  | Where                                   | What   | More information   |
|---|---|--|--|
| August 15<br>21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)       | Your computer                           | Live Webcast:<br>Overcoming Loneliness: Finding the Friend Within  | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a> |
| August 18 – 23                              | Chamma Ling<br>Poland, Wilga,<br>Poland | Retreat:<br>The Twenty-One Nails,<br>Part 3 (of 3)   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.pl">www.ligmincha.pl</a>   |
| August 29 – 30                              | Budapest, Hungary                       | Weekend seminar:<br>Dream Yoga   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.hu">www.ligmincha.hu</a>   |
| September 12<br>21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)    | Your computer                           | Live Webcast:<br>Nourishing Your Inner Being:<br>The Heart of Soul Retrieval   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a> |
| September 19 –<br>October 11                | Your computer                           | Interactive online course:<br>Tibetan Sound Healing  | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a> |
| October 10<br>21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)      | Your computer                           | Live Webcast:<br>Nourishing Your Inner Being:<br>Questions and Answers   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a> |
| October 24<br>21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)      | Your computer                           | Live Webcast:<br>Topic to be determined.<br>Broadcast live from the Annual<br>Fall Retreat at Ligmincha's<br>Serenity Ridge Retreat Center   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a> |
| November 14<br>21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)     | Your computer                           | Live Webcast:<br>The Power of Warmth: Physical<br>Healing Through Meditation   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a> |
| December 12<br>15.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)     | Your computer                           | Full-Day Live Webcast:<br>Healing from the Source:<br>Cutting the Root of Your Pain  | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a> |
| January 1, 2016<br>17.00 – 18.00 h (C.E.T.) | Your computer                           | Live Webcast:<br>Guided Meditation from the<br>Experiential Transmission<br>Teachings, Part 2.<br>Broadcast live from the Annual<br>Winter Retreat at Ligmincha's<br>Serenity Ridge Retreat Center | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a> |
| January 9, 2016<br>21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.) | Your computer                           | Live Webcast:<br>The True Source of Healing:<br>Soul Retrieval as a Lifetime<br>Practice   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a> |

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**Free internet teachings and videos on [YouTube](#), [Ustream](#) and [www.oceanofwisdom.org](http://www.oceanofwisdom.org)**





# Ligmincha Europe Magazine

**# 18 – Autumn 2015**



Meet the sangha from California

The Power of Prayers

Being Present with the Dying

Geshe Khorden Lhundup Gyaltsen



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

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# GREETINGS AND NEWS FROM THE EDITORS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Summer Retreat in Buchenau: the Party.

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

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche is a great teacher, but there are more teachers – not so well known yet – who are also

wonderful teachers. In this magazine we introduce Geshe Khorden Lhundup Gyaltzen, a Ligmincha resident lama living in Paris, France.

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

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



# THE POWER OF PRAYER

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Yes, absolutely.

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

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

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





# PRAYERS IN THE DZOGCHEN TRADITION OF TIBET

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

## The *Guru Yoga Prayer*

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

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

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

That point is not easy to understand. In other



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and his son Senghe.

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

## The *Inner Refuge Prayer*

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

## The *Invocation of Tapihritsa*

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



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

### The balance between acting and being

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

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

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

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



*Tapihritsa.*

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

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

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



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

### Remembering what is precious in us

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

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

During the last two weeks, we adults wanted to

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

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



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

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





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

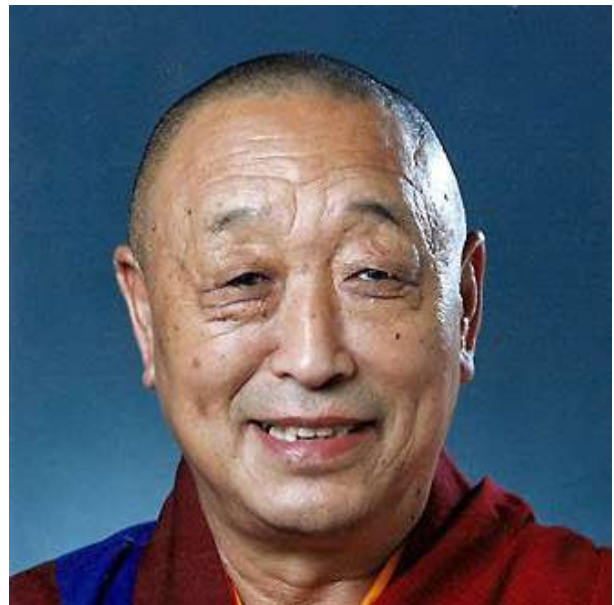
Everyone is encouraged to recite the *Long Life Prayer* and *Long Life Mantra* for the health of His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, spiritual leader of the Tibetan Bon Buddhist tradition. Read a letter from Rob Patzig, chair of the Ligmincha International Board, for details.

**Dear Dharma Friends:**

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

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

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



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

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

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

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ।  
 अथैकं यजुर्वेदं यजेत् ।  
 यजुर्वेदं यजेत् ।  
 यजुर्वेदं यजेत् ।  
 यजुर्वेदं यजेत् ।  
 यजुर्वेदं यजेत् ।  
 यजुर्वेदं यजेत् ।

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

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



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

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

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

**Rob Patzig**  
**President, Ligmincha International**

Long Life Mantra

བསྐྱེད་ཀྱི་ཨ་དཀར་མུ་ལ་ཏིང་ནམ་འོད་འདུ་མུ་ཡེ་ཚེ་ནི་ངེ།

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



# TRANSFORMING YOUR LIFE THROUGH MEDITATION

**8 – 13 November, 2015**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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





# LISHU INSTITUTE IS A GREAT GIFT

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

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

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



The students at Lishu Institute.

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

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

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



The main building of Lishu Institute.





Mindrolling monastery.

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

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

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

**Text by Jacek Trzebuniak**



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







Our teacher Sangmo Yangri.

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

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

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

At the dinner table one can suddenly feel the warmth inside as well, and walking and talking with the other practitioners is giving me this special feeling of having found my

family, my home. There are moments I will keep inside forever as a special treasure. I want to send my most sincere thankfulness to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche for making all this happen for us at Lishu Institute.

#### Text by Brita Carmen Sommer

Photos by Brita Carmen Sommer, Daniela Zago and Jacek Trzebuniak



Our group near the big *Stupa* in Dehradun.



Statue of Buddha in Dehradun.





# CUTTING THROUGH SPIRITUAL MATERIALISM

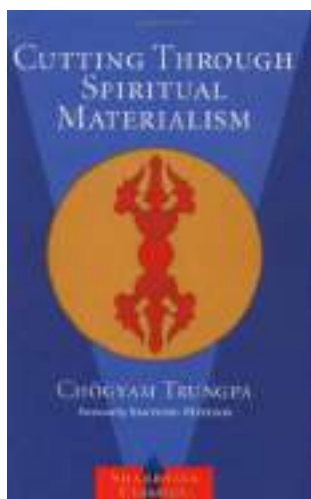
**We want to share inspiring texts from other Buddhist streams and religions. Ton Bisscheroux shares the pages 13-15 from the first book he read about Tibetan Buddhism. It was written by Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, a Buddhist meditation master and holder of both the Kagyu and Nyingma lineages. He was a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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

**Text selected by Ton Bisscheroux**



# HOTEL CALIFORNIA

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

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

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

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



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



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche teaching in Los Angeles in 2008.



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

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

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

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

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



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





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

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



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

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



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche teaching in Los Angeles 2015.

Wangyal Rinpoche and things were evolving quite well.

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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



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

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





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

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

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

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

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

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



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







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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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



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





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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



Dawa Gyaltsen.

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

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

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



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

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



Laura Shekerjian.







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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Interview by Ton Bisscheroux**

Photos: courtesy of Ligmincha California



# WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN EUROPE

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



## May 1 – 3:

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



## August 29 – 30:

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

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







### August 10 – 16:

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

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

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

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

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

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









### August 18 – 23:

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

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

#### A little history:

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

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

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

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

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

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







### September 18 – 20:

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

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

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

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

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



### September 26 – 27:

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

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

Handling the pencil takes the same amount of

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







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

Register for the webcast at [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)  
 This is Part 7 of a FREE yearlong course in soul retrieval.  
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You can watch the recording here:

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




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

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You can watch the recording here:

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



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

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You can watch the recording here:

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



# A TIBETAN IN PARIS

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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





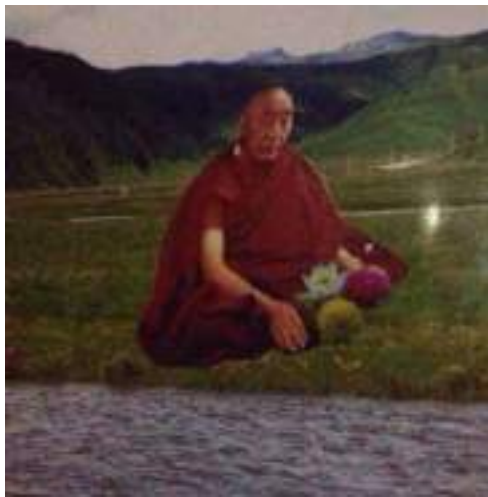
for me to leave Tibet, but I decided to follow my uncle's advice. He also told me that after I would have finished my study I should go back to Tibet to teach there.

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

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

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

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



Geshe Lhundup's uncle Patsang Dawa Gyaltsen Rinpoche.

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

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

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

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



Rashitogden Rinpoche.



Berutogden Rinpoche.



Togden Sherab Phuntsok Rinpoche.







Geshe ceremonies 2008 at Menri Monastery in India.

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

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

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

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

work together with the Ligmincha sangha.

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

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

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





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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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





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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught in a discotheque in Paris.







Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Pierre Clisson.

does not change the teachings.

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

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

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

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

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



Raphaël Ibanez de Garayo.

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

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

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

**Interview by Ton Bisscheroux**

Photos: courtesy of Ligmincha France



# MEDITATION AS MEDICINE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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





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

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

—Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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







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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

### **Text by Polly Turner**

Photograph of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche by Janine Guldener

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





# WHAT COMES AFTER DEATH?

## BARDO TEACHINGS

from **GESHE CHOEKHORTSHANG RINPOCHE**

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

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

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

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

### Programme:

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

**With prior registration: 40 EUR**

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





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

## AWAKENING THE SACRED FEMININE

A Weekend and a 5 Day Meditation Retreat with Marcy Vaughn

March 11 - 16th 2016, Pauenhof / Germany

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

### SHERAP CHAMMA: MOTHER OF WISDOM AND LOVE

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



### ABOUT MARCY VAUGHN



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

### Event Details

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

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

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

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

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

Organized by Ligmincha Nederland and Ligmincha Deutschland



The sangha



## WITH LOVE FROM RUSSIA



# ON DEATH, WITHOUT EXAGGERATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Death  
always arrives by that very moment too late.

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

*Wisława Szymborska*

*(The Nobel Prize in Literature 1996)*





# BEING PRESENT WITH THE DYING

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

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

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

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

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

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



going on.

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

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

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







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

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

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

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

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

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

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

+++

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

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

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

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





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

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

**Text and photos by Birgit Bastholm Bune**



# RELATING TO THE SACRED

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

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

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

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

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

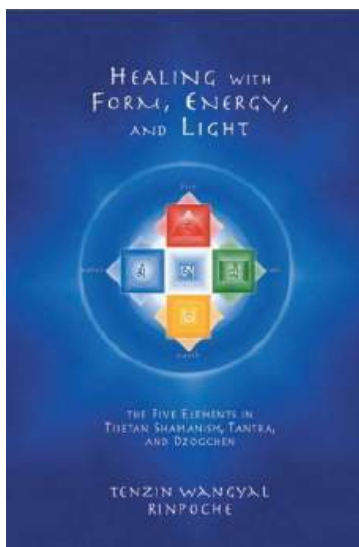
Ask yourself what “sacred” means to you. Are you in any relationship you regard as sacred? If so, is it based in your own sense of the sacred or is it composed of behaviors you learned from others? What in your life do you truly believe to be sacred?

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

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

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

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







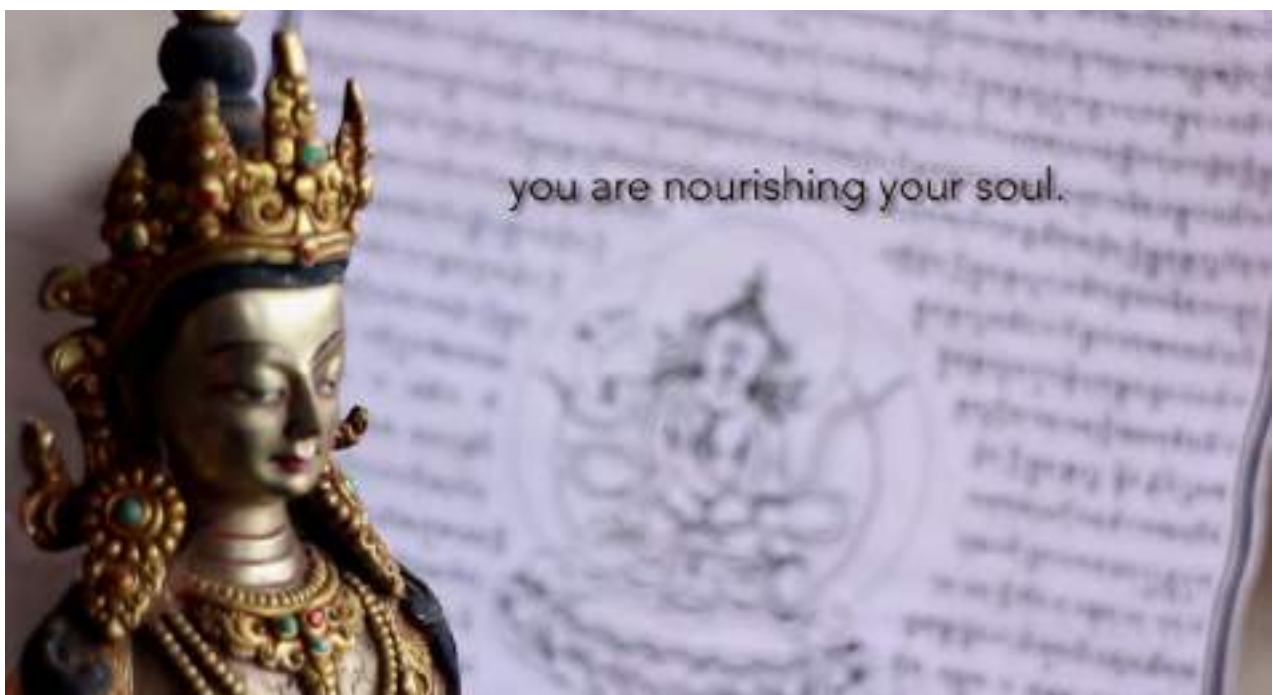
At the moment when awareness dawns  
and illuminates the space of being,

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

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

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

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



you are nourishing your soul.



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

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

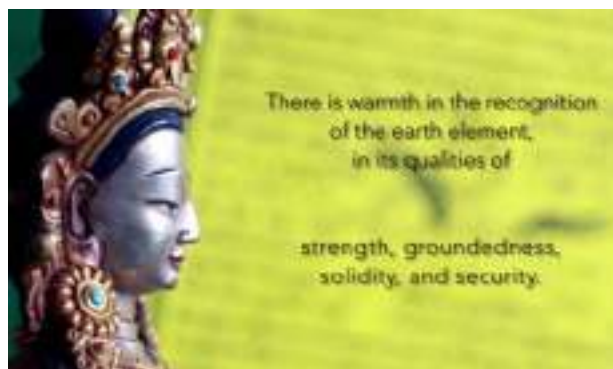
We may interpret the shamanic practices as only symbols used to manipulate mechanical psychological processes. But when we really need help, we don't turn to what we believe is only psychological; this is because it seems smaller than we are in our totality. In a sacred relationship — to the elements,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

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

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

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

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



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

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



# HOW TANTRA WORKS

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

## Introduction

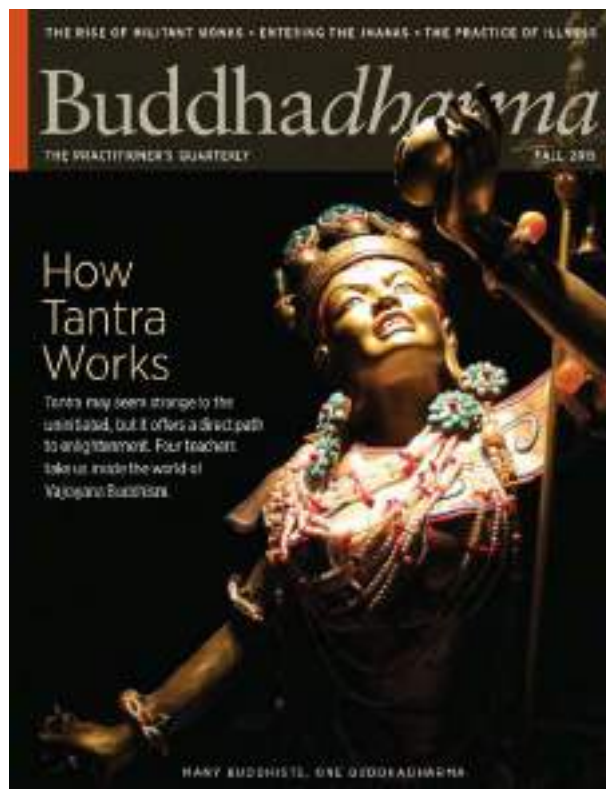
Tantric Buddhism of the Himalayan region, also known as Vajrayana Buddhism, is a rich and esoteric tradition extending initially from a body of texts called the *yoganiruttara tantras*, which began to appear in Buddhist communities around the sixth and seventh centuries in Northern India. Vajrayana,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

(...)

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

(...)

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



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

(...)

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

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

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





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

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

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

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

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

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

(...)

**Text selected by Jantien Spindler**

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

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

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



Khandros of the Five Elements.



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

| When                                    | Where                         | What   | More information   |
|---|-------------------------------|--|--|
| October 24<br>21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)  | Your computer                 | Live Webcast:<br>The Five Elements: Connecting with<br>the Living Universe                         | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a> |
| November 14<br>21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.) | Your computer                 | Live Webcast:<br>The Power of Warmth: Physical<br>Healing Through Meditation                       | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a> |
| November 14 –<br>December 6             | Your computer                 | Interactive online course:<br>Healing from the Source: Meditation<br>as Medicine for Body and Mind | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a> |
| December 12<br>15.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.) | Your computer                 | Full-Day Live Webcast:<br>Healing from the Source: Cutting the<br>Root of Your Pain                | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a> |
| <b>2016</b>                             |                               |  |  |
| January 1<br>17.00 – 18.00 h (C.E.T.)   | Your computer                 | Live Webcast:<br>Guided Meditation from the<br>Experiential Transmission Teachings,<br>Part 2.     | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a> |
| January 9<br>21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)   | Your computer                 | Live Webcast:<br>The True Source of Healing: Soul<br>Retrieval as a Lifetime Practice              | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a> |
| April 22 – 24                           | Paris, France                 | Weekend seminar:<br>Living with Joy, Dying with Peace  | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.fr">www.ligmincha.fr</a>   |
| April 29 – May 1                        | Vienna, Austria               | Weekend seminar:<br>Topic to be determined   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.at">www.ligmincha.at</a>   |
| May 6 – 8                               | Berlin, Germany               | Weekend seminar:<br>From Inspiration to Manifestation:<br>Unblocking Your Creative Potential       | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.de">www.ligmincha.de</a>   |
| May 14 – 16                             | Bulle,<br>Switzerland         | Weekend seminar:<br>Bardo and Dream  | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.fr">www.ligmincha.fr</a>   |
| May 20 – 22                             | Amsterdam,<br>The Netherlands | Weekend seminar:<br>A-tri, Part 4  | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.nl">www.ligmincha.nl</a>   |

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

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# Ligmincha Europe Magazine

**# 19 – Winter 2015-2016**



Meet Chamma Ling Colorado

Appointed as Rinpoche

Kanjur in Chamma Ling Poland

Who is Tenzin Wangyal?





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

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# GREETINGS AND NEWS FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Readers, Dear Practitioners of Bon,

During his December live webcast Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche asked us to reflect on the past year. I found myself reflecting on 2015 developments in the Ligmincha Europe Magazine. For example, in the section *Going Beyond*, we started to include quotes from other spiritual or religious traditions besides Bon. We introduced a new section on *Preparing to Die*. After featuring an interview with Geshe Khorden Lhundup Gyaltsen, the Ligmincha resident lama in Paris, we decided to introduce the other resident Ligmincha lamas as well. Once we had featured articles on all the European sanghas, we chose to interview sangha members in the United States, and will continue throughout 2016 with the other sanghas in the Americas.

national Newspaper of the Dzogchen Community of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. The article — which we found on the Internet — includes an interview with a young Geshe Tenzin Wangyal and a discussion of his 'discovery of America.'

What else can you read in this issue? Students from The 3 Doors and Lishu Institute share their experiences. Raven Lee, one of the teachers of The European 3 Doors Academy, shares an excerpt about Compassionate Wisdom in Action from her book *Unbinding the Soul*. Geshe Nyima Woser Choekhortshang Rinpoche, who has taught in several Ligmincha sanghas in Europe, tells how he received the honorific title Rinpoche, and



**Meet the European Sangha**  
**10. International**  
**LOSAR Practice-Weekend**  
with Geshe Khorden Lhundup Gyaltsen  
**Feb. 12-14, 2016**  
starting Friday 6 pm, closing Sunday with lunch

More information and registration at  
[www.losar.ligmincha.eu](http://www.losar.ligmincha.eu)



While reflecting I realized the preciousness of the Three Jewels: the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. Without these three we could not make this magazine, so I would like to thank the teachers who shared their wisdom with us, and the sangha members and all others who contributed to the Ligmincha Europe Magazine.

The World Wide Web plays a growing role in spreading the Dharma. During every month of 2015 Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche offered at least one free live Internet teaching. On the Internet you can also find many videos, courses, books, and magazines featuring the teachings. In this magazine you will find links to Rinpoche's recent recorded webcasts of 2015 and to his upcoming 2016 live webcasts. In addition, we share a 1990 article from the first issue of *The Mirror*, the Inter-

explains the differences between the designations of monk, lama, Geshe, Tulku, Rinpoche, Khenpo, Lopon and Ponlop. As always there is poetry, help in the dying process, and more.

The first chance of 2016 to be united in Europe with the Teacher, the Dharma and the Sangha is at the 10th International Losar Practice weekend in Buchenau, Germany. You can register for the weekend [here](#). And if you don't manage to attend, you will have many other opportunities to meet the Three Precious Jewels from your home computer or in person at a seminar or retreat in 2016.

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



# RINPOCHE'S FAMILY TIME

Seeing photos on Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's Facebook page of a visit to India in October, we asked Rinpoche to share with us about his trip.

**Ton:** Did you plan your visit to India a long time ahead, or was it a spontaneous decision?

**Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche:** I did not have any plans to visit India, but once I heard that the health of His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche was not good, and when I saw photos of him during his visit with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, I could see that he really looked weak. I was sad to see that, and on the spot I made the decision to go. I was very lucky to have this window of time, which I had kept open for my family. So I took this time from my family to visit him, because this is also family for me.

Since I often assumed responsibilities in the Dialectic School, I had to ask him a lot of things.

**Jantien:** I can understand that the choice of staying with your family or going to visit a sick parent is not so difficult. How did your family respond?

**TWR:** My wife Tsering was very supportive and said "Yes, go, and take your time," and although my son Senghe does not understand everything that adults do, he is used to sharing me with others.

**Ton:** How was the health of His Holiness when you visited him?

**TWR:** At the beginning of my visit he was quite weak and he needed a lot of rest. Over the course of the days I was there, I could see his health was improving. And I was very lucky and fortunate to



His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

**Ton:** Can you describe your relationship to His Holiness?

**TWR:** My relationship to His Holiness is the same as to His Eminence Lopon Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche in that they have been my parents — both mother and father — as well as teacher, friend, supporter, mentor. They have been everything to me since I have been ten years old. When I was young I did not live in the same house as His Holiness, but we lived in the same monastery and I encountered him every day.

be able to visit him every day. Actually, I did not want to visit him every day; I wished that he could rest. Then on the second day when I was not planning to visit him I got asked the question why did I not visit him? Of course I wanted to be there, so right away I went to him. We talked about things that were light and playful and fun, and also had heartfelt conversations. And after spending quite a while there, I said, "I'll go now," and he replied, "Stay longer and have tea. Why are you in such a rush?" I offered to give him a foot massage with







Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche visiting some old friends.

hot *tsampa*. After that he slept very well, so I did that every day. It was very nice to visit him every day. Now his health is much better and we are all very happy.

**Jantien:** It was so nice to have the connection with him, by reciting the prayer and mantras for his health. Did His Holiness have a message for the sangha?

**TWR:** He had no particular message, but he is very aware that sangha members all around the world have been very actively praying and accumulating

Long Life Mantras, and he is fully connected with it. He is very thankful for that and sends his prayers and blessings to everybody. I told him that the Ligmincha sangha around the world have been continuously praying Long Life Mantras for him and he was very deeply moved and felt it, and appreciated that and asked me to thank everybody.

In the international community, we talk about the importance of the relationship between student and teacher, and we always need inspiration and



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and H.E. Menri Lopon Trinley Nyima Rinpoche.





Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche with Geshe Thupten Negi and the participants of the first trimester of the Lishu Institute Three Year Residential Retreat.

a reminder to reconnect to that relationship for the sake of one's own practice and spiritual development. I see this situation as a great opportunity for us, as students, to reconnect with our teachers and to remember our connection. It reinforces and strengthens our own practice and connection.

**Ton: Are there also rituals performed for His Holiness, like the *Tsé Tar*?**

**TWR:** Yes, we did some *Tsé Tar* and we sponsored monks to do a lot of prayers in the monasteries

for the health of His Holiness. And also local villagers sponsored day-long prayers, and the kids in the schools prayed for him.

**Ton: Did you meet other people during your visit to India?**

**TWR:** I met most of my friends. And I met many village people, especially some very old ones that I have known for a long time. In past visits, they would come to visit me in the monastery where I was staying, but this time they were too old or too sick to come and visit me, so I had to go to all



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche with Bon students of the Central University for Tibetan Studies in Sarnath, India.







Group of Bon students welcoming Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche to the Central University for Tibetan Studies in Sarnath.

these villagers to show my support and love for them. For the last ten or fifteen years I have been financially supporting a group of very old people there, and I went to visit each of them to connect to them. That was wonderful. And in the Dialectic School I met with friends, and there were a lot of people I did not know, who were new to me. I gave a talk to the Dialectic School about my experiences of the Bon teachings in the West. And I also met people I had not seen for a long time, but have regular contact with on WeChat.

I spent a few days at Lishu Institute. As you all

probably know, the students there just finished their first semester. Then I went for the first time to Sarnath to the Central University for Tibetan Studies and gave a talk about the values of Buddhism in modern Western life: *How Westerners Value the Buddhist Teachings*.

**Jantien: How is for the monks to see that the Bon teachings are going all over the world?**

**TWR:** The Tibetan culture is a very open and sharing culture, so the monks are happy to see that the teachings are spreading and becoming available to many. And the lamas that have come to



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in Sarnath.







Public talk at University auditorium at the Central University for Tibetan Studies in Sarnath.

the West find it meaningful that they can be helpful, and they learn as well from the Western culture. We are enriching the cultures of one another.

**Ton: During the Summer retreat in Buchenau, Germany, you said that your nephew was very ill. How is his situation now?**

**TWR:** His situation has improved greatly; he has almost fully recovered now. It feels like a miracle that he is almost back to normal. We are all very happy about that.

**Ton: I am sure that the sangha members will also be happy to hear that.**

**Jantien: Did you see during your journey also the consequences of the earthquake in Nepal?**

**TWR:** I don't have any updates from there, and I know there is still a lot of work to be done. Every situation is like that, at the moment it happens, a lot of attention is brought there. Soon after, the attention fades away, but the challenges continue for the people there. Fortunately, as far as our monasteries are concerned, they were not affected so badly. They can maintain and are grateful for everybody's support.

**Interview by Jantien Spindler and Ton Bisschoux**

Photos: courtesy of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche



Students at public talk, Central University for Tibetan Studies in Sarnath.



# THE WISDOM OF THE 3 DOORS ENRICHES MY LIFE

**After a public talk by Raven Lee in Switzerland, a group of people with no meditation experience started to meet on a weekly basis under the guidance of Madeleine Bekassy, a graduate of The European 3 Doors Academy. They are enthusiastic about their experiences and want to share them with us.**

After graduating from The 3 Doors Europe Academy, I wanted to continue my growth and development, so I joined the Presenters Path, a training program for Academy graduates who wish to present The 3 Doors practices in their home communities and work places. It all took off when Senior Teacher Raven Lee came at the end of March 2015 and held a public talk in the small village outside of Basel, Switzerland where I live. Of the twenty-three people attending, six women were interested to go on and practice. So we met on a weekly basis for an hour and a half. We practiced Inner Refuge, deepening with *A*, *Om* and *Hung*, just as Raven had introduced at the public talk. In late autumn, following my approval as a Presenter, I added the *Five Warrior Syllables* to the weekly practice.

For me as a Presenter it has been a process. My biggest challenge was the language. I am Swedish, and in English there is a flow, but German was a new chapter! So I had some fear about guiding in the German language that I needed to take into my personal practice. In the beginning, I was a bit nervous, but with time it has shifted. I have such joy and feel confident. Our weekly practice time together is just beautiful. It is getting more and more powerful. It is very motivating!

One evening, a new woman joined the group. When I heard how the group described their experiences to her, and how practice had affected their lives, my heart was so touched. I had never before heard this in such a condensed way! I was speechless! I felt an enormous warm wave of gratitude arising within my body. On the one hand it was a gratitude and devotion to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, to the lineage and to these precious 3 Doors teachings; and on the other, to the group: gratitude that they are so open to receive. I was

amazed how in such a short time they had all experienced such beautiful transformations. It really moved me. We never worked actively with transformations in the way one does in The 3 Doors Academy. We have focused on the connection and deepening of Inner Refuge. So I was very surprised!

For this reason I asked them to write down their experiences and to share them in the Ligmincha Europe Magazine as a big "Thank you." It is a pity that I did not take a "before and after" photo – the change is obvious! They look grounded, so light and with a warm spacious openness! Just beautiful!

One of them got a very nice compliment from a colleague at work: "There are many people smiling in this office, but there is only one who smiles from her heart – and that is you."

It is a gift, and as Sabina says, "*I Love gifts, don't you?*" This gift is a very precious one indeed.

Madeleine Bekassy



*"In the spring of this year I attended the first informational evening and had an impulse mainly toward meditation. It is amazing how quickly I can find an inner peace that previously I could not find within me.*

*My thoughts never came to a place of rest. Not even at night with great fatigue. My mind was not in peace. Again and again it was talking to me "do this, do not forget," and so on. At each short period of waking up, the talking mind was there again, and remained. It was difficult to be able to go back to sleep. Sometimes I was awake for hours.*

*With The 3 Doors meditation I quickly found a way to connect within two minutes with peace within. Isn't that amazing!!!!*

*More specifically, I think the meditation in our*



*group is beautiful. We meet once a week. Through group dynamics we find a harmony and it feels like energy is created, which is much more intense than when I practice at home alone.*

*It's hard to believe, but since the spring a lot has changed in me, and I go much faster to finding peace within me.*

*It works, and there are more and more positive situations in my life that I do not want to miss. I thank Madeleine wholeheartedly for this experience and guiding us. It is a gift for everyday. I Love gifts, don't you?"*

Sabina, Basel

*"I am a single mother with three children, a full time job and on top of this I have been studying (Federal professional education degree). I was often at the end of my nerves and my strength.*

*I'm grateful to Madeleine, who introduced us to the practice and has guided us to this new world of inner peace. Thank you, and blessings."*

Gisella, Basel

*"Early this year, I had family problems that overwhelmed me. The starting point was that I could talk with Madeleine about it. Madeleine told me about these practices. I gladly accepted the help and began to practice them. Just like that, without knowing or having any preconceptions. I continued because it makes me feel good. My husband noticed a change in me, and I was amazed as I was not aware of it myself.*

*I began to read the books of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and to practice every day. Around me everything seemed to be clearing and resolving. It was so clear to me what to do. During this time, my*



Madeleine with four participants of the meditation group (two are missing).

*Through the meditation I found the opportunity to mobilize my inner forces to remain calm, like a solid rock taking all these challenges easily. Meanwhile, I have passed my Federal exam with success and peacefully allow new challenges to arise.*

*The group meditations are beautiful and powerful. I thank Madeleine from my heart for the wonderful meditations and look forward to the beautiful experiences."*

Eveline, Basel

*"A few months ago out of curiosity I joined Madeleine's meditation group. The 3 Doors meditations opened a new way in my life to overcome difficult situations. Finding inner peace has helped me to become more confident and not to worry all the time. The group practices are a powerful tool, and I enjoy our weekly meetings.*

*family moved to a new home, I moved into my own office in a great location, and my whole family has found more peace.*

*Following this path is a big pleasure, also because some friends joined too. So we are a very nice group. We meet weekly with Madeleine and practicing together is very powerful.*

*I have expressed myself very briefly. Just want to say that this wisdom greatly enriched my life and for me things have changed positively with these practices. So I'll stay tuned in, realizing that it is not so complicated. It seems to me that with love, everything is very simple."*

Sandra, Basel

**Text and photo by Madeleine Bekassy**





# CONNECTING TO A DEEPER SENSE OF SELF

Fifteen people attended the *Transforming Your Life through Meditation* retreat at Pauenhof in Germany from November 7-13, 2015. This weeklong retreat served as an introduction to The 3 Doors Academy program, to get a taste of The 3 Doors teachings and the teachers, John Jackson and Raven Lee. Three people share their experiences, and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche elaborates on his reasons for creating The 3 Doors.

*"The week was amazing. These teachings are pure gold. I'm still the same person, but it feels like I've taken off several layers that prevented me from showing my real self, and I connected to a deeper sense of self. I feel more centered, more joy and more confidence. I have a clearer mind and feel less stressed. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's precision and clarity are very well communicated by John and Raven. I feel deep gratitude to have received these teachings and find them an immeasurable treasure that needs to be shared. Words can't describe it, but I know it from the heart.*

*The core of the teaching is the Inner Refuge. The*

*stillness of the body, the silence of speech and the spaciousness of mind are the three doors used to connect to a deeper awareness that is crystal clear and spacious. An awareness that is beyond the 'thinking mind,' it's a sense of 'being.' Throughout the week John and Raven introduced us step by step to these three doorways and how to put them into practice, deepening our understanding and offering new perspectives.*

*We worked with the painful, habitual patterns that can govern our life. We learned to look at them, to give them space and to accept that they're there, and by doing so release them and connect to the deeper awareness that allows responding with love, joy, compassion and equanimity. There were laughs, there were tears, but due to the safe and warm environment set out by John and Raven and the support of the group it never felt uncomfortable. I've literally seen old and painful patterns of myself being liberated and becoming freer.*

*Since the retreat I've continued to practice at home, applying it to my daily life and finding it really useful to stay connected to and clear obstacles within myself. Of course stuff still happens*



John Jackson and Raven Lee in the meditation hall at Pauenhof.



*and I still experience stressful situations, but I am able to see through them much more easily. A relative commented that I'm showing more of myself from the space of the heart. And it feels like that, that my heart warms and opens. I can only imagine what a two and a half year intensive program will do and can't wait to get started!"*

Marco, the Netherlands

*"The retreat of The 3 Doors brought me a deeper understanding of what meditation is all about. I felt a deep connection with the wisdom and space of the practice. I experienced on a deeper level what meditation can bring to me, and why it is so important for me integrate it to my everyday life. I've found the unconditional love in myself for all the people in the group and discovered a good glimpse of my true essence, feeling confidence in myself for who I really am. This is a great gift to me. The retreat brought me to this through expressing myself in the group, talking about my feelings and insights, and singing a song, which I never before thought of doing, in front of an audience. Now, back home, I feel a good foundation and natural desire to go into that Inner Refuge, because I recognize the feeling more easily.*

*I was able to experience a calmness, clearness, spaciousness and awareness of my true essence so that it seems that everything else is like an illusion. That's what I noticed back home. It was like the retreat was a big dream, but actually I experienced my true nature there. That is what touches me most of all, and what brings me a great deal of gratitude: that I was myself witness of that deep experience. And where I made a start during the retreat by liberating my own being, by getting really interesting insights into my patterns, and working with compassion. I truly wish I may benefit others. Just practicing being in that open awareness, and resting in it."*

Judith, the Netherlands

*"The practice we did during this 3 Doors retreat was familiar to me because I have been following Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's teachings for more than eight years. However, the way I connected to the practice was new, and I discovered depths in myself I have not been aware of before: first I felt a deep emotional pain, and after that I connected to space where that pain dissolved. Both of these experiences were possible because of the support of the teachers, Raven and John, and the group.*



Participants of The 3 Doors retreat: Judith, Marco and Ton.





*I got a deeper understanding of The 3 Doors, or the Three Inner Refuges. Making contact with the stillness of the body, listening to the silence of the sounds and connecting to the space, I have learned how to stop the thoughts running around in my head, and to create a distance from a situation where I feel blocked.*

*I was impressed by the effect of the Nine Breathings in clearing many blockages, and realized that I can always and everywhere inhale Sacred and Healing Space.*

*Preparing for our journey home, we were invited to reflect on how to use the insights from the retreat in daily life. I got an image that is very supportive for me: first I saw a young boy playing, then an old man resting on a couch, and after that an image came of an adult man, doing his job with confidence and joy. From my daily life I know that the young boy and the old man are not always in contact with the wider world and in the retreat I saw that the adult man also needs to be playful and needs to relax sometimes. This realization continues to be profound for me, and during the day I sometimes ask myself: Who am I (the boy, the old man or the adult)?"*

Ton, the Netherlands

## **You can still register for the next European 3 Doors Academy**

**As a part of the Academy experience, there are six week-long group retreats that are held twice a year over a two and a half year period. For this European Academy, these group retreats will be held during the month of June in Tuscany, Italy and the month of November near Dusseldorf, Germany.**

**The next European Academy is scheduled to begin on June 6th, 2016. The European Academy is taught by [John Jackson](#) and [Raven Lee](#). Please apply before February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016.**

**For a complete listing of the schedule and Academy fees, visit the website: [www.the3doors.org](http://www.the3doors.org).**



**Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche about The 3 Doors:**

**Ton: Why did you create The 3 Doors program, and how is it evolving? I can remember you saying in Amsterdam once that students had been coming to**

**your teachings for many years, but they did not change in their daily life.**

**TWR:** The vision for The 3 Doors is that the core essence of the Yungdrung Bon teachings is powerful and transcends cultural and religious differences. The essence is for all sentient beings, and when we communicate that essence, it deeply touches a lot of people. The Yungdrung Bon is a very rich tradition with a vast literature and depth of sophistication. That level is for many Westerners sometimes a bit difficult to understand. So we try to keep the essential aspect of the teachings on a secular level. His Holiness the Dalai Lama refers to this as *secular ethics*. Often when we have dharma teachings in the West, usually there is a huge group of people meditating together. Many people don't know one another; they lack a sense of connection to each other and particularly the relation between student and teacher is affected.

By contrast, The 3 Doors is a very close community. It is a very trusted, very connected group of people who work on a very intimate level together. They discuss their issues in life and feel supported in making changes in their own lives. This makes a great difference. Wonderful transformations have taken place in The 3 Doors Academy. More than one hundred people have been trained now, and it is going well. People who are close to those who have been in The 3 Doors training are impressed with the transformations they witness in their friends or loved ones. The family and friends of those in the Academy don't have many words for it, but they often say, "Wow." The people who have been in the program fully express their own experiences, because a core benefit of the program is to express the fruits of one's practice. And this expression often shows in people's faces, their words, and how they live their lives. But we still have a lot of work in front of us in order to expand and bring these teachings to different socioeconomic populations, and to bring the essence of the teachings to schools, hospitals, offices, and so on.





# STUDENTS OF LISHU INSTITUTE VISIT MENRI MONASTERY

Five days a week the students of the first Lishu Institute residential retreat have to study hard. In the weekend they are free and sometimes they organize a fieldtrip, in the first weekend of October they visited Menri (Medicine Mountain) Monastery. Brita Carmen Sommer reports.

We heard that Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche was coming to India in October, to visit His Holiness. When we heard that he would come to Lishu Institute everybody was exited. The last evening Rinpoche was with us, we asked if we could go with him to Menri Monastery, and he said YES!

For me it was so special, because I have never been in India before, and now we were going with Rinpoche to Menri Monastery.

**Saturday, October 3rd, 2015**

We had tea with His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, we were blessed, and made a photo with him. We were presented with our



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Brita Carmen Sommer, with Menri Monastery in the background.

name and country, and there was a great elevated mood throughout the session. When we went outside and stood on top of the stairs, there was a huge golden eagle with over two meter wingspan hovering around, which came closer and closer and confirmed our ability to find the great inner spiritual freedom and space. Later, two eagles



In front of Menri Monastery, after the visit to H.H. Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche.





H.E. Menri Lopen and Brita Carmen Sommer.

were flying over the trees. A great experience.

When we visited His Eminence Menri Lopen, Jacek asked him if he would come to Lishu Institute to teach us. He said he would be happy to come in November, and we thanked him for that.

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche joined us when we went to a school for orphans, located between Menri Monastery and the Nunnery. The road was insanely steep. I saw things that gave me a lot to think about. I have always worked with children, so I am familiar with the demands we meet in our Danish Institutions. But these kids, living in poor conditions, had the biggest smile. I did not take

photos, because I wanted to give my full attention to everything. We were shown around the dormitories. The smaller the child, the more stayed in one room. The biggest teenage girls had half a room and a balcony. There was a little personal stuff in the rooms because there were only two beds and a dresser. Next door to the youngest children's room, from 2 to 6 years old, lives an adult.

Then we saw the hospital room / a medical room with a single bed. It was neatly and properly outfitted and staffed by the finest small female doctor. They treated everything here, if kids were sick. If they were seriously ill, they would go to the hospital. I asked if they used oriental methods such as acupuncture? No, she looked very frightened, and showed me a lot of medicine packages with penicillin etc.

In the dining room good food was served in bowls. Tea was poured and they lifted all the cups and sang thanks for the food. We could see how happy they were. They giggled excitedly when I showed them the pictures, I had taken of them.

Down in the men's / boy's corner, it was cold and damp, and I smelled the usual Indian toilet tradition without bond and release. There was clean water outside, where they washed themselves



Boys at the school for orphans.







Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche turning Lopon Sangye Tenzin Rinpoche's (1917–1978) big prayer wheel.

and their clothes, and there were clean pure children in clean uniforms everywhere.

The visit to the house of the former incarnation of *Tulku* Pondse Jigme Tenzin in our group was the experience that affected us most in the trip to Menri. It was very quiet inside, and we felt *Tulkus* special connection and how it affected him.

#### **Sunday October 4th, 2015**

We visited the library and the museum of Menri Monastery, which was very interesting. There were not bookshelves as in our libraries, but book cabins with glass. I think it is because the houses are not heated, and to preserve the books better. The books are not books, as we know them, they are scriptures written on long pieces of paper one by one; not sewed together, as in ancient times. There is a museum of antiquities with fossils millions of years old, scriptures, and instruments for surgery and medicine seeds. There are old



Menri Monastery.





*Thangkas*, figures in jade and other fine stones.

Here it was so obvious, that this is not Tibet. These are the few things the Tibetan religious people could bring, when they fled over the mountains risking their lives. All their temples and sacred relics were destroyed by Mao's People's Liberation Army.

The rest of the afternoon I took photos of the buildings from Menri, so I will have a memory for life. For those I am really happy, to see a poster on a wall: Bon dialectic school; to see the monks actually in the philosophical discussions with clapping of the hands and shouting; to see the beautiful temple; be there myself, when they all were chanting the prayers we saw the wagon come in with the bread and afternoon tea; to see the four minor monks about 7-8 years old, where a little monk keeps disturbing his neighbor; and to see the patience of the others, trying to concentrate in spite of the little monk slapping him; to see the grown up monk telling the little monk patiently to behave better. I felt the energy of the chanting monks alone in a quiet place, when I unexpectedly saw them going around the corner.

Walking around among the buildings where the castle of the Bon protectors is built, after they escaped from Tibet. When Mao Zhe Dong came in

1959 with all his soldiers, ten times more than the Tibetan soldiers, and said he only wanted to be in Tibet for some years and then leave. I was thinking about their despair and effort in all these years. First all the killings of the monks and nuns and burning down all the temples, then the very dangerous escape over the cold mountains, crawling on hands and knees. When the Chinese soldiers saw them, they were, and still are, shot down cold-bloodedly. Then starting allover from zero in a new country, with a different language, different culture and different religions. They went to the hidden beautiful mountains and started building a temple, a monastery, a nunnery and school. There was a lot of work to be done. This was in great contrast with me, waking up in the morning, hearing all the beautiful birds singing, I feel I have found Shangri-La. If we are going to save the world, it will start from here, if we can preserve Menri Monastery and the teachings of our dear masters, we will save this beautiful planet. I wish that you at least one time in your life will go to these mountains and see this peaceful valley.

When you are interested in this exceptionally valuable learning program, go to [www.lishu.org](http://www.lishu.org).

**Text by Brita Carmen Sommer**

Photos by Daniela Zago and Brita Carmen Sommer



The Valley of the Menri Monastery.



# OPPOSITES COEXIST

**We want to share inspiring texts from other Buddhist streams and religions. Marlies Cober-Philippens has chosen this text from the book *Start Where You Are*, by Pema Chödrön, because “Pema Chödrön is able to explain to me the *dharma* very clear and simple, and at the same time she is telling me how to be human. To realize again and again that it is all like one taste, all coming from the Buddha within, reminds me to be open and aware.”**

“Good and bad, happy and sad, all thoughts vanish into emptiness like the imprint of a bird in the sky.”

This is as close as you could come to describing what it means to be a child of illusion. That's the key point: this good and bad, happy and sad, can be allowed to dissolve into emptiness like the imprint of a bird in the sky.

The practice and the view are supports, but the real thing — the experience of sound being like an echo of emptiness or everything you see being vividly unreal — dawns on you, like waking up out of an ancient sleep. There's no way you can force it or fake it. The view and the practice are there to be experienced with a light touch, not to be taken as dogma.

We have to listen to these slogans, chew on them, and wonder about them. We have to find out for ourselves what they mean. They are like challenges rather than statements of fact. If we let them, they will lead us toward the fact that facts themselves are very dubious. We can be a child of illusion through our waking and sleeping existence; through our birth and our death, we can continually remain as a child of illusion.

Being a child of illusion also has to do with beginning to encourage yourself not to be a walking battleground. We have such strong feelings of good and evil, right and wrong. We also feel that parts of ourselves are bad or evil and parts of ourselves are good and wholesome. All these pairs of opposites — happy and sad, victory and defeat, loss and gain — are at war with each other.

The truth is that good and bad coexist; sour and

sweet coexist. They aren't really opposed to each other. We could start to open our eyes and our hearts to that deep way of perceiving, like moving into a whole new dimension of experience: becoming a child of illusion.

Maybe you've heard that the Buddha is not out there; the Buddha is within. The Buddha within is bad and good coexisting, evil and purity coexisting; the Buddha within is not just all the nice stuff. The Buddha within is messy as well as clean. The Buddha within is really sordid as well as wholesome — yucky, smelly, repulsive as well as the opposite: they coexist.

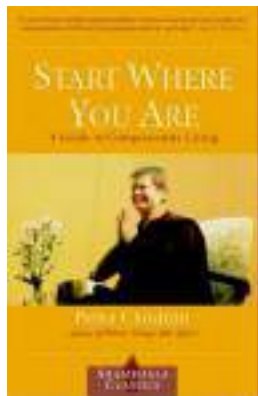
This view is not easy to grasp, but it's helpful to hear. At the everyday kitchen-sink level, it simply means that as you see things in yourself that you think are terrible and not worthy, maybe you could reflect that that's Buddha. You're proud of yourself because you just had a good meditation or because you're having such saintly thoughts. That's Buddha too. (...) They aren't at war with each other.

In meditation practice we struggle a lot with trying to get rid of certain things, while other things come to the front. In order for the world to speak for itself, we first have to see how hard we struggle, and then we could begin to open our hearts and minds to that fact. The view and the meditation (...) are meant to support a softer, more gentle approach to the whole show, the whole catastrophe. We begin to let opposites

coexist, not trying to get rid of anything but just training and opening our eyes, ears, nostrils, taste buds, hearts, and minds wider and wider, nurturing the habit of opening to whatever is occurring, including our shutting down.

We generally interpret the world so heavily in terms of good and bad, happy and sad, nice and not nice that the world doesn't get a chance to speak for itself. When we say, “Be a child of illusion,” we're beginning to get at this fresh way of looking when we're not caught in our hope and fear. We become mindful, awake, and gentle with our hope and fear. We see them clearly with less bias, less judgment, less sense of a heavy trip. When this happens, the world will speak for itself.

**Text selected by Marlies Cober-Philippens**



# THIRD BON'S 24 HOUR GLOBAL PRAYER



## **The Harmony of Pray, The Sound of Meditation, the Peace of Bon**

**February 13, 2016**

Hard to believe it has been three years since our first 24 hour global prayer event.

Yeru Bon Center and Latri Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche invite Bon practitioners and friends of Bon to participate in our third annual Global Prayer and Meditation event. Last year's participation was well over 2000 people from all over the world. Majority were Bonpos, but we had soldiers and non Bonpos praying throughout the world. We received letters, photos and more from people around the world participating in this incredible event.

This year's global prayer event will be February 13, 2015, The birthday anniversary of Nyamed Shenrab Gyaltzen, the founder of Menri Monastery, the main monastery of Bon.

On this auspicious day, every prayer we pray is multiplied by 100.000. On that day, we ask all practitioners to pray and meditate for a minimum of one hour anytime between 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. within their time zones. Gather as a sangha, by your self, in a private place or public.

This year, there will be a release of a special prayer from Rinpoche and Menri Monastery to all registered participants.

So this is how it works: Our global prayer/meditation event will begin at Menri Monastery in India. His Holiness, Monks and Bon practitioners in that time zone will begin the global prayer event at 7:00 p.m. Prayers and meditation will continue with the next time zone, (going West), until our prayers have gone full circle around the world.

There is no fee for this event. We ask only that you register your participation and time zone by February 11, 2016. After you have registered your name or group name, Yeru Bon Center will send the list of participants to His Holiness at Menri Monastery. A special blessing will be given to all participants.

During your event, please feel free to post photos or messages of your gathering or meditation on Facebook or Twitter, so everyone participating around the world can see you and your group gather, uniting all Bon practitioners for this spectacular 24 hour global event. Participation in all time zones will keep the bond strong and going.

**REGISTER**



**Event**

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19**



# THE FIVE STAR RETREAT CABINS IN COLORADO

To introduce Chamma Ling Colorado we interviewed John Jackson. Chamma Ling Colorado is different from the other Ligmincha sanghas we have introduced so far, because it exists in order to provide solitary retreat cabins for practitioners in the Bon tradition, as well as meditators of other spiritual traditions.

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

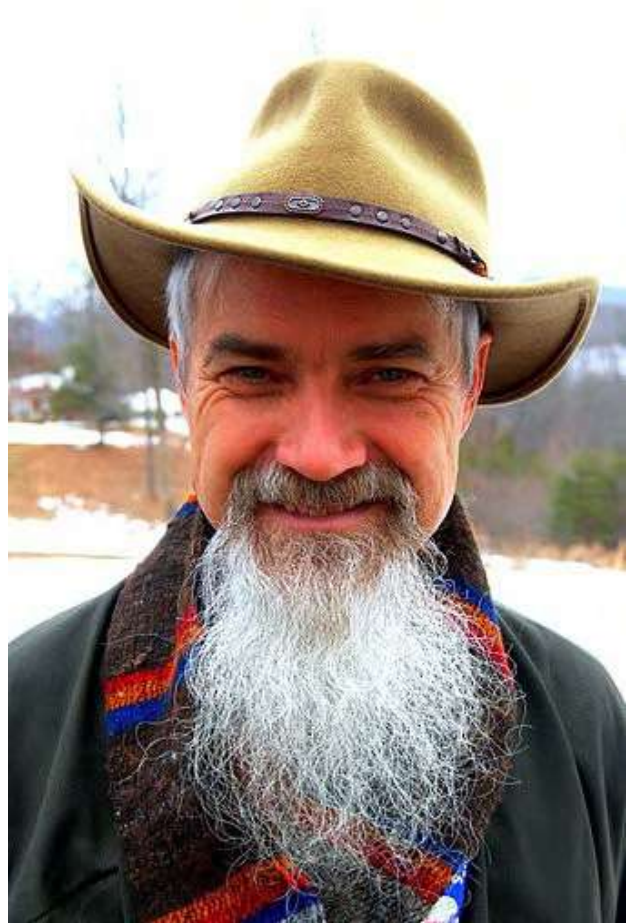
**John:** I met Rinpoche in 1992 when he was leading a retreat on *Sleep Yoga* in Richmond, Virginia, US. My wife and I were already associated with a Tibetan Buddhist center in the town where we live, about an hour drive from Richmond, and wanted to hear this new teacher in the area. When we went to the teachings, there were about fifteen to twenty people in someone's house. After an hour of teaching, during the break, we went outside for fresh air. There Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche walked up to my wife and I and said, "I've heard that you are from Charlottesville." And after we said "Yes," Rinpoche continued "I want to set up a center there. Will you help me find a place?" That was our first conversation, and a few months later we helped him move to Charlottesville, and establish Ligmincha Institute.

**Ton: Were you surprised by that question?**

**John:** Yes, it was a bit surprising. There were some people helping Rinpoche in Richmond, but they were more connected to Namkai Norbu Rinpoche. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche was looking for a place to settle and create his first center. Before we met, he had already been looking around Charlottesville, and he had already come to the decision to create a center somewhere near there. We just happened to be at the right place at the right time.

**Jantien: Was there a practice group in Charlottesville at that time?**

**John:** No, at that time there was no sangha in Charlottesville. Initially we rented the upper floor of a house with three bedrooms. One bedroom was Rinpoche's bedroom, another was the office of Ligmincha, and the third bedroom was the library of Ligmincha. We used the living room as a



John Jackson, Managing Director Chamma Ling Colorado.

practice space. A few months after he moved there we organized the first Summer Retreat. For the next seven or eight years Rinpoche invited his teachers, His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche and His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, to come and teach every year during a three week Summer Retreat.

**Jantien: How have you been involved in Ligmincha and Chamma Ling Colorado?**

**John:** For the first few years I served as Vice-President of Ligmincha, while Rinpoche was President. In the early years my wife and I took the major responsibility for the organizational work, and there were a number of people helping. Between my job at the University and volunteering with Ligmincha, I took on more than I could do. I needed a break, and talked to Rinpoche about a reorganization, and spreading the responsibilities among more people, and I stepped back from being the main organizer, but continued to be on the Board for a couple more years. Then my



wife and I went for a six-month retreat in India and Nepal, I stepped back from the Board, and Gabriel Rocco took my position on the Board.

A few years later a friend, John P. Milton, came to the Summer Retreat at Serenity Ridge and stayed at my home. John is a meditation teacher, who studied with Dudjom Rinpoche and other great masters. He lived in Nepal for many years and served as the first White House staff ecologist in the seventies. He founded an organization called *Sacred Passage*, and also served on the Board of Directors of the Manitou Foundation in Colorado, which had land to donate to spiritual organizations who would establish retreat centers. John encouraged us to apply for a grant from the Manitou Foundation, so Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and I talked with him several times about it in 2000. At that time Rinpoche was not sure if he wanted to do this, because a few years earlier we had purchased Serenity Ridge in Virginia. Rinpoche did not want to start too many projects at the same time, because money is always a challenge when you are getting started. Finally he agreed to do it, but he said he did not want it to compete with Serenity Ridge. He wanted me to be the Director, and wanted me to focus on the Western half of the United States to try to attract people to this area and create a new organization in Colorado. It was quite a challenge to start something completely new with no existing sangha and no donors, but we managed to do it. Through the grant from the Manitou Foundation we got about twenty-two hectares of land, and we created a new organization, called Chamma Ling Colorado.

The land is very challenging in terms of creating buildings, because the mountains are quite steep. We have a parking place near the public road, but then you have to walk up to get to the cabins and the community house. The steep terrain increases our costs

for construction and maintenance as we can only use very small vehicles to bring materials up the mountain. The areas where we plan to build more cabins in the future are much more remote, so we may have to bring in materials by helicopter.

**Ton: What kind of people come for retreats to Chamma Ling Colorado?**

**John:** People come from all over the world, and a fair number comes from Europe. In Chamma Ling Colorado we have three different groups of people who come.

The first group are people who come for solitary retreat. Before they come, they file an application which we review and approve. They describe what kind of training they have had, what their retreat plan is, and how they will practice on a daily basis. We ask all this for we are not here to provide people with just a nice place for a holiday. We also want to make sure that people are stable enough to practice by themselves. The minimum stay is one week, and retreatants may stay as long as six months or even longer. We have the rental rates set up so it becomes less expensive the longer you stay. This way we try to support people in long retreats and in dark retreats. All of our cabins are designed so that we can seal the windows for dark retreat, or keep them open for any



Chamma Ling Community House.







Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche teaching at rented center near Chamma Ling Colorado.

other type of retreat.

The second group of people who come are those who attend the annual retreats with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. He comes once a year in September for three days. Usually about seventy to one-hundred people come for Rinpoche's teachings, from all across the United States. We usually rent a big meditation hall from one of the centers nearby, and typically we have a follow up retreat, led by another teacher. In 2015 Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught *Living with Joy, Dying in Peace*, followed by Alejandro Chaoul leading a three day retreat for caregivers – people working in hospitals or hospices, or taking care of their parents in their last phase of life. It was very much focused on how to help other people in the dying process with their own fears and challenges.

In 2016 we plan to have our annual retreat with

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in Boulder, Colorado, at Naropa University, which was founded by Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche in the seventies. Naropa University was the first Buddhist university established in North America. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will be teaching on *The Essence of the Seven Mirrors of Dzogchen*. We expect this is going to be a big event, because the last time he gave a public talk in Boulder we had to turn people away due to overcrowding. In 2016 we will have a follow up retreat with Geshe Tenzin Yangton, the resident lama at Serenity Ridge, and he will teach *Phowa*. After the teachings, people will have a chance to practice in a five-day residential retreat where you actually do the *Phowa*, and try to get the experience of how you can take the consciousness out of the body at the time of death.

The third group of people are those that come to



Sang Chod at Chamma Ling Colorado.







Setting sun at Chamma Ling Colorado.

Chamma Ling for smaller group retreats led by a visiting lama or Western senior teacher. These retreats are held in our community house on our property, that can accommodate up to about twenty-five people. We had several lamas who have taught in the past. Geshe Nyima Kunchap, one of the most senior teachers from Nepal, taught on the *Red Garuda* fire ritual recently. We have also had Geshe Nyima Gyaltsen teach, and he plans to come again in 2016 to teach a series of retreats on *Soul Retrieval*. These small group retreats are intimate and last up to a week, and people can stay in one of the cabins or in the camping area in their tents. For the people who camp, we provide showers in the community house.

**Ton: Why do people come to Chamma Ling Colorado?**

**John:** The environment here is very unique and there is a wonderful presence to the land. The valley which stretches out below Chamma Ling is about 2,500 meters, and the mountains rise to about 4,300 meters above sea level directly above our cabins. The climate is very dry, with about

twenty cm rain over the whole year. You have a huge view where you can see for a hundred kilometers when you're sitting in the cabins, looking over the valley. It is very spacious. The land was a sacred meeting place for the Native Americans for thousands of years, and there are still many stone meditation seats and stone circles, which were created by the Indians, all over the Chamma Ling land and the adjoining land owned by the neighboring centers. Many Tibetan teachers who have come there have remarked the area looks and feels like Tibet.

There is also a unique cultural aspect: in a village of only seven hundred people there are twenty-three spiritual centers and retreat centers. To the one side of Chamma Ling is a Bhutanese Nyingma center named Yeshe Khorlo. They were one of the first retreat centers established in Crestone. On the other side is the Haidakhandi Universal Ashram, from the Indian Hindu tradition. Next to them is the Crestone Zen Center founded by Baker Roshi. Next to them is Vajra Vidya Retreat Center from the Tibetan Kagyu tradition. It was the mission of the founders of the Manitou Foun-



Stupa at Chamma Ling Colorado.





One of the cabins from the outside,

dation, which donated land to most of these centers, to have a place where many spiritual traditions are drawn together so there may be a dialogue between the traditions, and they may all support their retreat traditions. *The Crestone Spiritual Alliance* is a community organization where all the spiritual centers come together and discuss their shared interests. Each year they have a conference for the public where the representatives of these organizations share about their tradition and practices. There is also a walking pilgrimage tour of many of the centers, called the Camino de Crestone.

And last but not least, the cabins are very nice facilities, which Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche refers to as our Five Star Retreat Cabins. All the cabins use passive solar designs and very energy efficient. We had a number of other teachers from other traditions who have chosen them for their personal retreats, like Pema Chödrön and Reginald A. Ray, both teachers from Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche's tradition, as well as teachers from Namkhai Norbu's organization.

All the cabins are designed to support any kind of retreat, including dark retreat. They have windows, which can be sealed and a special ventilation system, to provide fresh air. There is a special pass through door in the wall, where a retreat attendant can deliver meals to someone in dark retreat. There are only a few places on the world designed for dark retreats. We rent this facility to anyone, not only to our sangha, but to people from any spiritual tradition. Last year Pema Dorje Rinpoche, a Nyingma master from Nepal, brought several of his students from Switzerland, to do dark retreat under his guidance and supervision. They chose to travel all the way from Europe as a group to do their dark retreats at Chamma Ling



and one from the inside.

Colorado.

### **Ton: Can you tell about the structure of Chamma Ling Colorado?**

**John:** We have a Board of Directors who set the vision and high level policy. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche is the President, I am the Managing Director, and Margaret Freund rounds out the board. The expertise of Margaret is that she is a real estate developer, and does business in Colorado and Virginia. She has managed the design and construction of all the facilities.

Further we have a Council with ten people on it, and they are responsible for manifesting all the activities, like coordinating our annual fund raising auction, marketing and communications, production and distribution of recordings and transcripts, treasurer and many more tasks. Three of the Council Members oversee and share the responsibility of the operation of the retreat cabins.

We have four cabins and our community house which are in operation for 365 days a year. For much of the day to day work – like preparing meals for the people doing dark retreats, and cleaning the cabins – we hire a select group of people from the local community.

### **Jantien: How big is your sangha?**

**John:** Our sangha does not have a membership, so it is hard to give an exact number. During Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's annual retreat about seventy to one-hundred people from the entire region come, and that is very remote: it is ninety kilometers to the first traffic light. Many people who consider themselves as member of the sangha live four or more hours away. The way people think of distances is very different from Europe compared to this part of the United States. In the village of



Crestone there might be about a dozen people from our sangha, but the reach of the organization is quite large, because of the way people travel and are spread out in this part of the country.

**Ton: Are you connected to the other sanghas in the United States?**

**John:** Yes, of course. Many people who are involved with Chamma Ling Colorado are actually from other parts of the country. For instance Raven Lee serves on the Council, and she lives in Los Angeles and is also involved in the council of Ligmincha of California. There are people from California who come regularly to our events, as well as the sangha in the Pacific North West. Recently Macy Vaughn and Gabriel Rocco led a retreat for the graduates of the The 3 Doors Academy at Chamma Ling, and people from all over US came. I live in Virginia, right next to Serenity Ridge, so I am in constant communication and collaboration with Ligmincha International. When we have a big event, the bookshop of Serenity Ridge ships us all kinds of books and practice materials, for we don't maintain our own bookstore.

**Ton: You are the Managing Director of Chamma Ling Colorado. How much time do you spend there?**

**John:** I go there a couple of times a year, always at Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's retreat, and usually one other time. The people on the Council live in California, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, Virginia

and Washington. We do most of our business by phone and email, and physically meet as a group once a year.

**Jantien: Do you have a message for the European sangha?**

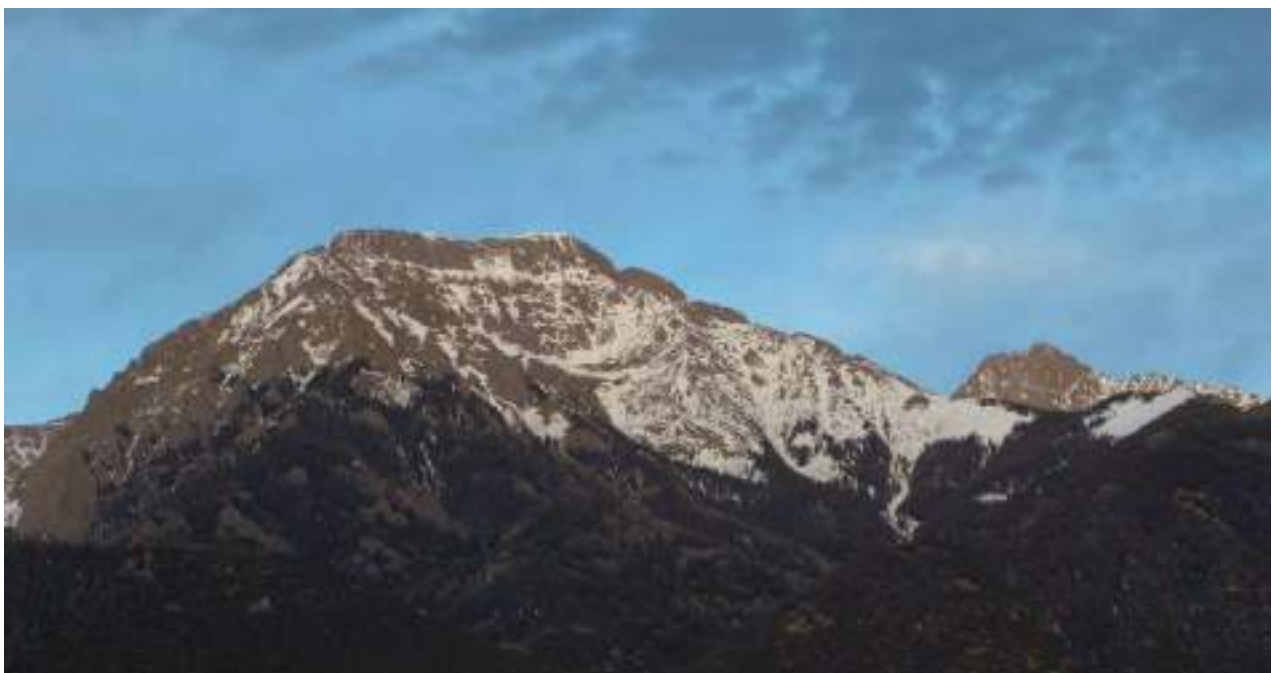
**John:** We welcome people coming from Europe, and will be happy to support them when they would like to enjoy a personal retreat. You can fly directly from several cities in Europe to Denver, Colorado, and it is easy to get from Denver airport to Chamma Ling Colorado. Please consider our center when you are ready to enjoy a powerful solitary retreat experience.

**Interview by Jantien Spindler and Ton Bisschoux**

Photos: courtesy of John Jackson



Small group retreat with Alejandro Chaoul at Chamma Ling Colorado.



Crestone Mountains.





# WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN EUROPE

Here is our report from what's been happening in the European sangha. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche gave Internet teachings, Geshe Woser Choekhortshang Rinpoche, about fifty people came. It was a wonderful evening with many new participants, and we were amazed by the number and the enthusiasm.



## November 27:

To a public talk on *Dream Yoga* in Slovakia, with Geshe Nyima Woser Choekhortshang Rinpoche, about fifty people came. It was a wonderful evening with many new participants, and we

were amazed by the number and the enthusiasm.



## November 28-29:

Geshe Nyima Woser Choekhortshang Rinpoche taught Yeshe Walmo in Vienna, Austria. It was great to know the background information when we went through the *Invocation of Yeshe Walmo*. Geshe-la translated every word and explained them, and we learned how to perform the ritual. There were twenty-nine participants from Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary.





#### November 27-29:

In Berlin, Germany, we invited Wolfgang Krebs to guide the practice of *the 21 Nails*, the teachings of the last Summer Retreat in Buchenau.



#### November 19-22:

Khenpo Geshe Gelek Jinpa visited Helsinki, Finland, to continue his Dzogchen *Ngondro* teachings from *Zhang Zhung Nyan Gyud*. His warm hearted teaching touched us all and encouraged us to turn our attitude towards more compassion. It is a rare opportunity in Finland to enjoy these teachings, and therefore they are greatly appreciated.



#### November 21-22:

Geshe Khorden Lhundup Gyaltsen taught in the Netherlands in two places on *A-tri*. On Saturday, in Zwolle, about fifteen and on Sunday, in Eindhoven, about twenty-five people attended.







**In the late summer of 2015** the Bon canon of sacred texts, the *Kanjur*, reached Chamma Ling Poland. This is a very big step towards the development of our Sangha and validity of this place. Now we are trying to bring also the *Tanjur*. It will be a complement to our prayers, many years of joint efforts and practices.

**We invite everyone to support our action to bring the Tibetan texts to Poland.**

The canon of Tibetan Bon teachings tradition is more than three hundred volumes of writings. It is divided into two parts: the first *Kanjur* (or *Kangyur*) are the teachings of the founder of our tradition, Tonpa Shenrab; the second *Tanjur* (or *Tengyur*) are comments to these teachings.


In the Tibetan tradition texts they are considered as the core of the spiritual path. That is why it is so important to possess, use and preserve them for future generations.

Having a complete set of writings in our *Gompa* is an extraordinary opportunity, to show our commitment and devotion to the teachings. Their presence at the Wilga Chamma Ling will also have a special, energetic impact on our practice and our actions. Only in a few exceptional places in the world, the full canon of the Bon tradition is present.

We have prepared a special thanks to everybody who contributes in this unique project and how you will be commemorated. You can read more about the thanks, acknowledgements, and how to transfer money at: [www.ligmincha.pl](http://www.ligmincha.pl).








**Free Live Webcast**  
**The Power of Warmth: Physical Healing Through Meditation**  
 with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche  
**November 14, 2015 21.00–22.30 (C.E.T.)**

Register for the webcast at [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)  
 This is Part 10 of a FREE yearlong course in soul retrieval.  
 Learn more at [www.ligminchalearning.com](http://www.ligminchalearning.com)



You can watch the recordings here:

The True Source of Healing, Part 10 — The Power of Warmth: Physical Healing Through Meditation. [Introductory Video \(2:52\)](#) / [Full Playlist](#)



**Free Full-Day Live Webcast**  
**Healing from the Source: Cutting the Root of Your Pain**  
 with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche  
**December 12, 2015 15.00–22.30 h. (C.E.T.)**

Register for the webcast at [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)  
 This is Part 11 of a FREE yearlong course in soul retrieval.  
 Learn more at [www.ligminchalearning.com](http://www.ligminchalearning.com)



You can watch the recordings here:


[Cutting the Root of Your Pain, Session 1 — Practice](#)

[Cutting the Root of Your Pain, Session 1 — Teaching](#)

[Cutting the Root of Your Pain, Session 2 — Practice with Alejandro Chaoul](#)


[Cutting the Root of Your Pain, Session 3 — Practice](#)

[Cutting the Root of Your Pain, Session 4 — Practice with Alejandro Chaoul](#)



**Free Live Webcast**  
**Guided Meditation for the New Year**  
 From the Experiential Transmission Retreat  
 with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche  
**January 1, 2016 17.00 – 18.00 h (C.E.T.)**

Translations in multiple languages available  
[www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)



You can watch the recordings here:

[Guided Meditation for the New Year From the Experiential Transmission Retreat](#)



# SPEAK LESS, READ LESS, PRACTICE MORE

Lowell Britson started in September 2014 in Shenten Dargye Ling in France a four-year meditation cycle. Here is his report from his experiences at a Bon meditation school during the second retreat. You can read his first contribution in [Ligmincha Europe Magazine # 15](#) on page 33-34.

Shenten Dargye Ling, a Bon monastery in Blou, France, established a meditation school in 2008 to offer practitioners an opportunity for in-depth study and practice of Dzogchen texts. Under the guidance of a Bon lama, these retreats, called *gomdras*, meet seventy days for four consecutive years. The second year of the current *gomdra* cycle which began in November 2014, focusing on the Bon text, *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud*, was held September 3 – November 11, 2015. There were twenty-seven participants. This is a diary of my experiences at this *gomdra*.

Change is the nature of the universe and so was it at this year's *gomdra*. Instead of one teacher, there were four teachers, with hours of outdoor practice with very changeable weather, with a lovely new wooden floor in the *gompa*, with wonderful salads from the Shenten gardens and a variety of interesting visitors to the Shenten grounds. H.E. Yongdzin Rinpoche held a series of live streaming teachings during the *gomdra*, a first for Shenten, and fourteen of us witnessed the glories of a lunar eclipse at 3:30 am on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. All were frequent reminders of the preciousness of our lives and how rapidly it was passing. It held us together as a group.

This retreat was not silent. Some participants chose that option. Three participants from the previous year did not return. They were replaced by participants from an earlier *gomdra* cycle. One participant left for a family emergency and did not return. One free day a week was available for contact with the outside world.

The daily schedule, similar to the parent monastery, Triten Norbutse Monastery, remained the same. Morning chants began at 7:00 am and evening chants finished the day at 9:30 pm. There



H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche.

were five hours of meditation, a two hour dharma lecture, and two hours of community work. Lights were out at 10:00 pm. Most participants locked their doors this year. I did not.

One of the Shenten lamas was always with us; leading the chants, guiding the meditation sessions, and teaching from the texts. Tibetan and French language classes met several times a week. On Tuesday mornings, Yongdzin Rinpoche gave the text teachings. With great clarity, compassion, and humor, he revealed to us the essence of the Dzogchen teachings. At 89, he continues to be an inspiration to everyone's practice. On his daily afternoon walks, he was always willing to answer our many questions with clear and direct guidance.

This *gomdra* focused on the Dzogchen teaching and practices of *trekchö* and *thögal* based on the first chapters of the *Ngözhi* text of the *Chaktri*, from the practice manual of Dru Gyalwa Yungdrung. These nature of mind meditation practices were taught along with various body postures, including *trul khor* and *tsa lung*, eye gazes, and breathing techniques to enhance clarity and bring stability into one's practice. Meditation practice was held indoors as open space, or as a dark retreat with blindfolds, or outdoors with sky gazing and sunlight practices. *Dream Yoga* and *Sleep Yoga* was done in one's room.

Dzogchen is a nature of mind meditation. Different from *sutra* or *tantra* meditation, one does not concentrate on an object or a deity visualization. Rather one's focus is an open space with unification of emptiness and clarity. With no grasping of anything; one is freed of conceptual thoughts and



emotions. No need to move, speak or think.

The nature of mind is the unification of emptiness and clarity, as the Bon texts specify; it is naked, it has never been covered, and unspeakable, not able to be spoken about, and indescribable, not able to explain in word or thought. It's not mental process but an experience. Think of trying to describe the taste of salt to someone who has never tasted it. Through the various Dzogchen practices we experience the awareness and clarity of our mind; thinking is not required.

With daily practice the mind slowly settles. No longer attracted to thoughts or emotions, the mind opens to the energy of awareness. No substance, no reference, no this or that, no subject, no object; just pure awareness. Thoughts and emotions do continue to arise but quickly liberate out of our consciousness into the nature of mind.

Slowly one's way of seeing begin to change, in subtle ways we sometimes cannot always detect. But the effect is still there. Nothing gets lost. With fewer thoughts, it is no longer as easy to be obscured and the mind slowly reveals a clear unbounded state. As your practice stabilizes, the experience of basic nature of mind becomes familiar, like an old friend. Without thoughts and emotions, rootless, we could say, without the obscurations or delusions, one experiences the clarity of open presence.

Awareness is not thinking. It is spontaneous clarity. Not boring, it's rather exciting and liberating. It is your nature of mind. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of the *Ngondro*, the preliminary practices, for the experience of the accumulations in purifying the mind. Realization is gained through experience not by thought. It is liberation from our conceptual thinking. You view the world in a different perspective.

Devotion, inspiration, and refuge in the Buddha's teachings are essential. One should never underestimate the power of them. The awakened awareness of our actions; whether thought, speech, or action, is no longer obscured. Daily practice, along with the prayers and blessings of our teachers and lineage masters, awaken within us great reserves of energy and joy. It is our refuge. It will lead us to our eventual freedom from the pain and suffering of samsara. Samsara is just

a thought.

While we abide in the nature of mind; visions, lights, rays and sounds, develop. They are reflections from the nature of mind of our experience and practice. Called *trekchö*, the inner practice, and connected to the *thögal* visions, they are the result of the practitioner's integration with the nature of mind. This leads one to the clear light meditation practice. The speed of this development, of course, depends upon the practitioner's realization and stability.

All these practices connect with the *Phowa* practice, the transfer of consciousness at the time of death, when body and mind disconnect and our mind enters the *bardo*. With the body gone, the mind is left alone with a lifetime of thoughts and sense consciousness. Soon the visions of sounds, lights, and rays begin to appear. During this time, if we have stabilized our practice, the awareness of our mind integrates with the nature of mind. We realize these visions are arising from us, not from an external source. They are empty forms, like *thögal* visions. We have remembered the teachings we have received, practiced, and all is liberated into the natural state.

While in the *bardo* we are already in the natural state, so it is important not to become distracted by the visions. It may not be possible for one to achieve Buddhahood in this lifetime, so this practice of remaining in the natural state becomes essential. While in the *bardo* there will be no books or pieces of paper to help you.

The nature of mind will never leave you. It's your nature that cannot be separated from you. It is always there; the source of everything. All beings with consciousness have it. It is spacious, changeless, and limitless. No actions are needed but to experience it. No thinking is required, just relax and open to it. Once you have realized it, it must be practiced. Without practice it cannot help you. It is your path to Buddhahood.

**Text by Lowell Britson**

**Lowell Britson is a senior student of H.E. Yongdzin Rinpoche. He lives in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, US.**





# UNBLOCKING YOUR CREATIVE POTENTIAL



*"Creativity can be seen as a state of natural flow, one that spontaneously and effortlessly gives birth not only to manifest form, but to all experiences of body, energy, and mind. This state of flow, which has its roots in openness, occurs only in the absence of hope and fear. It is at once naturally joyful, peaceful, compassionate, expansive, and powerful."*

*"When you know how to tap fully into this open, creative flow, its beneficial qualities can extend to any area of your life. You can paint more masterful paintings. Your music can have more depth of connection. Your writing can be more genuine and moving. You will be able to solve problems at work, resolve conflicts with loved ones, or even shift your thought patterns with more natural spontaneity."*

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche,  
*The Great Perfection of Creativity*, Shambhala Sun Magazine, November 2012.

~

Join us for this opportunity to free yourself from creative obstacles, nurture your capacity for joyful self-expression, and make positive changes in your life.

This retreat is for anyone who wants to explore how inspiration takes form and expression in your life — whether through creative problem solving at work, in resolving conflict in personal relationships, or in bringing your relationship to an art form to a new level.

The Tibetan spiritual traditions tell us that unleashing our dynamic creative energy is a matter of recognizing and tapping into the wellspring of creativity that already exists in us. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will instruct and guide simple meditation practices of body, speech, and mind that can help you to:

- recognize and clear physical, energetic, and mental obstacles blocking your creative flow,
- connect with and trust in your innate creative potential,
- discover the inner strength and confidence to bring your inspiration to full expression.

Public Talk and Seminar will be held in English with German translation.

**Public Talk:** Friday, May 6th, 2016 | 19.00 – 21.00 h |

€ 15 / reduced € 10

**Seminar:** Saturday, May 7th, 2016 | 10.00 – 18.00 h | Sunday, May 8th, 2016 | 9.00 h – 16.00 h |

€ 160 / reduced € 120 (incl. public talk)

**Early bird:** € 140 / reduced € 100, payment necessary till March 1st, 2016

**Location:** Ufababrik, Viktoriastraße 10-18, 12105 Berlin, Germany | U6 Ullsteinstraße



# THE SOUL RETRIEVAL HAS COMPLETED ME

**So beautiful that I have the opportunity to live  
More beautiful that I learned to forgive  
It's nice to have the courage of a rock  
Fall down and roll over to stand up  
I look inside and know who I really am  
No need to compare or to grow  
If I truly see the beauty of me  
And go on with living I finally see  
I no longer need to forgive  
Taking life as it is  
I laugh and I cry  
Without wondering why  
My needs are more less and less  
Now I trust instead of guess  
The Soul Retrieval has completed me**

***Astrid Keesen - Sulovari***



# COME ALONG, COME ALONG!

**I'm cycling, 'cause I'm Dutch.  
There are people and they watch.  
While cycling, while walking,  
while thinking, while talking.**

***In sunshine, in rain and in dust.  
Come along, come along,  
and sing with me that song!***

**The world is in a rush,  
And people need a hush.  
From pain, they are bleeding,  
From menace they are fleeing.**



***From war, from danger and distrust.  
Come along, come along,  
and sing with me that song!***

**Connecting with the heart  
in space we're not apart.  
In openness and warmth,  
the world can be transformed.**

***In empathy, in wisdom and in trust.  
Come along, come along,  
and sing with me that song!***

**Tonny Maas**





## BEST WISHES



Created by Bridget de Claire



# CALENDARS FOR 2016

Dear Practitioners, Supporters and Friends,

As each year, Ligmincha Poland is preparing a calendar. The topic of the 2016 calendar will cover holidays and ceremonies of the Bon tradition. As usual, special days will be included according to the calendar prepared in the monastery, listing holidays and days particularly important for practitioners. Such days are determined on the basis of an oracle and astrological calculations and can only be known later, closer to the Losar. This is why our calendar will cover the Tibetan year from February 2016 to February 2017. The ordering and dispatch information will soon be available in Polish and in English at [www.ligmincha.pl](http://www.ligmincha.pl).



Cover of the Polish calendar of 2014.

We encourage all our friends and supporters to buy the calendar. The price of the calendar will be € 15 plus shipping costs (about € 2 or € 3).



This calendar for 2016 is designed by Bridget de Claire. She is a student of H.E. Lopon Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

You can download the calendar as PDF from the website [www.scribd.com/Bon-Calendar-2016](http://www.scribd.com/Bon-Calendar-2016), and make a donation to support the work of H.E. Lopon Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche:

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| January 2016 |         |           |          |        |          |        |
|--------------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|--------|
| Monday       | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|              |         |           |          | 1      | 2        | 3      |
| 4            | 5       | 6         | 7        | 8      | 9        | 10 ●   |
| 11           | 12      | 13        | 14       | 15     | 16       | 17     |
| 18           | 19      | 20        | 21       | 22     | 23       | 24 ☺   |
| 25           | 26      | 27        | 28       | 29     | 30       | 31     |



# HELPING TO DIE

In 2001 H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche gave a teaching of *Gyalwa'i-Chagri* in Austria. In 2010 a transcript was published by *Éditions Shenten Dargye Ling*. We reprint the pages 7-11.

## Preface

This practice manual completes the *Gyalwa'i-Chagri Teaching* that Yongdzin Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche gave in Waldzell, Austria in the year 2001. The introductory questions and answers were part of that Teaching.

During the two weeks of the Teaching many questions were asked about how to help friends, relatives or patients, practitioners and non-practitioners, during their transition from life to death. Rinpoche kindly referred to the basic practices briefly and later explained more for publication and distribution among practitioners. He also approved of the publication of the Thodrol-text for the same purpose.

May this precious Teaching help to release the suffering of many of us!

(...)

Duluth, July 2009  
Waltraud Benzing

## Helping To Die

A question about the state of unconsciousness immediately after death:

*Q: How long, from the point of view of human time, does the state of unconsciousness immediately after death last?*

Rinpoche answers: How long this lasts depends completely on the individual person. It is not limited.

A question about helping during that period:

*Q: What can we do to help during that period?*

Rinpoche answers:

1.) The advanced practitioner

An advanced practitioner keeps in the Natural state, in meditation, continuously. The best thing for him is to keep this, so we leave him without touch from before dying until quite some time after the sign comes. Without anything, you must not disturb, leave as it is.

The purpose of this is very important: if you touch or do something, it disturbs him, keeps him from staying in meditation continuously. He is still in meditation, even after the sign comes. That means: when an advanced practitioner is dead, you can see he

is dead, but he does not change colour, he does not change his posture, he is still straight, or in the position he has been in, it looks like controlled, like controlled body-posture, and still his consciousness, everything looks like dead. But then the special sign comes, mucus, white mucus comes, that is one sign. And also after he has stopped to meditate continuously, his head will hang down.

2.) In the case of the normal being

In the case of the normal being, there is no reason

for not touching or whatever else you may do. The text says, that if you dispose of the body or do something like cremating it, the diseased person will not completely feel it, but it will be like during unconsciousness. How long this lasts depends very much on the individual person, there is no limit at all.

What happens to the person next looks like waking up, and then this spirit is no more connected to the material body. And the text says, "His feeling is





like he immediately wanted to get up and to do something, wanting to do things, wanting to say something, all the feelings are very clear and alive.”

So then when he looks and wants to get up with his body, and tries to do so, his body cannot be connected to his spirit any more. Then he realises he has passed away, and that it is not possible any more for him to connect, which causes a lot of suffering, and he changes his mind and tries to figure out what to do now. Then he goes round to see and talk to the alive persons he was connected to, but nobody answers, and nobody sees him. That again causes even more suffering. There are feelings, and the

Traditionally one asks someone who has the knowledge, a lama for instance, to do this. The lama will be called and asked to do prayers and Pho-wa. All this is done to show the diseased person what he should do, and to guide him.

We hope that with this help also a normal being, who is not a practitioner, can go the direct way. And then after this we do Sur practice with the help of burning. And that is for the family, relatives, and whoever is close to the dead persons, to think of them and giving them by visualisation what they need. This ritual of burning of food supports the mind.

So one can use all these methods. The traditional pre-



H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche.

spirit cannot be stopped, even if you close the door, like in a dream, you see. He can also not stop anything, but he can see many visible things.

At that time the only thing you can do to help, according to our believe, is to recite the Thödöl, as you call it: Bardo Thödöl. Traditionally this is recited continuously for three days and three nights.

Our tradition says that when they hear it, they will listen and try to realise that they are passed away. We hope that by listening and following the text he hears something gets through to him. That is one thing.

riod of time for this, according to the text, is 49 days. If one does it later, it can still bring some change to the situation. Prayers can be helpful at any time.

### **Bibliography**

*Helping to Die, Dru Gyalwa Yungdrung practice manual Interpretation*

Commentary and Additions by Youngdzin Lopön Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche

Edited by Waltraud Benzing Éditions Shenten Dargye Ling, Blou, 2010.

### **Text selected by Frits de Vries**

Photo from [www.shenten.org](http://www.shenten.org)



# HOW IS THE SOUL LOST AND RETRIEVED? IT DEPENDS ON YOUR VIEW AND UNDERSTANDING.

Some time ago someone in the sangha felt attacked by another entity. The outer cause was then neutralized by ritual. In the webcast of October 10, 2015, *Nourishing Your Inner Being 2 – Questions & Answers*, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche shows us in Bon there is also the awareness solution. The inner solution is to become more connected to one's essence of mind.

**Question: Do we need to do ceremonies and rituals for soul retrieval or can we follow the guided meditations and instructions by ourself as we are learning in these webcasts?**

You can do soul retrieval both ways, through ceremony and ritual or through personal practice. And as I explain in the book, there are very specific and traditional ways of doing soul retrieval in the causal vehicles of the Bon tradition.

Soul loss is sometimes attributed to one's soul being stolen by a spirit, by somebody external to you, by outer forces or entities. Because of this belief, there are particular soul retrieval rituals that are very detailed in forming a relationship with an external entity and in retrieving your soul back from that entity. There is no question that these rituals are very powerful, and for some people very beneficial. But for another person, that approach is too dualistic. Instead of attributing outer causes to soul loss, this person can look inward and discover that in not being conscious and connected to one's essence of mind, through a lack of awareness, one becomes disconnected and experiences the loss of positive qualities. One becomes less able to process life's experiences. So there are different methods of retrieval and reconnection based on different views of the cause of soul loss. Basically, both ways have value and what is right for you depends on your capacity for understanding.

The success of the method depends how you feel.



If you truly feel there is an external force responsible for your soul loss, if you believe that some person or entity out there has disturbed or stolen your positive qualities, I would first tell you that there is no one who is stealing your soul. If it is not possible for you to believe or to have confidence in this view, if you have a specific name or character that you strongly believe has caused your suffering, then you have to work with that level of understanding and a ritual will be a more effective way for you to retrieve your soul. Another person may not believe their loss of connection has anything to do with an external being, but has to do with their own lack of awareness. If you try to convince that person that there is a ghost or entity that is causing their soul loss, it would be hard for them to accept this. Therefore, the ritual approach might not seem necessary or effective for them. So the method used in soul retrieval becomes the method appropriate for the different levels of understanding.

In these last months, the emphasis of my teaching is from my book *The True Source of Healing*, which is not ritual related. I am confident you will be able to retrieve your soul through following the instructions described and guided in the book and in the Webcasts.

**Text selected by Frits de Vries**



# COMPASSIONATE WISDOM IN ACTION

During The 3 Doors retreat *Transforming Your Life Through Meditation* in November 2015, in Pauenhof, Germany, Raven Lee read aloud from her book: *Unbinding the Soul – Awakening through Crisis and Compassion*. The chapter touched all the participants. Jantien Spindler shares with us why the book touched her, and she selected the text Raven read in Pauenhof.

I have bought the book some months ago and have read it with much attention. For me the book is a great gift. I think that to tell your biography with all the intimate aspects takes much courage. Beside this, in the way Raven Lee shares the story of her life, she shows how a deep crisis can become a blessing. The personal transformation that gave the possibility to open to deep compassion and wisdom.

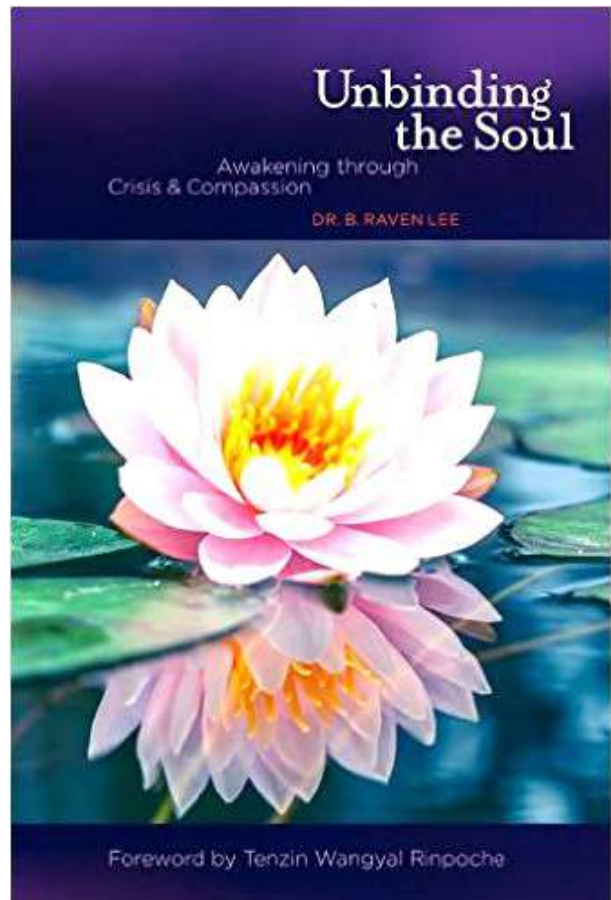
The compassion that is felt in every word, invited me to look again at my own life story and give light to painful events. It was as if I was telling my story to a very warm and open listening friend. It gives hope and motivation to go on working on my own hidden shadows. The integration of the scientific fields with practical solutions to challenging stories is also illuminating.

As Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche writes in the Foreword: “Raven has a sincere motivation that her own healing be of benefit for others. By expressing her own journey through suffering, along with her knowledge in the fields of psychology, science, and spirituality, Raven articulates and illuminates a simple message: opening to your own suffering can be a powerful door to transformation and become a path of healing and benefit for oneself and others.”

All proceeds of the book benefit the Bon community. The book is available through [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

## COMPASSIONATE WISDOM IN ACTION

*“Practicing compassion felt easy when I opened my heart to others. Cradling my own wounds and vulnerabilities, however, felt foreign and unnatural. Yet, even self-compassion seemed remedial*



*when compared to the feat that was opening my heart to my father. Following the separation from my mother, my father had remained in Hong Kong. I welcomed the physical and emotional distance between my father and I, especially in the wake of Gary's death. Upon hearing of my father's plans to visit Los Angeles, I knew my ability to practice compassion would be tested to the limits.*

*I had clung to the hope that my father had mellowed and grow wiser during our time apart, but upon his arrival in Los Angeles, I soon realized that his drinking and his belligerence had amplified. One evening, after several glasses of scotch, my father descended into his ritual of complaining and barking orders. I remained calm and disengaged. Undaunted by my restraint, he simply shifted focus, directing his verbal attack toward his grandchildren. This was too much for me. For the first time since I was nine, I stood up to my father's bullying.*

*“You cannot insult the children,” I insisted, firing the first salvo.*





*"I'll say what I want," he shouted back, eyes bulging with rage. "You're my daughter and you can't tell me what to do!"*

*"This is my house," I retorted. "You have to respect me and the children."*

*"Is this the way you treat your elders?" His voice teemed with incredulity that his dutiful daughter would answer back. "You're good-for-nothing. I'm leaving."*

*My courage rose. "I'll help you pack your bags."*

*We had each drawn our swords, prepared to do battle. My adversarial reaction fueled my father's anger. He stomped around the living room, screaming obscenities, and brandishing his fists.*

*Suddenly, everything slowed. My fury morphed into the fierce sword of compassion, searing my anger and opening my heart. Rather than seeing my father through the eyes of an abused daughter, I connected to the suffering of a lonely old man running amok on my balcony. A surge of love flowed from my heart, holding space for my father's rage, which suddenly began to subside. Reacting with compassionate wisdom I walked toward my father, took his hands and guided him to a chair. "Sit down, Dad. You're exhausted."*

*He stared at me like a child. "You hurt me when you said those things," he blurted, his eyes welling with tears.*

*"I'm sorry you were hurt. That was not my intention." A wiser, loving, spacious voice in me emerged. We sat in silence, gazing at each other, compassion filling the surrounding space.*

*"Dad, why have you always treated me as a servant?" No blaming or anger accompanied my words, just a gentle curiosity for the truth. My father looked puzzled.*

*"Why? You are my youngest daughter. You are supposed to serve me."*

*At that moment, all my yearnings, frustration, and pain vanished. I started to laugh. Suddenly, in a flash of understanding, I saw my father as a product of his upbringing, a man crippled by a culture that devalued women and was reared by a mother*



Raven Lee.

*who indulged his every whim. This moment of clarity collapsed what had been an impervious wall, allowing tenderness and acceptance to move freely between us. During the rest of my father's visit, our relationship began to shift. I learned to hold space for his drunken outbursts, which diminished in frequency. Following his visit, my father remained self-centered and quick to anger, calling occasionally to demand money. Now, however, I refused his demands out of love rather than anger.*

*Twelve years later, I returned to Hong Kong. My father lay dying, ravaged by liver cancer and emphysema. Despite his physical deterioration, he remained tenaciously himself, boasting of his romantic conquests and hounding hospital staff for cigarettes. To avoid confrontation, my family had not spoken honestly to my father about his grave prognosis. That honor fell upon me. As I sat at the bedside and held his withering hand, I gently told him that he was dying. In this moment of intimacy, our eyes met and a deep feeling of love seemed to flow between us. My father soon fell into a peaceful sleep. I remained at his bedside, chanting the Buddhist prayers he had heard his mother recite when he was a child.*

*Several days later, he looked at me mournfully and whispered, "Please ask your mother to forgive me. I have not been a good husband." Tears flowed down his cheeks, which I gently wiped away. Soon after, I returned to Los Angeles. As I said good-bye, I hugged him and told him how much I loved him. He smiled and we both wept. The last memory of my father was of this precious goodbye. He died three days later."*

**Text selected by Jantien Spindler**



## WHY HAS GESHE TENZIN WANGYAL LEFT FOR THE WEST?

**The Mirror** is the International Newspaper of the Dzogchen Community inspired by the teachings of and under the spiritual guidance of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. In the first edition published in 1990 Frits de Vries found two articles on Geshe Tenzin Wangyal, which he shares with us, with permission of *The Mirror*.

The first Tibetan Lama in Europe openly teaching Dzogchen to lay people was probably Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche according to [Wikipedia](#):

*"In 1976 Namkhai Norbu began to give Dzogchen instruction in the West, first in Italy, then in numerous other countries. He quickly became a respected spiritual authority among many practitioners, and has created centers for the study of Dzogchen around the world.*

(...)

*As interest in his teachings grew, Rinpoche dedicated himself to spreading Dzogchen and establishing 'gars' (Tibetan), seats of the International Dzogchen Community, throughout the world. Today there are gars in Italy, the United States, Mexico, Venezuela, Argentina, Australia, Romania, Russia, Spain, Ukraine and China."*

As a natural development these communities started to exchange information about the schedules and the teachings of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in the form of a newsletter. In March 1990 this newsletter took a definitive form and went on under the name *The Mirror*, the name of a famous wisdom symbol in the Dzogchen teachings. The first issue was published on Wednesday March 14, 1990, with a headline on the important visit of the Dalai Lama to their main center in Merigar, Italy. Much attention was given to the choice of the name of their newsletter. Here is a part of the answer to the question: "Why this newspaper is called The Mirror."

*"The mind's essential nature is said in the Dzogchen teachings to be like the nature of a mirror. A mirror's essential nature is clear, pure, and limpid; if this was not the case no reflections could arise in it. In the same way the mind's natural condition is one of clarity, purity and limpidity. A mirror will reflect whatever is placed in front of it, but the nature of the mirror is not stained by any reflection, no matter how ugly or terrible. In the same way, if an individual remains continually present in the contemplative state that is the inherent nature of the mind, no thought however beautiful or ugly, attractive or repulsive, can stain the mind's fundamental purity, or distract or disturb the practitioner, who remains integrated in a state beyond the*



*limits of the ego and the judging mind, experiencing the world as the play of his or her own energies. This is the effortless state of 'Dzogchen', the 'Great Perfection', complete in itself, and lacking nothing. But when an individual is distracted, they are no longer in the state of the nature of the mind; they enter into the dualistic confusion of separating their experience into that of an observing subject who perceives a seemingly external world as an object. This is said to be like mistaking the unreal reflections arising in a mirror for reality itself. The Dzogchen teachings exist to enable those who have entered into this dualistic condition, with all its inherent suffering, to return to the 'primordial state' which is the mind's natural condition, the state of Dzogchen.(...)"*

The first issue of *The Mirror* consists of sixteen densely filled pages with:

- Interviews, like one titled *Maintaining the purity of transmission as the Dzogchen community grows* with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche himself.
- Stories such as one on the upcoming visit of the H.H. Dalai Lama to Merigar for the inauguration of the Shang-Shung Institute.
- Reflections from the base of the Dzogchen community in Merigar, Italy.
- Explanations, such as on practices for special days.
- News from the *gars* all over the world.
- Schedules and programs, like the teaching schedule of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and the Shang Shung Institute program schedule.
- Reports of retreats, such as the Christmas 1989/1990 retreat on the Dzogchen Longde, attended by 600 people. In this report we find the name of the young Geshe Tenzin Wangyal, assisting Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche.

*"About 600 people came to the Christmas retreat. During the first few days Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche gave a general introduction to the Longde series of the Dzogchen teachings to the whole group of participants in the big barn that has usually been used as a wood workshop. Then the retreat continued with Rinpoche giving the initiation of Ngonzog Gyalpo, an empowerment to practice the Longde Series, in the main house at Merigar to five groups of 108 people, and one group of 37. While this was going on the rest of the participants followed teachings in the barn from Geshe Tenzin Wangyal, who explained the all-important basics of how one*

*enters contemplation and integrates it with one's daily life. Fabio Andrico also shared his experience as a practitioner of Yantra Yoga. (...)"*

We also find in this first issue of *The Mirror* an extensive introduction by Tuula Saarikoski of Geshe Tenzin Wangyal. She wrote an article on Tenzin Wangyal based on interviews during retreats, for as in Stockholm on Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud. Here is the story.



**GESHE TENZIN WANGYAL**

*"I am not a Tulku and I am not a Rinpoche, just call me Tenzin Wangyal." This is how he introduced himself. I had heard of this young Bonpo Lama, Geshe Tenzin Wangyal, in the spring 1988. He was doing his Western Ph.D. at Oslo University. He had been at the Dzogchen Community's base in Italy, Merigar. He had given Bon teachings on retreats at Merigar, and in Oslo and Copenhagen.*

*He arrived at the Arlanda Airport, coming to Stockholm, Sweden. He looked very young, smiling, vigorously, and he carried a suitcase heavy with books. Having never met a Bonpo before I was very curious. I was interested in Bon; otherwise I did not expect much.*

*The retreat was a surprise. The young Geshe was a real Master, I felt, a true Dzogchenpa. His teaching was of the Shang-Shung Nyan Gyud (Zhang zhung snyan brgyud), his way of transmitting clear, direct and strong. He had a pleasant sense of humour. The fact that he was a monk added an aspect of power and an almost innocent purity to his youth-*





ful energy and his scholarly sophistication. When later, in the December of that year, I finally made a longtime dream come true, and went to live near Merigar, in Tuscany, Tenzin Wangyal was there back from India. He seemed to be on the road all the time, travelling from Merigar to Rome, from Rome to Naples, to Milan, to Venice or Bologna to give teachings of Dzogchen.

I wondered what his life had been like so far. "Who are you, Tenzin Wangyal?" I asked.

"I shall tell you" Tenzin Wangyal replied.

"I was born in India, at Amritsar, in 1961. My father was Buddhist, and my mother was Bon by religion. They were Tibetan refugees, and at that time they lived in Madiya Pradesh, in a Tibetan settlement, where they had a house. A house, and very big problems."

Because of his parents' difficult situation, Tenzin, their only child, was sent to a children's home at Simla. When he was seven, the home was closed, and the Tibetan children were transferred to a Christian school at Rurki, near Delhi. Four years of misery followed. Buddhist or Bonpo, the Tibetan children were taught the Christian moral codes, they learned to read and write Hindi and English, and their lives were hard.

"My father had died in 1970, and my mother had found a new Tibetan husband. My step-father was a Bonpo, he had been a monk in the Menri monastery in Tibet, and he wanted me to study in Dolanji, in the Bon monastery that the former monks of Menri had established some years before. I was eleven when I went to Dolanji, and I had to start from the beginning, learning how to read and write in Tibetan. The preliminary studies took almost three years."

Nevertheless Tenzin Wangyal, at 14, was the youngest in the group of fifteen monks who studied under the guidance of Menri Lopon Sangye Tenzin, who was also the principal Master of Lopon Tenzin Namdak.

"With Sangye Tenzin we went through the whole of the Shang-Shung Nyan Gyud. It took three years with no holidays. During that time I also did many retreats with Sangye Tenzin, doing Ngondro and Phowa practices. When we had come to the end of

the Shang-Shung Nyan Gyud, in 1977, we all wanted to start again from the beginning. So we did. Soon after Sangye Tenzin died, and before dying he said: 'It was a good sign to start again.' The same year Norbu Rinpoche came to Dolanji."

Lopon Tenzin Namdak started a Dialectic School in Dolanji. Grammar, poetry, astronomy, Sanskrit and all the various rituals were learned first, and after that, primary logic, vinaya, cosmology, prajnaparamita and tantra. The last year of eight years' studies in the Dialectic School was dedicated to Dzogchen again.

"Before we started to study Dzogchen, we were told to find a sign in a dream," explains Tenzin Wangyal. I had a dream in which I was in a tram. A friend of mine, another student of Sangye Tenzin's, was driving the tram and I was handing people the tickets. The tickets were square pieces of paper in all basic colours, and in the center of each ticket there was a Tibetan letter A. That was my sign."

"When I started to teach in the West, and we were doing the fixation on an A, I remembered this dream as I handed each person a square piece of cardboard with the Tibetan letter A in its centre."

There had been other signs, too.

"When I first came to Dolanji, Lopon Tenzin Namdak had a dream in which his personal divinity told him to take care of the new boy and to educate him. While I was studying in the Dialectic School, I did many retreats with him, and we did a Dzogchen practice every evening with Sangye Tenzin."

"My most important experience was the dark retreat. I spent 50 days and nights in the dark, when I was seventeen. Sangye Tenzin had told me to do it while I was still young, and Lopon Namdak helped me. I did the retreat in Lopon Namdak's house. For the first two weeks of the retreat nothing happened, but then the visions came and my practice developed."

In 1986 Tenzin Wangyal finished his studies as a Geshe, which is the equivalent of a Ph.D. in Western universities. His other important Masters were Geshe Yungdrung Namgyal, who was a Bonpo Geshe, but also Lharampa Geshe. This Master



received the Lharampa degree, which is the highest of the several Geshe degrees of the Gelugpas, from the monastic university of Drepung.

*“With Yungdrung Namgyal I studied the Gelug philosophy, and I studied the Nyingmapa tradition with Ketsun Zangpo, who is the most important contemporary Nyingma scholar.”*

Lopon Tenzin Namdak and the first four Geshees to graduate from his school travelled in Tibet for eight months in 1986, visiting many Bonpo monasteries, such as Nag Chu, Chabdo, Tsang, Dege and Nyangsong. After returning to Dolanji, Tenzin Wangyal was invited to Dharamsala, to work in the Library of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, preparing a catalogue of all the Bon texts of the Library.

*“During the time that I spent in Dharamsala, I also published a book about my journey in Tibet, whose title in English is ‘The Helpful Jewel of the New Speech.’ I also wrote a summary of Shenrab Miwo’s biography and published several articles.”*

Geshe Tenzin Wangyal’s scholarly career was well established. Professor Per Kvaerne, an outstanding authority in Tibetology, of the University of Oslo, Norway, invited Geshe Tenzin to collaborate, and offered him the possibility of doing his Ph.D. according to the Western academic tradition. The university of Lund, in Sweden, gave him a research scholarship, and Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche invited him to Merigar to work with him.

Thus in addition to an academic career, there emerged the possibility of giving the spiritual teaching of Dzogchen. Tenzin Wangyal gave teachings at two retreats in Norway, one in Denmark, one in Sweden, and before going back to India he gave a retreat in London, as well as a long retreat of transmission and practice in Devon, England.

*“After some time in India, I decided to come to live in Italy. Here I started to work at ISMEO, the Institute of Middle and Far Eastern Studies in Rome, making a catalogue of all the Tibetan texts in Professor Giuseppe Tucci’s library. When I came to Italy for the first time, a year ago, I had planned to rest and take it easy, but I was drawn in all directions. Now I begin to understand the ways of the West a little better,” he laughs.*



He has temporarily settled down in Italy, and found a car to his taste. Sometimes one can feel in him a nostalgia for the regular pattern of life in a monastery, for his “family,” Lopon Tenzin Namdak and fellow monks, for the school where he had already started instructing the younger monks before finishing his own studies, and where he was the chairman of the students of Dolanji for three years. Most of the time, though, he is happily driving fast on the highways of Italy from one city to another, where groups of the members of the Dzogchen Community wait for him to share with them his profound knowledge and his transmission. But for how long will he remain in Italy?

*“I think I shall like the Americans and their way of thinking,” he used to say, as if he was ready to move on. Then, a couple of days before Tenzin Wangyal was to leave for America, a telegram arrived from India with sad news. His mother had died after eleven days in hospital at the age of 48. Everything that had to be done for her had already been done. At the monastery in Dolanji the traditional rites to help the deceased had been performed, and the funeral, which according to the Bonpo way was to be held in three day’s time, had already happened. Everything had been taken care of, and for Tenzin Wangyal there was nothing to do there. Under this shadow of the loss of his mother, Tenzin Wangyal started his journey to the USA, where he planned to stay a few weeks on the East Coast, mainly at Tsegylgar, in Massachusetts. He will fly from there to the West Coast, visit Los Angeles, San Francisco and also Oregon, where land has been offered for a possible future Bon Foundation. A group of devoted friends from*



*Italy followed the young Dzogchen Master on his first trip to the new continent, where just six months before him his own master Lopon Tenzin Namdak had made a similar tour."*

Tuula Saarikoski's story on page 6 of the first issue of *The Mirror* is later followed by a short story of what looks like Tenzin Wangyal's first visit to New York. On page 16, in the news section, *News From Tsegylgar* we find this impression:

### **LAMA TENZIN WANGYAL'S DISCOVERY OF AMERICA**

*"On January 25, 1990 Lama Tenzin Wangyal arrived in New York. The first two days were spent relaxing and going for 'walkabouts' – we heard the news in Massachusetts that Lama Tenzin Wangyal discovered the only two Tibetan restaurants in all of New York on his first days in the City. In Amherst, Mass., we had rented the 'Unitarian Church' for a public talk; Lopon Tenzin Namdak had spoken in the very same church the previous year. Around a hundred people came, which was a very good turn-out for a small town. Amherst has a student population of about 20,000 and the talk was planned before the beginning of a new term. So we were happy to see so many people. There was a good question and answer session after the talk, and one of the big questions was: "What is dualism?"*

*Throughout the weekdays we altered the schedule by inviting newly interested people to come every other night for further teachings, and the remaining nights we went to the houses of older students. Everyone wanted Lama Tenzin Wangyal in their houses and the whole feeling was very joyous. We were grateful to be brought back to the basics of Concentration, Fixation and Contemplation. Most nights we gave out A's in five coloured tiges fastened onto wooden sticks on a base and we enjoyed the thought of how they may adorn so many interiors, and hopefully be integrated into people's lives.*

*On two consecutive week-ends Lama Tenzin Wangyal gave teachings in Shelburne Falls. People who had come to last year's summer retreat may remember the oasis of civilization not far from our camp-ground: the famous McCuskers store: our lunchtime soups had come from there. On the upper floor there is a very beautiful space, and about forty to fifty people came from all directions*



*to participate.*

*Lama Tenzin Wangyal taught from a text from the Shang Shung Nyan Gyud on Dzogchen. He had received this transmission from his own Master, Lopon Sangye Tenzin. Through the process of transmitting and translating and explaining the text he gave such a vivid example through his own being: how what really counts is indeed one's very own experience and understanding of whichever practice one may choose to do. I think everyone participating respected his honesty and courage – as well as the fact that he had been somewhat rebellious in his response to the structure of his personal education.*

*For the second week-end we moved on to Powa teachings and practiced together on both those days. Lama Tenzin Wangyal urged everyone not to be satisfied with an idea or a concept, but really just to do it: practice for a full week, twice daily and then see for oneself whether there might be a change – something to be noticed.*

*We all did notice a feeling of inspiration – and back-to-the roots experiences – simple distinctions of feeling and sensation. In that way it was a very successful process.*

*On February 13 we sadly waved bye bye to Lama Tenzin Wangyal – on his way to further Americas. We have invited him to come again – hopefully for a longer time."*

**Text produced and selected by Frits de Vries**  
Photos from *The Mirror* and [Facebook](#)





## APPOINTED AS RINPOCHE

Recently Geshe Nyima Woser Choekhortshang added “Rinpoche” to his name. Curious about how he got this title, the editors invited Geshe-la for an interview, and asked him to explain titles as Geshe, Tulku, Rinpoche and some other.

**Ton:** Rinpoche, I want to start with some personal questions. Where were you born?

**Choekhortshang Rinpoche:** I was born in Dolpo, a culturally Tibetan region in the north-western part of Nepal, bordered in the north by Tibet. It is located to the west of Mustang. This remote region has preserved its Tibetan culture in relatively pure form, and the Dolpo are generally adherents of Bon and Buddhism. Politically it is part of Nepal now but many of the older generations still don't speak Nepalese.

**Frits:** Can you compare it to Ladakh?

**Choekhortshang Rinpoche:** Yes in some points, but people of Ladakh are trying to present themselves these days as Indian stronger. I visited Ladakh and even neighboring regions Lahaul and Kinnaur a few times. They are all changing. Culturally they are rooted with Tibet.

**Frits:** Is Dolpo interesting because there are a lot of Bon monasteries?

**Choekhortshang Rinpoche:** That is one reason since there are around thirteen Bon monasteries in the area and it was a home of many great masters. And then the history of the Dolpo is the second reason. Besides that, for the Bonpos the Yangton Lamas of Dolpo are very important. For example *Yangton Chenpo*, the Great Yangton, put the oral teaching of the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* onto the script. And later, other members of this family played a very important role in bringing this teaching into the monastic curriculum. Before Menri Monastery was established in Tibet, the Yeru Wensakha Monastery was the main Bonpo Monastery in Tibet. In thirteenth century, Dru Gyalwa Yungdrung, the main lama of the Yeru Wensakha requested Yangton Gyaltsen Rinchen, the founder of the Dolpo Samling Monastery, to give the teaching of *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* to him.

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



His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche and Geshe Nyima Woser Choekhortshang Rinpoche.

**Choekhortshang Rinpoche:** My father Tsewang Tashi was a practitioner and also a priest in the village called Tra. His father was from Buddhist family lineage called ‘Choekhortshang’ and his mother was a daughter of a Yangton Lama of Bon. Both of these two lineages are recorded as the two most important families of Dolpo by Prof. Snellgrove in his book *The four lama's of Dolpo: Tibetan Biographies*. My paternal grandfather Karma Choewang was a Buddhist during the first phase of his life. And then he married a daughter of a Yangton Lama who is the most important family of Bon in Dolpo. Therefore he adopted the Bon in the later period of his life. Since then my father was adopted by his own maternal grandfather, Yangton Yungdrung Dradhul Rinpoche, who was the lama of the famous Samling monastery and also the founder of the new monastery called Tashi Namgyal in Tra village. He then trained my father to become his successor as lama of the Tashi Namgyal Monastery since my father is the eldest son of his daughter. That is the connection, the background of my family lineage.

When my father was young he studied with the





Choekhortshang Rinpoche with his mother, two brothers and sister.

present lama of Samling Monastery, who is also from the Yangton family lineage. He learned meditation, even became a physician of Tibetan medicine. And then he served as a priest in the village having a title of 'Chichoe' (*spyi-mchod*) that means 'common priest,' who's responsible to serve villagers without differentiation between Bonpo and Buddhist. So he was a priest for both. There were certain responsibilities on him like making rituals, taking care of the crops, like making rain, stopping hail, or something like this in general. Later when his maternal grandfather passed away he became the head lama of the Namgyal Monastery in Dolpo.

**Ton: Is your mother a practitioner?**

**Choekhortshang Rinpoche:** Yes, my mother, her name is Sangmo, is a practitioner belonging to a Buddhist family. The name of her family lineage is called Chokro, and this family lineage is very well-known in Tibetan world. My mother is a semi-nun. I introduced this term 'semi-nun' and 'semi-monk' when I gave a presentation amongst Tibetologists. It is a very typical tradition in Dolpo, where many Tantric or Dzogchen practitioners have many involvements in the monastic activities, and they have a family. It is somehow a practitioner's life in-between celibacy and lay people. Many of my

relatives are semi-monk and semi-nun.

**Ton: Do you have brothers and sisters?**

**Choekhortshang Rinpoche:** I have three brothers and one sister. Two of us studied in the monastery, and one is at home in Dolpo, and takes care of our mother. My youngest brother, Amchi Yungdrung Tsewang studied Tibetan medicine to follow our father's steps. He is a physician in Kathmandu, Nepal, where he practices Tibetan medical knowledge and teaches at the 'School of Four Medical Science of Early Tradition,' which is near to Triten Norbutse Monastery. My brother Geshe Yungdrung Gyatso is now a resident lama at Chamma Ling Poland. My sister Palsang Lhamo lives in Kathmandu.



Choekhortshang Rinpoche with his three brothers.





The Samling Monastery in Dolpo, Nepal.

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

**Choekhortshang Rinpoche:** When I was around six years old, I went to a Nepalese government school in our village. There were similar schools in many parts of Dolpo. Since these schools didn't teach Tibetan, many families did not send their children to the school. Therefore, those schools closed one after the other. I began learning Tibetan reading and writing from my father. I also served as a shepherd for two years in my village, looking after the goats and sheep. When I was eight years old, I went to India with my grandfather, my father and the lama of Samling Monastery. There, I studied in the Central School for Tibetan in Dolanji of Tibetan Bonpo Settlement for eight years. Back in my homeland, later, the local Dolpo people started new private schools in different regions, where they teach in Tibetan and teach Tibetan religion. The school uniform is a *chuba*, which is a Tibetan traditional dress; so it is different from schools in Kathmandu.

**Ton: Can you tell about your education as a monk and how that evolved?**

**Choekhortshang Rinpoche:** At the age of seventeen, in 1992, I became a monk at Menri Monastery, the mother monastery of Bon. There, I joined Bon Dialectic School and studied Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen as main courses. Besides them I learned meditations, healing rituals, astrology, sacred dances, yogas and many others. Anyhow, after studying sixteen years in the Menri monastery, I became a Geshe in 2008.

During my study I had an opportunity to serve as a personal secretary for His Holiness the Menri Trizin Rinpoche; the spiritual leader of Bon for eight years. I also served as president for the Bon

Dialectic School for a year and also treasurer of Menri Monastery for three years. I have been the chief editor for *Bon-sGo*, the first journal of the Bon, which is very popular amongst the Tibetan society. Recently the education department of Tibetan Administration in India declared it as one of the three best Tibetan journals in exile.

**Ton: Why did you come to the West?**

**Choekhortshang Rinpoche:** Initially, my intention was to go back to Dolpo and teach there. But while studying at the Menri Monastery I discovered some personal interests: writing poetry and doing research in a more traditional way. The writing brought me in contact with many Western professors and researchers, and I started to work with some of these Tibetologists. In 2006 I was invited for the biggest conference for Tibetologists at the University of Bonn in Germany. I attended that conference and then later in 2008 I was invited by Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche for a conference in Shenten, France. In 2009 I was invited by Leiden University in the Netherlands to work as an affiliated fellow in religious studies. There was a plan to study and live there for a longer time, but I had to go back to India. In 2009, a Czech Professor, Daniel Berounsky, invited me to Prague to study in Charles University. There, at the Tibetan department, I also teach Tibetan language, tradition, textual reading and some context of the religion to the bachelors, masters and Ph.D. students.

**Frits: When are you going back to Dolpo?**

**Choekhortshang Rinpoche:** Since I was enthroned officially in Menri Monastery, the community in Dolpo has been waiting for my return. Their hope and request is that I should go back now. They







Choekhortshang Rinpoche at Menri Monastery in 2015 during the enthronement ceremony.

started to reconstruct the monastery. But I came here for academic purpose and interest, and want to finish my Ph.D. study first. My research topic of the Ph.D. dissertation at Charles University in Prague is concerned with a Bonpo family of Dolpo. It will be based on its family genealogy. Right now I haven't decided anything about returning to Dolpo. Recently we started a Master project at the university for Tibetology, and I want to stay till it is finished. While I was studying in the monastery I had been wondering about the academic world, so doing research in Western universities is somehow my personal interest.

**Jantien: Did you ever get homesick?**

**Choekhortshang Rinpoche:** I never felt homesick, because I left home when I was very young, but sometimes I miss my monastery. I miss the monastery more than my family. Once my mother told me the first time I was leaving for India, she felt that she was going to cry, and when she felt that, she immediately stopped. And later when my brothers left, she never cried. She told me that this decision made her stronger.

**Ton: I read in the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* that people who stay behind should not cry, because it would make the process of the *bardo* of the person who died more difficult. So your mother practiced this.**

**Choekhortshang Rinpoche:** That is true. When I was young and if I had seen the tears in my mother's eyes, I would have remembered it when I was studying and it probably would have made

me homesick. But now I had a positive memory to my mother and my departure, because she seemed happy with it.

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

**Choekhortshang Rinpoche:** I met him when I was very young. One of his sisters was my school classmate. I got the opportunity to know him better when I was studying at Menri Monastery. Since then I have always stayed in contact with him, and sometimes we spend time together in Europe.

**Ton: We would like to ask you some questions about the Bon tradition and sangha. Can you tell about the difference between a monk, a lama, a Geshe, a Tulku, a Rinpoche, a Khenpo, a Lopon and a Ponlop?**

**Choekhortshang Rinpoche:** A monk lives in celibacy. Usually there are two kinds of monks; one is called novice monk; generally in Bon it is a monk who has taken twenty-five vows. And then the second is the monk who has taken a fully ordination, which has two hundred and fifty vows.

Geshe is a monk who completed the scholastic phase of monastic training and holds the highest monastic education degree from the educationally qualified monastery. It is something like a traditional monastic degree or title. You can compare it with the title of professor in the West, but it takes longer and is a higher study. I spent sixteen years to receive my Geshe title. Another difference is that a professor has normally studied





During the enthronement at Menri Monastery Choekhortshang Rinpoche in February 2015.

on one topic. We have no choice of what we want to study. We have to go through the entire curriculum. In the Tibetan schools only the Gelug, Bon and Sakya use the Geshe title, the Kagyu and Nyingma don't use it normally.

For lama there are three different categories. The first category is a family lineage lama. In Tibetan the term is *Dhung-gyue*. These lamas belong to the family lineage of very famous spiritual masters, like Shen in Bon. Shen is the family lineage of Tonpa Shenrab, the founder of Yungdrung Bon. All the children of the Shen family become automatically a lama. They don't need to study in the monastery, they are genetically lama. It does not matter if they are lay people or ordained, once they are involved in a religious practice, they will be respected and accepted as a lama. In Bon we have five main such family lineages. One of them, called Dru, could not continue their lineage because of the recognizing of fifth and eighth Penchen Lamas from this family. When the eighth Penchen Lama was recognized from this family, he was taken to Tashi Lhunpo Monastery and became a monk along with his brother, and his brother was then entitled as a Ta lama. So the Dru could not continue their family lineage since both of their last boys were made Gelugpa monks. This family lineage was very important and connected with the Yeru Wensakha and Menri Monastery.

The second category is the *Tulku* lama; a young child or an adult person who is recognized as a reincarnation of an important lama. It can be recognized by written note of the previous life, it can be recognized through auspicious dreams or signs of certain lamas, or it can be recognized through religious lottery. However, it can be confirmed with the test such as where they have to choose possessions of the previous lama. If he or she chooses correct, he or she can be recognized as a reincarnation. For example Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche is a *Tulku*. Unfortunately, in Tibet, some *Tulkus* were not recognized during their life.

The third category of lama is an officially appointed lama, through education, meditation, qualification and contribution. The Tibetan term for this lama is called *Lama Tripa*. All the heads of monasteries like the Lopen and the Khenpo belong to the third category. Both His Holiness the Menri Trizin Rinpoche and His Eminence the Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche belong to this category, because of their education, achievement and contributions to the Bon.

Rinpoche means 'Precious One.' In general a Tulku is naturally called Rinpoche. However, according to Bon tradition the Tulku system is not that important as it is in other schools. In Bon most of the Rinpoche titles are given only by official







Choekhortshang Rinpoche's weekend teaching in Hungary in 2015.

enthronement. Some family lineage lamas are not called Rinpoche but just lama. Majority of the great lamas of Bon are officially given the title of Rinpoche for the purpose of teaching, administration or maintenance of a monastery.

In my case I was given the title of Rinpoche by His Holiness the Menri Trizin Rinpoche through an official enthronement at Menri Monastery. It was because the people of Dolpo requested His Holiness for my enthronement as a Rinpoche of Namgyal Monastery in Dolpo. Actually the maternal grandfather of my father was a Rinpoche of the Namgyal Monastery and was a Yangton Lama – and my father succeeded him. When my father passed away the villagers choose me as his successor, because I was the eldest son. In the Bon tradition when a monk is given the title of Rinpoche, the monastery should enthrone him. When that happens, the person has to spend time in the monastery and teach there. In 2000, while I was studying at Menri Monastery, I received a journal where I read that they had registered my name in the religious department of the Nepalese government in Kathmandu as the head lama of Namgyal Monastery. Then they gave me the responsibility to take care of the monastery and the villagers. Actually, then I became a Rinpoche and it was approved by the Nepalese government. However, in a way, I refused the title Rinpoche, because for me it felt not as the right time to go back to Namgyal Monastery; instead I came to the West. When I would have gone to Dolpo, the monastery would have enthroned me. So, it happened in 2015 that some important people from my village wrote a letter to His Holiness Menri Trizin Rinpoche and asked to enthrone me. This way they tried to get me back to my village. I

went to Menri Monastery to edit few editions of *Bon-sGo* journal, and then all this happened so quick, that I could not tell even my mother and some of my close friends what was going to happen. So, officially I am enthroned as Rinpoche at Menri Monastery in February 2015.

Amongst the officially appointed lamas, Khenpo is a title that is designated as an Abbot for the learned and accomplished master through an official enthronement for the purpose of the monastic administration.

Lopon means 'head teacher,' which is enthroned officially for the purpose of educational responsibility amongst the qualified spiritual teachers.

However, it is important to know that the implement of Khenpo and Lopon titles in some Buddhism schools are very different than in Bon.

Ponlop is a typical Bon term which is an abbreviation of 'Ponse Lopon.' In Bon, the Khenpo and the Ponlop of Menri Monastery are the most important. The Khenpo of Menri Monastery becomes His Holiness of the Bon. In the case of Menri Lopon, when his disciple will be the new Abbot of Menri Monastery then his title will be promoted to the Menri Yongdzin.

Then, there are monks who have finished a meditation retreat of more than three years. Usually, they are called *Drupthonpa*.

**Frits: Do you have a sangha in Prague?**

**Choekhortshang Rinpoche:** No, I don't have any sangha right now, because I want to keep all my time for my work at the university here in Czech







Choekhortshang Rinpoche's weekend teaching in Poland in 2014.

Republic. Initially, I wasn't available for giving teachings. I even never thought of it then. However, everything happened spontaneously when I visited Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in Berlin 2010. I attended his evening talk and there I was introduced to Ulrike Bross and other Sangha members. Then Rinpoche asked me to give an introduction of *Nine Ways of Bon* to Ligmincha Berlin. I agreed because I thought that it would be just only that. But it continued since students asked Rinpoche for more, and Ligmincha sanghas from Austria, Poland, Italy, Slovakia and Hungary also invited me respectively through Rinpoche's suggestion. Still invitations have been coming from many other countries such as Norway, Ukraine, Lithuania, United Kingdom, Argentina and even Columbia, but I could not accept them at the moment because of my involvement at the Charles University in Prague. Therefore, in Czech Republic I don't give teaching as I do in other European countries. However, I used to give just public talks in different towns of Czech Republic such as, Brno, Ostrava, Olomouc, Opava, Plzen, Luhacovice and Prague. Those were very successful and halls and theaters were mostly packed.

**Frits: Do you feel more a researcher than a teacher?**

**Choekhortshang Rinpoche:** I don't know. I learned a lot from spending time at different universities. I have attended many international conferences as a researcher and did many presentations. This interest made me travel to many countries, like Japan, Canada, Mongolia, the

United Kingdom and many European countries for academic purposes. I spent one month at Oxford University and had opportunity to teach there.

**Frits: What do you think about preserving the Bon-Buddhist wisdom in the West?**

**Choekhortshang Rinpoche:** I am sure it will succeed, because I can see many sanghas, and outside of the sanghas people opening to the practices and teachings, and the number of people is growing. I started to teach in Berlin, and never thought I would also teach in other European countries. While teaching I saw many attendances coming from other Buddhist groups too.

**Frits: Do we need a monastery in Europe to preserve the Bon teachings?**

**Choekhortshang Rinpoche:** It would be good if there are one or two monasteries, but without it can also survive. There are many ways we can teach the community. If it was only *Sutra* we teach, then it would be important to have a monastery. But since we also teach *Tantra* and *Dzogchen*, it can survive in a lay community.

As I mentioned about the semi-monk of Dolpo, it is somewhere between a monk and a lay practitioner. They have a family, their own life, and they practice. So I think this kind of life can be adopted in the West.

**Interview by Frits de Vries, Jantien Spindler and Ton Bisscheroux**

Photos: courtesy of Choekhortshang Rinpoche



# FREE SIX-MONTH INTERNET COURSE: TRANSFORMING YOUR WORLD THROUGH SERVICE

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will continue with the free live webcasts in 2016. Great news is that there will be a free six-month course on *Transforming Your World Through Service*. See the full 2016 schedule below.

## **New: *Transforming Your World Through Service***

We're excited to announce a brand-new, six-month Internet course with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche that begins February 13, 2016. The topic is *Transforming Your World Through Service*. Rinpoche especially encourages his students throughout the world to participate.

Serving others is fundamental to our personal spiritual development. Our commitment to making a difference to others and the world can fill our life with love and joy, but it requires a strong foundation of wisdom and compassion. This free, six-month course will support you in becoming as effective as possible in your service to others. You will learn:

- The fundamentals of enlightened leadership
- Meditation practices for cultivating wisdom and compassion
- How to rise above your ego to connect with a sense of collective purpose
- The best ways to inspire others to serve.

The free course will include everything from free monthly live webcasts (listed further below) to a discussion forum, recorded webcasts, MP3 audio recordings, and downloadable print materials. Stay tuned for information on how to register for the first live webcast on February 13. You will need to register separately for the six-month course with its full support materials—**registration is now open at [www.ligminchalearning.com](http://www.ligminchalearning.com)**.

## **Live Broadcasts from Serenity Ridge Retreats**

Each year, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche teaches four seasonal retreats at [Ligmincha International's Serenity Ridge Retreat Center](#) (see dates and times below). As he's done in the past, Rinpoche plans to broadcast one teaching session from each of these retreats, giving everyone an opportunity to receive his instruction and engage



in a guided meditation from the comfort of their home computers or other devices.

## **One More Webcast in the Soul Retrieval Series**

If you've been following Rinpoche's 2015 yearlong course in *Soul Retrieval, The True Source of Healing*, you're already anticipating the final webcast in the series, *Soul Retrieval as a Lifetime Practice*, scheduled for January 9, 2016. As with all of Rinpoche's coming webcasts, this broadcast is free and open to all — there's no need to view any of the previous webcasts in the series to enjoy and benefit from the teaching and guided meditation. [Learn more](#).

## **How to Stay Informed**

Answers to commonly asked questions about live webcasts with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche can be found on the [webcast FAQ page](#). Information there includes:

- how to stay informed about upcoming webcasts
- where to find video recordings of previous webcasts
- how to access simultaneous translation into as many as 12 different languages.

## **How to Contribute**

All these free offerings are made possible through the generosity of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and an international team of dedicated volunteers. Ligmincha International pays a fee to maintain the advertising-free webcast service. If you would like to support these efforts, [donations are most welcome](#).



## Full Webcast Schedule for 2016

So you don't miss any of these coming free webcasts with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, mark your schedule now! Each webcast takes place on a Saturday, except as shown; all times listed are Central European Time.

We look forward to seeing you at an upcoming webcast!

- **January 1 (Friday), 17.00 – 18.00 h.**

Guided Meditation from the Experiential Transmission Teachings, Part 2. Broadcast live from the Winter Retreat at Ligmincha International at Serenity Ridge, Nelson County, Virginia (not a public talk, but webcast is open to all). [Learn more.](#)

- **January 9, 21.00 – 22.30 h.**

*The True Source of Healing, Part 12: Soul Retrieval as a Lifetime Practice.* [Learn more.](#)

- **February 13, 21.00 – 22.30 h.**

*Transforming Your World Through Service, Part 1: The Value of Enlightened Leadership.*

- **March 12, 21.00 – 22.30 h.**

*Transforming Your World Through Service, Part 2: Cultivating Wisdom.*

- **April 2, 21.00 – 22.30 h.**

*Enlightened Leadership.* Broadcast live from the Spring Retreat at Ligmincha International at Serenity Ridge, Nelson County, Virginia (not a public talk, but webcast is open to all). [Learn more.](#)

- **April 9, 21.00 – 22.30 h.**

*Transforming Your World Through Service, Part 3: Generating Compassion.*

- **May 14, 21.00 – 22.30 h.**

*Transforming Your World Through Service, Part 4: Service and Spirituality.*

- **June 11, 21.00 – 22.30 h.**

*Transforming Your World Through Service, Part 5: Inspiring Others to Serve.*

- **June 25, 18.00 – 19.15 h.**

*Sleep Yoga.* Broadcast live from the Summer Retreat at Ligmincha International at Serenity Ridge, Nelson County, Virginia (not a public talk, but webcast is open to all).

- **July 9, 21.00 – 22.30 h.**

*Transforming Your World Through Service, Part 6: Questions and Answers*

- **August 13, 21.00 – 22.30 h.**

Topic to be announced.

- **September 10, 21.00 – 22.30 h.**

Topic to be announced.

- **October 8, 21.00 – 22.30 h.**

Topic to be announced.

- **October 15, 21.00 – 22.30 h.**

*The Practice of Chod.* Broadcast live from the Fall Retreat at Ligmincha International at Serenity Ridge, Nelson County, Virginia (not a public talk, but webcast is open to all).

- **November 12, 21.00 – 22.30 h.**

Topic to be announced.

- **December 10, 21.00 – 22.30 h.**

Topic to be announced.

- **December 31, 15.00 – 16.15 h.**

*Experiential Transmission of Zhang Zhung, Part 3.* Broadcast live from the Winter Retreat at Ligmincha International at Serenity Ridge, Nelson County, Virginia (not a public talk, but webcast is open to all).

Adapted from an article published in [Voice of Clear Light](#), December 2015.





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

| When                                    | Where                      | What  | More information   |
|---|----------------------------|---|--|
| January 9<br>21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)   | Your computer              | Live Webcast:<br>The True Source of Healing: Soul Retrieval as a Lifetime Practice                    | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a> |
| January 16 – February 7                 | Your computer              | Interactive online course:<br>Awakening the Sacred Body   | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a> |
| February 13<br>21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.) | Your computer              | Live Webcast:<br>Transforming Your World Through Service, Part 1: The Value of Enlightened Leadership | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a> |
| March 5 – April 3                       | Your computer              | Interactive online course:<br>Tibetan Dream Yoga  | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a> |
| March 12<br>21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)    | Your computer              | Live Webcast:<br>Transforming Your World Through Service, Part 2: Cultivating Wisdom                  | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a> |
| April 2<br>21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)     | Your computer              | Live Webcast:<br>Enlightened Leadership.  | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a> |
| April 9<br>21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)     | Your computer              | Live Webcast:<br>Transforming Your World Through Service, Part 3: Generating Compassion               | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a> |
| April 22–24                             | Paris, France              | Weekend seminar:<br>Living with Joy, Dying with Peace   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.fr">www.ligmincha.fr</a>   |
| April 29 – May 1                        | Vienna, Austria            | Weekend seminar:<br>Outer, Inner and secret Tsa Lung  | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.at">www.ligmincha.at</a>   |
| April 30 – May 22                       | Your computer              | Interactive online course:<br>Tibetan Meditation — Achieving Great Bliss Through Pure Awareness       | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a> |
| May 6 – 8                               | Berlin, Germany            | Weekend seminar:<br>From Inspiration to Manifestation: Unblocking Your Creative Potential             | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.de">www.ligmincha.de</a>   |
| May 14 – 16                             | Bulle, Switzerland         | Weekend seminar:<br>Bardo and Dream   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.fr">www.ligmincha.fr</a>   |
| May 14<br>21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)      | Your computer              | Live Webcast:<br>Transforming Your World Through Service, Part 4: Service and Spirituality            | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a> |
| May 20 – 22                             | Amsterdam, The Netherlands | Weekend seminar:<br>A-tri, Part 4   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.nl">www.ligmincha.nl</a>   |

You can also watch on your computer 24 hours a day, and 7 days a week: Free Internet teachings and videos on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com), [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org) and [www.oceanofwisdom.org](http://www.oceanofwisdom.org).





# Ligmincha Europe Magazine

*# 20 – Spring 2016*



Meet the Washington sangha

Study at Lishu Institute

The Bon Refuge Tree

Shadow work and the Path to Enlightenment



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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 Magazine](#).

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# GREETINGS AND NEWS FROM THE EDITORS

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

Again, there is plenty to read in this Magazine, but... most important is to practice and to integrate the wisdom of the Bon teachings in your daily life.

When Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche was asked if the teachings offered by Ligmincha and The 3 Doors Academy are complementary to each other, he answered:



*"Yes, I say both are complementary to each other because in the tradition there is a very deep elaboration and understanding of the dark side or the shadow of our own personality: practices exist to tame your ego, cultivate compassion and purify afflictions. All these form the core essence of the teachings. But while this is the case it is very seldom that these teachings become personal in people's lives. Many teach about the need to tame the ego and purify afflictions but this does not become something personal for a practitioner, teacher, and dharma group. The belief is that personality is something one works with a therapist while dharma is just meditating peacefully, sitting quietly and not really reflecting on one's own concrete afflictions as one does in a therapy session. I am one of very few teachers who is encouraging reflection on a constant daily basis." (page 7)*

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche offers us a great variety of teachings you can choose from. In April you can participate in a free online workshop, every month there are free internet teachings, you can

meet Rinpoche personally during his teachings in Europe, you can apply for The 3 Doors Academy in Europe and the US, and you can apply for the second year programme at Lishu Institute in India.

There are also other Bon teachers in Europe. Now we introduce Geshe Gyatso, who is the resident lama of Chamma Ling Poland since March 2015. He also explains why the lineage plays an important role in the Bon tradition, and elaborates about the Bon Refuge Tree.

The importance of the connection to the lineage is also made clear in the article about *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* – the edition compiled and edited by Walter Y. Evans-Wentz, with a psychological commentaries by Carl Gustaf Jung – is criticized by John Reynolds and others. There is a new, first complete translation of the text with an Introductory Commentary by His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama.

We have interviewed one of the sanghas in the US, reprint an article about *Bodhicitta* and Great Compassion from the *Voice of Clear Light* from January 2004, and as always, there is poetry from our sangha.

And last, but not least, prayers are requested for His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche (photo).

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



# FOCUSING AND CALMING YOUR MIND

**Free two-week online Workshop for beginners  
with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche  
begins April 16**

For the past six years Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche has been providing meditation instruction through his popular [Glidewing.com](http://glidewing.com) online workshops. Now, for the first time he will offer a two-week workshop free of charge. The course will take place from April 16 through May 1. All that's needed to participate is a high-speed Internet connection.

“Meditation for Beginners: Focusing and Calming Your Mind” is tailored for beginning meditators but will be beneficial for anyone — including experienced practitioners — who needs support in stabilizing their thoughts and their mind. The course gives comprehensive instruction in the *zhiné*, or “calm abiding,” practice, which has its source in the ancient Bon Buddhist tradition of Tibet. Through this practice you will learn to quiet and calm the mind by focusing attention on a single object. Three forms of *zhiné* are taught: focusing on a visual support; focusing on sound; and focusing on the “Three Precious Pills” — stillness of the body, silence of the speech, and spaciousness of the mind.

A short meditation practice each day can bring many benefits, including enhancements to physical, emotional, and psychological

wellbeing. More specifically, the practices of this workshop can help you to:

- improve your focus in all areas of your life
- clear negative emotions, unblock creativity, enhance your productivity, and improve your mood
- find more sense of peace, quietude, and inner calmness
- become more connected and grounded in all experiences of body, speech and mind
- stabilize clarity of mind and cultivate awareness
- come closer to your true self.

Rinpoche instructs and guides the practice through a series of videos that can be watched at home on your own schedule. A discussion forum lends a sense of community and permits you to share experiences, ask questions, and engage in mutual support. A course moderator will ensure that forum discussions are appropriate and supportive.



To learn more about the course and register now, go to: [www.glidewing.com](http://www.glidewing.com).

*This article also appeared in the April 2016 issue of [Voice of Clear Light](#).*



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

Everyone is encouraged to recite the Long Life Prayer and Long Life Mantra for the health of His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, spiritual leader of the Tibetan Bon Buddhist tradition. His Holiness recently arrived in the United States for an extended visit to rest and restore his health. Read a letter from Rob Patzig, chair of the Ligmincha International Board, for details.

Sunday, February 22, 2016

**Dear Ligmincha Sangha,**

In case you have not already heard, His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, spiritual head of the Bön tradition, arrived recently in the United States for an extended visit. While here he will be resting and restoring his health.


Our precious teacher, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, encourages all of us to pray for His Holiness' health and long life. In this way, we come together as a community and open our hearts for the benefit of another. He especially encourages us to do this practice for the next two weeks, but to continue for the next few months.

To keep track of how many mantras are accumulated, we have created a form for submitting accumulations. Alternatively, if a sangha wishes to count its accumulations collectively, please designate one individual to keep count and that person can then submit the sangha's total count. The form can be found here: <http://goo.gl/forms/twCzDkZrqP>. Please report, or your sangha's accumulations for the first time on March 8, two weeks from today. We will take this count and Tenzin Rinpoche will offer them to His Holiness.

Please join Rinpoche, our resident lamas, and the whole Ligmincha community in praying for His Holiness. Together we can accumulate millions of Long Life Mantras. These activities will support not only our selves and each other, but the whole world as well.

In Service to Bön,

*Rob Patzig*  
Rob Patzig  
President  
Ligmincha International



Long Life Mantra

བཅུ་ཐུ་ཨ་དཀར་མུ་ལ་ཏིང་ནམ་འོད་འདུ་མུ་མེ་ཚེ་ནི་ཨ།

SO DRUM A KAR MULA TING NAM Ó DU MUYE TSE NI DZA

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

Mantra accumulations may be submitted to: [ligmincha.org/long-life-hh-feb-2016](http://ligmincha.org/long-life-hh-feb-2016).  
You can find the Long Life Prayer for His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche at [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org).





# A CONVERSATION WITH TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE

## Accessibility of the Teachings, Shadow Work and the Path to Enlightenment

Santiago Villaveces Izquierdo interviewed Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche a couple of times over Skype last year. Their conversation was mainly on the complementarity of a traditional approach to the teachings with The 3 Doors. Within that frame they touched upon other topics such as shadow work, embodiment of the teachings, inner refuge and hosting. Here you can read an edited and compiled text of these interviews.

**Santiago Villaveces Izquierdo:** After more than two decades of following the Yungdrung Bon tradition and after recently completing a three-year training designed by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, my teacher for over twenty-four years, I have realized very deep shifts within myself. A different way of being in the midst of the ups and downs of daily life has emerged together with a deep feeling of freedom, expansiveness and connection. At the same time I have begun to realize that the teachings have come much more alive in myself, not as intellectual constructs but as embodied and experienced realizations. In sharing this wonderful adventure of discovery and healing I found myself engaged in a series of heartfelt conversations with Rinpoche during 2015.

For the last several years Rinpoche has been engaged in creating a novel system that blends the strengths of an 18.000 year old tradition with the openness and candidness of acknowledging our own personal obstacles and afflictions. Merging the best of East and West while at the same time waning down the effects of emotional over-intellectualization or emotional denial. Our conversation departed from this unique blend touching upon issues ranging from his motivation of expanding the accessibility of the teachings to anyone interested in transforming their own afflictions, to the embodiment of the teachings by working through one's shadow and finding in this work not just transformations of old patterns and the healing that comes from liberating ourselves from blockages, but also deep embodied realizations that bring the teachings alive within.



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche with Santiago Villaveces - Izquierdo.

Our conversation started off with a distinction that Rinpoche was keen on making: that between Ligmincha – the organization he established in the mid 1990s that has since grown to a worldwide network of centers and *Sanghas* for the preservation of the ancient teachings and practices of the Yungdrung Bon tradition of Tibet and The 3 Doors Academy – a secular training based on three of these ancient practices that allows participants to work through physical, energetic and mental obstacles that deter us from reaching self-realization. As the conversation developed we touched upon the two most fundamental pillars of spiritual work: reconnecting to the inner refuge, that is, reconnecting through our conscious awareness with our own true nature; and developing the inner skills of hosting all our experiences by allowing them into our expansive nature rather than grasping and identifying ourselves with them.

**Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche:** It is important for people to understand the basic differences between Ligmincha and The 3 Doors Academy. First of all the purpose of the latter is not preserving the tradition but emphasizing in allowing individuals who have no association with Buddhism, Bon or Tibetan culture to have access and benefit from some of these teachings. This of course does not mean that people who are following a traditional Buddhist path would not benefit from the methods and approaches used in The 3 Doors, as has already been proven by over one-hundred practi-



tioners that have graduated from the Academy.

Another difference is in the way The 3 Doors is structured. People who enter the Academy work as a group for a period of three consecutive years within a set up that provides more intimate support systems that are otherwise absent in a *sangha* (1) or *dharma* (2) center: closeness to the teacher or mentor, closeness amongst practitioners, a deep level of commitment towards each other and towards the practices, and a continuous communication amongst all as a basis for growth and support. For all these reasons The 3 Doors is also extremely beneficial for all those practitioners who are following the tradition of Yungdrung Bon and who are connected to any of our world-wide centers.

I feel it is also important to mention that all of us that are following a tradition such as the Yungdrung Bon have pledged a commitment to develop a meaningful sense of compassion. This means acting in practical ways so as to allow people who have no interest in following this tradition to benefit from the *dharma*. I care about all human beings not only those who follow my tradition. If one has a sectarian view one does not truly understand *Bodhicitta*, the spontaneous wish to attain enlightenment motivated by great compassion for all sentient beings. For sectarians *Bodhicitta* is just a mental abstraction about helping other sentient beings.

For me The 3 Doors Academy is very important because it is a means to include people who otherwise would not have access to the teachings simply because Buddhism or Yungdrung Bon are of no appeal to them. And I wanted to offer this opportunity within a strong system of support and commitment.

So you see, there is no conflict or contradiction between Ligmincha and The 3 Doors Academy. One might have preferences, people can choose one over the other, but you cannot judge based on what you like or dislike. You cannot say The 3 Doors Academy is not right because it does not follow the tradition. This is not only a wrong judgment but also a lack of understanding of *Bodhicitta*. I am encouraging all my students to follow the approaches of both Ligmincha and The 3 Doors. This is very important.

**SVI:** This provides a very nice introduction that allows the unfolding of various topics each with a different degree of depth. The first, at a more superficial level, is that of the audience: Ligmincha and The 3 Doors are conceived as distinct means to reach different audiences. Second, beyond the issue of distinct audiences lays a deeper difference: The 3 Doors provides a more integral support system to the person who is working with the practices. Third and deepest is that in the personal development of a practitioner both tracks Ligmincha and The 3 Doors Academy are complementary





to each other. Can you elaborate more on this complementarity?

**TWR:** Yes, I say both are complementary to each other because in the tradition there is a very deep elaboration and understanding of the dark side or the shadow of our own personality: practices exist to tame your ego, cultivate compassion and purify afflictions. All these form the core essence of the teachings. But while this is the case it is very seldom that these teachings become personal in people's lives. Many teach about the need to tame the ego and purify afflictions but this does not become something personal for a practitioner, teacher, and *dharma* group. The belief is that personality is something one works with a therapist while *dharma* is just meditating peacefully, sitting quietly and not really reflecting on one's own concrete afflictions as one does in a therapy session. I am one of very few teachers who is encouraging reflection on a constant daily basis. This is my bad quality, my unique quality, my special quality, whatever you want to call it. I emphasize work with the personality. The 3 Doors is a formal structure that supports such work, and that is where the sixty-three transformations are coming from (3). This is how *dharma* should work. People are used to count sixty-three afflictions but never recognize and work with the ones they have!

**SVI:** Rinpoche if you allow me I would like to talk through my experience as a 3 Doors Academy graduate and follower and practitioner of the Yungdrung Bon. When one does not integrate one's own personal issues and obstacles in one's own practice but rather engages in very deep and beautiful practices one falls into a delusion. I have felt this very strongly in my own growth throughout the years. After attending many summer

retreats at Ligmincha I recall the feelings that emerged when the three weeks of teachings and practices came to an end. I recall many of us recognizing these feelings, dreading them and even joking about them: the fall after the high. During the retreat one inhabits this space of containment that nurtures very deep and significant experiences but when the three weeks come to an end something like a post-retreat syndrome arises when you go out and you face your daily reality. You lose those experiences, you cannot really hold the space of containment and you are once again back into the miseries and sufferings of your normal daily life. The retreat becomes something like an oasis in your own suffering. You are walking in a desert and you reach this beautiful pool of crystal water, you rest there for three weeks and then you are back into your old same old usual desert. But all this is a delusion on how one is engaging with the teachings because the teachings are not embodied in oneself. They are not integrated with one's own suffering or with the challenges that one is facing in one's own daily existence. The beauty in the approach of The 3 Doors is that it allows you the possibility of actually embodying the teachings and understanding, through your own transformations. The three root poisons are not this abstraction that makes sense within a very comprehensive philosophical canon, but are something that is actually inside yourself, alive and playing out and manifesting in multiple manners in your life all the time.

**TWR:** Yes absolutely!

**SVI:** So the way of breaking with this delusion is by integrating the teachings into your daily life by accessing the concrete possibilities that arise while working through your own obstacles.





**TWR:** What the *dharma* and the teachings say when making reference to our afflictions and three root poisons is that they are actually happening at every single moment: in the way you are viewing the world, in the way you are responding and interacting with the world. All of one's own afflictions are right there, producing deeply rooted challenges, deeply rooted patterns in our relationships with each other and our surroundings. All of it is there! But very often people who practice *dharma* seldom touch the concreteness of their own afflictions. They go to the beautiful pool and when they come back they are as confused as before. They end up finding no relationship between the teachings and their own daily life. There is an immense gap. What The 3 Doors emphasizes is bridging that gap, actualizing that connection.

shadow.

**SVI:** So if you want to embark in the path of discovering the nature of mind you have to begin with what you have in your own life right now – with your own mud that is right there in front of you at that present moment.

**TWR:** That is the only place. The “I” (pain identity) that has been created by all the shadows, that is the place to begin. But the smart ego can totally dismiss this and do something in parallel for years and years (i.e. working with the teachings without engaging with the shadow). And that is the biggest damage that the smart ego can make.

**SVI:** And this is the biggest delusion one can fall into when in the *dharma*.



**SVI:** Would you say that embodying the teachings and truly understanding the nature of mind begins with the transformations in your daily life? In other words, if you do not work with your shadow systematically – using tools like the ones proposed by The 3 Doors for example, it is quite impossible to embody the teachings and understand the nature of mind.

**TWR:** Absolutely! There is no doubt of this. That is why so many people who are practicing for so many years, even if they have higher and higher positions within any social structure (religious or otherwise), and are very knowledgeable and have read a lot, attended more retreats and do more practices, do not necessarily embody change and transformation. These qualifications do not necessarily mean that they have a clue about the nature of mind. There is no way to understand the nature of mind unless you work and overcome your own

**TWR:** Right.

**SVI:** So following the metaphor of the pool of water, integrating the teachings by embodying them in your daily life would be to discover that the oasis is always present because one has acquired, through one's own work with the shadow, the ability to hold the space and allow for the concrete transformation and liberation of one's afflictions.

**TWR:** Yes, and that the oasis is present everywhere, even within the shadow. It is in the shadow that you discover the pool and if you opt not to look at it you won't see it. My concern is that there are people who follow me, who follow the *dharma* that do not see any value in The 3 Doors. It is important for this people to hear what I am saying here. The 3 Doors is good for you as well as for others who do not follow the *dharma*



and you should be open enough to understand this. The ways teachings are taught traditionally and in The 3 Doors are complementary to one another; one is not the replacement of the other.

**SVI:** Would you say that they are not only complementary but actually the methods proposed by The 3 Doors in working through one's own afflictions are actually the starting point to engage with the teachings?

**TWR:** Yes. If you do not understand it that way there is no genuine way of entering into the *dharma*. A true way of entering into the *dharma* would be through methods like The 3 Doors.

**SVI:** So the key message here is highlighting the importance of The 3 Doors, in particular emphasizing that if you do not touch anything of your shadow there is no way you can actually understand and come to realizations of what the teachings are all about.

**TWR:** That's what I have been saying for years.

**SVI:** When one doesn't engage with the shadow the teachings become experiences that are not embodied in yourself, or when you embodied them you do so when you have unique circumstances – as in a retreat – and in such cases they cannot be sustained or accessed in your daily life.

**TWR:** Yes, I have been emphasizing this all the time. Many people who have a deep knowledge of the teachings have a hard time hearing this. They are somehow closed to it despite the fact that all the texts have specific lines emphasizing this approach.

**SVI:** Rinpoche, I would like to ask you a couple of questions at this point that might provide an interesting backdrop to our discussion. What triggered you to create The 3 Doors?

**TWR:** My main motivating factor was seeing the benefits of the teachings in bringing direct transformations to the lives of many, regardless of their background, age, or culture, and regardless of how familiar they are with the texts and the tradition. We want to bring the *Nine Breathings of Purification* and meditation to elementary schools as we have been doing in Chile. We have been doing so in prisons for the last fifteen years in Virginia, and also with patients at a cancer center in Houston. We want to bring these teachings to people in many places and allow them to benefit. These teachings are not only for declared Buddhist. They are for all sentient beings. I am not advocating that we disregard tradition. The whole purpose of Ligmincha and Lishu Institute (4) is this emphasis on tradition, and I have dedicated enormous energy toward these two projects as well.

**SVI:** This leads me to the second question. In the West, we picture monastic traditions of Tibet as a system in which persons are taught from a very young age and in a very strict manner the canon, dialectics, debate and the array of meditation techniques. Within these settings, how are the emotions dealt with? How did you, being a monk from a very young age in the monastery, cope with your own afflictions and emotions?

**TWR:** I think the interesting part is not that in the monastery we were not taught how to deal with afflictions and emotions. We were taught in a very sophisticated and detailed manner, but many times this became intellectual and not personal. It



is very different to say: *When anger arises, do this*, than to say: *Are you getting angry at me now? Then, do this*. That is not the emphasis in the monastery. If you messed up and did something wrong, you were punished. In the monastery there is no emotional support system. So emotions and afflictions became intellectualized.

**SVI:** And intellectualizing leads to delusion, having the knowledge but not embodying it.

**TWR:** Exactly. So my own anger is the most important thing for me, because if I have any realization of my anger, I have chances of success, and not because I have incredible knowledge of anger and how it works. When you become a *geshe* (5) within the system, while you have very sophisticated knowledge about afflictions and emotions – all categories and subtleties – still you can be a very angry person with no understanding of how your own afflictions work and manifest. Without this personal understanding, there is no possibility you can gain any realization. Not acknowledging your personal emotions is a challenge in Eastern traditions.

**SVI:** I think we are getting closer to the core of the treasure that is The 3 Doors. You are connecting an immensely rich tradition of practices and an understanding of the human mind with the acknowledgment of your own emotions that is more available in the Western mindset.

**TWR:** Yes! I feel that the system that is embedded in the teachings is incredibly powerful if you apply it in yourself. I believe the experiences that all of you in The 3 Doors have had – the deep inner transformations that you have come to realize – are not accessible to that many people. When lamas come with me to my teachings they are amazed because they see how deeply the teachings touch people. They see how easily people can connect and relate to the teachings. They are amazed because the teachings become something personal, something that people can use in their daily life as tools to work through their own afflictions. The question here is: How can we communicate what we are discussing here in a way that people will relate to?

**SVI:** The greatest thing about The 3 Doors is that you are integrating an 18.000 year old tradition with its technology for inner development with our own present condition of imperfections, obstacles, lack of clarity, and delusion – in short, our painful, afflictive shadow. It is in this union where one begins real work. This is the opportunity to truly understand, in a non-intellectual heart-connected manner, what the teachings are, and have a direct experience of how they open you up. This is the path towards understanding our own true nature.

**TWR:** Sure. And I think it is good to talk about these things because we need to communicate



Graduates from the European 3 Doors Academy with the teachers Raven Lee and John Jackson.







this in a way that is understandable to anyone. It is not a question of what approach is more important, the traditional approach or The 3 Doors approach. What is important is who you are at the present moment and what is beneficial for you.

**SVI:** So, here you are also saying that if you are on the path and you don't do The 3 Doors Academy that is fine, but if you do not engage in working with your shadow while you are on the path you won't go anywhere.

**TWR:** Exactly. That's all I have been saying all these years in every teaching. This systematic way of working with your own personal obstacles and afflictions is not as common in Buddhism, as it is for example, in therapy. The structure that facilitates working with one's own emotions is often lacking in the *dharmā*, and that gap is what I have been trying to bridge.

**SVI:** Throughout the years, all your teachings and your recent books have emphasized the importance of accessing one's own true nature by connecting to one's inner refuge. Can you explain what inner refuge means?

**TWR:** The inner refuge is the three bodies or *kayas* – the *dharmakaya*, *sambhogakaya*, and *nir-*

*manakaya*. The three *kayas* – or inner refuge – refer to the enlightened state, an illuminated consciousness, our own true being. Now the process of accessing the inner refuge can be dual or non-dual. At the beginning, there is somebody who is taking refuge and somebody who is giving refuge, so there is a sense of duality there. For beginners, taking inner refuge is a dual process, where inner refuge conveys the sense of seeking help when one is suffering, when one is lost, when one is in pain, when one feels helpless and without a direction forward. So this process is similar to that of a shaman who encounters the sacred mountain or the Great Spirit, or when a Christian devotee, after years of practice, has a vision of Christ, or when a Buddhist monk after praying and meditating, finally sees the Buddha while in practice. Imagine how much joy, trust, openness, inspiration, and devotion that person will feel! When one finds that inner sacred space, one experiences those feelings. The *dharmakaya* is the unbounded sacred space of one's being. The *sambhogakaya* is one's infinite awareness. The *nirmanakaya* is a sense of genuine warmth, or you can just say finding one's self. When you are fully in inner refuge you are it. This is when taking refuge becomes a non-dual process. You connect with it, you are it. When you're not fully able to be in that non-conditional space and awareness and experience



the warmth, you long for it. Approaching the inner refuge by praying is a more conventional sense of taking refuge.

**SVI:** Here you mention two different things: one is that in our deluded state, in our normal way of living and experiencing the world embedded in our own suffering, there is duality because we are trying, from this ordinary space, to connect with the source of all manifestation...

**TWR:** When people are lost in suffering and in pain, duality arises. In those challenging moments, duality arises because one has lost the connection with the inner refuge and its three qualities. Reconnecting to inner refuge means the closer you are to it the more protected you are. Even the idea that there is something inside that one can access already creates a sense of protection. When one has full realization of inner refuge, that is, when one **becomes** inner refuge, that is when one is fully protected.

**SVI:** So it's all about connecting. Being refuge is connecting with your true self, which is the same as the source of all manifestation. Correct?

**TWR:** Yes. And inner refuge is not only the source of yourself, but of all the qualities that you need in life.

**SVI:** So it's the source of all the potential and all the perfection.

**TWR:** Yes.

**SVI:** Rinpoche, how do you respond to those who react to this and say: *Well that all sounds good but isn't this escaping your reality or dissociating from your own miseries....*

**TWR:** It is not dissociating from reality, because one's ordinary existence is already dissociated

from reality. The reason one is lost, suffering, and in pain is the outcome of dissociation, the outcome of disconnection. So when you seek inner refuge you are not dissociating but rather reconnecting. When you are in deep pain you are already fully dissociated – there is nothing more to dissociate. So when people say that seeking inner refuge is dissociating, this is the mistake of a vision based on duality. This is a wrong view. Suffering begins with dissociation and the reality you perceive while suffering is not ultimate reality. So in such cases a person is associating reality with the hardship, the challenges, and the suffering, not with the source of perfection and enlightened qualities.



**SVI:** So the bottom line is that our daily existence is determined fundamentally by our own disconnection, and inner refuge is actually reconnecting with our source.

**TWR:** Not only are we disconnected from our source, but from who we are! When people speak about dissociation and meditation, they are asking if they are dissociating from the ordinary challenges of life. The key thing to realize is that one has **already** dissociated from one's true self and those appearances, those challenges in our life, are the outcome of that dissociation.

So identifying yourself with those appearances is dissociating from your true self.

**SVI:** This discussion leads very nicely to the issue of hosting. In all your teachings you are emphasizing two pillars: one is taking refuge, which you described, and the other is hosting – the method that allows transformation of the pain in one's life, which leads to realization of what your own true nature is. Can you explain what hosting is?

**TWR:** Many times when physical, psychological, and emotional challenges and pain arise in our life we fight against them. We dislike them, we try to suppress them, we try to change the story, we try





to do all sorts of things that in the end disconnect us from them. Instead of being aware of our multiple disconnections, we try to disengage from them. Hosting is two things. One is that you are lost when you are in full-blown pain so when you are hosting your experience you try to feel that there is something else besides the pain. There is a space where pain exists that is bigger than the pain itself. There is a mind that is experiencing the pain from a place much bigger than pain itself. So when you are hosting you have some access to that boundless space, infinite awareness, genuine warmth, and you are having a moment of freedom from that pain, a moment of break from that pain. Second, when you have that space and awareness you are able to experience that pain in that unbounded space, the space which cannot be affected or obscured by that pain. So our awareness of that space is so big that it is able to process the pain easily. That is the magic!

**SVI:** Can we say that hosting is reconnecting to your suffering but from a different space within that allows for the liberation of that suffering?

**TWR:** So another way of looking at hosting is that if we take pain as an object, the subject – the one who is ordinarily attached to the pain – is worse than the pain itself. That is what we don't realize. If you take a break from the ego, pain is not as bad as it looks. The worst pain is the one created by the mind by holding onto that relationship. For example, when you have a painful relationship, it is you who is producing the pain. But you think it is the person you are having a relationship with who is producing the pain. Actually, the other person is causing something that helps you manifest hidden pains and blockages that you have in you and in your life. So it is helpful if you are able to host somebody when you are in a relationship in

the same way you host your pain and have a good relationship with it. It's not about getting rid of pain.

**SVI:** Rinpoche, when we talk about hosting, we talk mostly about negative emotions. It seems to me that when you have an incredible good and joyful feeling you can also lose yourself there.

**TWR:** Yes, absolutely. We talk about pain more because pain bothers us more than pleasurable experiences. We can live with joyful experiences, but painful ones exert an extraordinary power over our lives, so we emphasize hosting pain more than we do pleasure. People who can hold beautiful experiences for a long time or for the rest of their life are those who can host them well. People who do not have lasting relationships, lasting joy, or lasting wisdom do not because they do not host them well. When pleasure arises they might have a moment of joy and connection, but at that very moment, instead of hosting, they grasp. You host in the space. The grasping mind cannot host because it loses the space.

**SVI:** So essentially, the completeness of one's own journey or path is to live connected to the refuge while at the same time hosting everything in one's life.

**TWR:** Yes, absolutely. But probably first one should host negative emotions, then neutral ones, and then positive ones.

**SVI:** Once you realize the power of the refuge by hosting your own negative emotions, your own shadow, and seeing in your life the amazing transformations that can manifest from that space, then you can have more confidence to be able to host neutral and positive emotions and experi-





ences.

**TWR:** Then also you realize that when you are experiencing something beautiful, grasping is not the solution but the problem. A beautiful experience is deeper and richer when there is no grasping. Many times what happens in our life is that we grasp in order to have, but by grasping we lose the very experience we want to have.

**SVI:** Once you start grasping you're out of the refuge. You're gone again.

**TWR:** Yes.

**SVI:** Thank you Rinpoche! I think this interview summarizes in a very nice manner your thinking and your heart advice to all of us.

#### Notes

(1) *Sangha* is the community of practitioners.

(2) *Dharma* refers to the collection of all the teachings within a Buddhist tradition.

(3) *The 3 Doors Academy* requires participants to commitment in the completion of sixty-three transformations over a period of two-and-half years in three areas of their life: relationship to one's self, relationships with others, and professional life and/or participation in society as paths to work through personal obstacles and afflictions. For more information visit:

[www.the3doors.org](http://www.the3doors.org).

(4) *Lishu Institute* was founded by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in Dehra Dun, North India, as a place that offers access to Western practitioners to a structured, long-term study of the Bon tradition in a non-monastic setting. For more information visit: [www.lishu.org](http://www.lishu.org).

(5) *Geshe* is a Tibetan Buddhist academic degree conferred to monks and nuns who have successfully completed a rigorous training in philosophy and dialectics based on the major texts of the canon.

**Interview by Santiago Villaveces Izquierdo**

**Edited by Marcy Vaughn**



# CONNECTING TO YOUR INNER SOURCE OF CREATIVITY

## An Invitation from The 3 Doors

June 6-12, 2016, near Florence, Italy

All are welcome to [Connecting to Your Inner Source of Creativity](#), a residential retreat taught by Senior Teachers Raven Lee and John Jackson from The 3 Doors and held at La Chiara di Prumiano, a lovely 17th century villa in the hills of Tuscany, Italy. Our time will be spent in a carefully planned mix of teaching and guided meditation with periods of silence, small group work, writing and other creative exercises.

Within each of us is an infinite source of creativity that allows our work and service, relationships with others, and personal confidence to flourish. In this retreat we will uncover the blocks and obstacles in our way and tap into the wellspring of creative expression within. As a result, we may manifest and enjoy a fuller, richer life and benefit others.

[Read more and register >](#)



La Chiara di Prumiano.





# NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR THE 3 DOORS ACADEMY



THE  
3 DOORS

TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH MEDITATION

## Programs Begin in the United States and Europe in Fall 2016

*"For me The 3 Doors Academy is very important because it is a means to include people who otherwise would not have access to the teachings simply because Buddhism or Yungdrung Bon are of no appeal to them. And I wanted to offer this opportunity within a strong system of support and commitment . . . I am encouraging all my students to follow the approaches of both Ligmincha and The 3 Doors."*

– Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche –

The 3 Doors has good news to share: applications are being accepted for two new academies to begin in United States and Europe this year.

You may [apply to the US Academy](#), taught by Marcy Vaughn and Gabriel Rocco, which begins on September 21, 2016 at Serenity Ridge Retreat Center in Shipman, Virginia or [to the European Academy](#), taught by John Jackson and Raven Lee which begins November 6, 2016 near Dusseldorf, Germany.

[The 3 Doors](#) is a contemplative secular organization formed in 2011 by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, founder and spiritual director of Ligmincha International. The meditation practices are simple, accessible, and powerful.



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

In the words of Academy graduate Renee Daily, *"Gathering with others who are similarly committed to self-reflection and personal transformation, and witnessing and sharing the journey together, is a unique and remarkably rich experience. As a graduate of the first US Academy, my participation was life-changing. My own growth and the deepening of my personal practice were so supported by the experience that I am currently attending the 3rd US Academy to continue this beautiful process of personal transformation. The commitment required in the program is challenging, yet the rewards are beyond measure."*



The 3 Doors Academy Director of Operations and the Senior Teachers.





# Lishu Institute



## Second Year Programme Lishu Institute (India) September 2016 – June 2017 Mother Tantra (Ma Gyud)

Mother Tantra is one of the major tantric cycles in the Bon tradition. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche has taught this cycle over the past 20 years. During the second year of the 3 years programme at Lishu Institute, the Mother Tantra teachings will be given. This is a great opportunity to learn and deepen your practice within an intensive residential year study.

1. 1st trimester (September 12th 2016 – November 18th 2016): Tummo and Dream Yoga
2. 2nd trimester (January 9th 2017 – March 17th 2017): Nyen Sa Lam Khyer (including Chod) and Phen Pa Lam Khyer (including Phowa)
3. 3rd trimester (April 3rd 2017 – June 9th 2017): Sleep yoga and Bardo Lam Khyer

*For any question, please contact: [director@lishu.org](mailto:director@lishu.org)*





# Initiation of Sherab Jamma



To enter the teaching of higher vehicles, Tsok offerings will be performed and initiation will be bestowed. Initiation formally gives us the permission to enter the tantra teachings.

The Sherab Jamma and the Gekhod initiations will be given at Lishu by His Eminence Menri Ponlob Trinley Nyima Rinpoche in April/May 2016 (exact date will be published soon on the Lishu website). You can participate to the initiation personally or you can donate any amount to Lishu Institute via:

<http://www.seientityridge.ligmincha.org/donations.html>  
(Donation to Ligmincha International, please specify that your donation is for the Initiation in Lishu Institute)



[www.lishu.org](http://www.lishu.org)



# APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED FOR SECOND YEAR PROGRAM AT LISHU INSTITUTE

Lishu Institute near Dehradun, India, will begin the second year of its three-year residential program in Tibetan Bon Buddhism on September 12, 2016. The year will focus on the *Ma Gyud* teachings, one of the major tantric cycles in the Bon tradition. All are welcome to apply for the second year of teachings. Vickie Walter interviewed Sangmo Yangri, Lishu teacher and administrator, for an update about this year's program and plans for the second year.

**Sangmo, can you tell us briefly about your connection to Bon and to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche?**

I grew up near the Menri monastery in Dolanji, India, and my father was a close friend of His Eminence Yongdzin Rinpoche, so since early childhood I have been immersed in the Bon tradition and culture. The same way, I have known Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche since childhood. Later I studied and got my Ph.D. at the University of Varanasi in Bon and Buddhist Philosophy. [She is the first Tibetan woman to receive this Ph.D.]

Tenzin Rinpoche connected me to Lishu the first time in 2008, and in 2011, during the second gathering at Lishu, he introduced me to the participants (about one hundred people) as a future teacher at Lishu. Then he asked to join Lishu after the completion of my Ph.D. in 2013.

**What have you been doing since you arrived at Lishu?**

I have been teaching at Lishu since spring 2015, where I taught a six-week intensive Tibetan language course. When the three-year program started in September, I was in charge of all the teachings during the first trimester; namely the first and second *sutric* vehicles of the *Nine Ways of Bon*, the first three chapters of the Hagiography of Buddha Tonpa Shenrab, Tibetan language and Bon prayers. During this second trimester, in addition to the lectures (hagiography, Tibetan language), I translate the teachings of Geshe Sherab Lodoe, who joined us from Menri Monastery to teach the third and fourth *sutric* vehicles. I also am a liaison with Menri and nearby monasteries and a member of the Lishu management, which includes participating in the examination and selection of applicants.



Sangmo Yangri teaches a class of Lishu students.







Students with Geshe Sherab Lodoe and Sangmo Yangri in the meditation hall at Lishu Institute.

### Can you please introduce us to the plan for the second year of the program?

*Ma Gyud Sangye Gyud Sum* is a teaching coming directly from Dharmakaya Kuntu Zangpo, the primordial Buddha. The second year, which starts September 12, addresses the six great methods of the *Path of the Ma Gyud* cycle:

**First trimester** (September 12 – November 18, 2016): *Tummo* and *Dream Yoga*.

**Second trimester** (January 9 – March 17, 2017): *Nyen Sa Lam Khyer* (related to *Chod* practice) and *Phen Pa Lam Khyer* (related to *Phowa* practice).

**Third trimester** (April 3 – June 9, 2017): *Sleep Yoga* and *Bardo Lam Khyer*.

In addition, we will continue the hagiography of Buddha Tonpa Sherab and the Tibetan language. The year will have a strong emphasis on practice. Geshe Sherab Lodoe will teach the *Ma Gyud*. I will teach Hagiography and Tibetan Language, and will translate Geshe-la's teachings.

### What other staff are there at Lishu?

Geshe Thupten Negi is the president of Lishu and takes care of the general administration. We also have a cook and someone to clean the common areas. His Eminence Ponlop Trinley Nyima Rinpoche came during the first trimester to give a

teaching on Sherap Chamma and will come again, probably this fall, to give the empowerment. We will invite teachers from Menri Monastery to come to Lishu and teach on specific topics, as needed.

### What does a typical day at Lishu look like?

During the second trimester this year, the day begins at 7 a.m. with *tsa lung* (Tibetan yoga) and meditation practice, followed by Sherap Chamma and Yeshe Walmo prayers. We have breakfast at 8 a.m. Classes are held from 9 a.m. to noon, with teachings on the greater vehicles of the *Nine Ways* and the hagiography of Tonpa Shenrab. Following lunch and a short break, Tibetan language classes are held in the afternoons – grammar and reading on Monday and Tuesday, Bon prayers on Wednesday and Thursday, and Tibetan speaking class on Friday. Mealtimes and tea breaks are opportunities to share and discuss. The students have free time on weekends and can use this time to relax and/or to study and practice. Lishu is located in a quiet area in the countryside, with a small village within walking distance, but it is possible to go to Dehradun or other nearby cities like Rishikesh.

**Are there visitors to Lishu, and do students visit other places?**



We have regular visits of monks from Menri and Za Mongyal Monasteries. We've had other visitors for short periods, including two journalists from a Buddhist magazine from Delhi. We had the great fortune to host Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche last September. Then the Lishu sangha went with Rinpoche to Menri Monastery. The young Tulku Pondse Jigme Tenzin (Jorge Rene Valles Sandoval) was among the students. When we were at Menri, one 87-year-old man, who was the disciple of his previous incarnation (the great Bon master Lopon Sangye Tenzin), was very eager to meet the young Tulku and pay respect to him by offering the traditional *khata*. It was very moving for all the students to see the devotion radiating from this man.



Tulku Pondse Jigme Tenzin with a disciple.

The students have visited Menri Monastery and Za Mongyal Monasteries (both Bon) and also other monasteries such as Mindrolling (a Nyingma monastery nearby Dehradun) and the Sakya monastery.

### **Can anyone apply for the second year of study, whether or not they attended any of the first year program?**

The whole three-year program is designed in a modular and flexible way. Therefore, it is not mandatory to attend the first year to be able to

apply for the second year. Although there will be a strong emphasis on the practice from the second year onward, Tibetan language will continue to be part of the program. The students who have been attending the teachings in Lishu so far have very different backgrounds. Some have followed Bon and/or teachings for decades, some are pretty new. So we have already had to adapt to different levels. The *Ma Gyud* cycle in the second year and the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* in the third year are pretty independent.

### **What type of applicants are you looking for?**

We are looking for motivated and determined people to study and practice. New students should have the will to adapt to a new environment. One important requirement is to speak English fluently. Other than that, the admission committee will address each application individually. We invite people who would like to apply to contact us and ask any question they might have.

### **How do you see the Lishu environment as being beneficial for learning and practice?**

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's vision for Lishu was a place where Westerners could dedicate themselves to long-term study. It's now embodied, and it is really meant to foster in-depth study and practice. Lishu is located in a quiet area, so the facilities enable the students to concentrate on their study and practice. Furthermore, they have closer connection to the Bon tradition by interacting with Bon monasteries.

This is still the first year for the program at Lishu, so many things still need to be built up. For example, we have a project to establish a library, and to improve and develop the *gompa*. In addition, we need some basic materials such as a printer/copy machine, generator . . . so any support is most welcome! Donations can be made to Lishu through the Ligmincha International donations page [serenityridge.ligmincha.org/donations](http://serenityridge.ligmincha.org/donations); please specify donation for "Lishu." To donate equipment please email [director@lishu.org](mailto:director@lishu.org).

Learn more about the second year program of Lishu [www.lishu.org](http://www.lishu.org).

Apply for the second year program [www.lishu.org](http://www.lishu.org).

**Interview by Vickie Walter**



# I DON'T NEED TO HAVE AN IDENTITY

**To introduce Ligmincha Northwest, Ton Bisscheroux talked with Carel Camerer. Another surprising and interesting story from a sangha, in the United States of America.**

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

I met Rinpoche about fourteen years ago. It seemed like a big coincidence as several things came together, when my wife Lynn and I decided to go to Serenity Ridge in Charlottesville, Virginia. A retreat with a Buddhist teacher we had planned to attend was cancelled because he was ill. Then we decided to go on a retreat with a Buddhist nun. But when we talked with our friends who organized it, they said, *"We are sorry, you did not sign up, and we are full."* Because we wanted to go to a retreat we looked in a magazine called *Sangha News*. It turned out that all these teachings were offered by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and we later learned the magazine was written by a student of Rinpoche. We had been reading his book *Healing with Form, Energy and Light*, which we got from the Buddhist teacher who was sick.

It was also an opportunity to visit Charlottesville. My wife Lynn had a vision years before about a community, called Synchronicity Foundation. It was in Charlottesville and was being centered around deprivation zones and A-frames that were being built on five hundred acres of land. She had also read about this project in *Discovery Magazine*, so we decided to go and check both places.

We went to Rinpoche's teaching at Serenity Ridge and the amazing thing was that the place that Lynn had the vision about was across on the opposite side of the highway from Serenity Ridge. During the retreat we went to visit Synchronicity Foundation. It was so entirely different from what we just had done, it felt completely ungrounded. They were playing music in the woods with speakers attached to the trees. In the buildings they had big speakers for music and colored lights that they meditated with.

When we went back to Rinpoche's teachings, he was talking about sounds, lights, and rays, from



Carel Camerer and Lynn Damiano at Serenity Ridge.

the inside, not from the outside. That was so funny. It was quite an experience to have this first teaching with him. And I felt I was truly home.

Before meeting Rinpoche I had studied with a Gelugpa teacher the Medicine Buddha practice. We had a Medicine Buddha Healing Group which offered a monthly healing in the community. The Gelugpa teachings were very academic, which made it harder to feel the warmth and connection to the heart. Lynn was more an intellect than myself, so I was straining my brains for years trying to keep up. I am sure it was good for me; it gave me a really strong foundation in Buddhism. I am grateful for all of it, and I am so happy that I met Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, because I don't know how my life would be otherwise. I have made huge changes.

**Can you tell about some of these changes in your life?**

One of the biggest changes is having integrated practice into life, and having a view that includes everything, like more flexibility and more space. Recognizing how much that space supports everything and offers so much stability as well as flexibility in my life. It's like the ego gets to take a vacation from running my life. There is more spontaneity.

**Did it affect your work, your relationship with your wife?**

What I see now is that it affected my ability to create more, from a more spontaneous enlightened place. Everything feels more integrated in my life.





In the past I have been a creative person, however often it seemed more that the creativity was just happening and not blossoming fully. Now it feels there is more ability for it to rise on a greater level, and flows out without a needing to plan for it to happen. I am using some of it with my work as a psychotherapist with clients. And as a result, I find the client population I am working with consists of more artists, writers and musicians. That's being a lot of fun!

Another example is when Lynn was sick – she had cancer – the caring for her when she was on hospice became my life. There was no hesitation, instead there was a sense of confidence. There was a kind of ease going into that. Although I am not a nurse, I was doing the things that nurses do, and was open for everything that was there. Lynn and I have both been psychotherapists and Buddhist and Bon practitioners for many years. We were together for twenty-three years.

#### **Since when has Rinpoche been coming to the Washington?**

He has been coming to Olympia about once a year. This past January was his seventh visit.

#### **Why do you call your sangha Ligmincha Northwest?**

Because people who have been involved in our sangha have moved out in different directions from Olympia, to Portland, Montana, Idaho. A

number of long-time students of Rinpoche's also live north of Seattle, some in Canada or south of Portland. These places are all considered the Northwest. They are all part of our sangha and we are all connected. So it felt best to call sangha Ligmincha Northwest instead than Ligmincha Olympia or Ligmincha Washington. Portland is about two hours south of Olympia, and Seattle is about one hour north.

#### **How far is it from Olympia to Washington?**

We live in the state of Washington, and Washington DC is on the East coast; that is a six hour flight from here. Washington DC is closer to Virginia, and Serenity Ridge is only a few hours from Washington DC. And since Rinpoche lives now in California, he is much closer to this Washington. I am more aware of his presence here; I feel more connection and in tune with the teachings he is doing. Since Lynn has passed, every time it felt like when he presents something it is like the perfect thing that I need. I know everybody thinks that, but now I am saying it. The first time I went to a seminar in France, I had the feeling Rinpoche was talking to me personally. With the free live webcasts of the Soul Retrieval I thought, this is exactly what I need. How could this be any better?

#### **Can you tell about collaboration with other sanghas?**

In some ways there is a little bit of collaboration



with the California sangha, in terms of passing on information about teachings that are going to be happening in either place. And also on special days, like Losar or internet teachings we all do something similar.

### **Can you tell about the sangha?**

It is interesting to live at the base of the Puget Sound [an inlet of the Pacific Ocean], it is very watery here, there is not a lot of solidity. This influences everything and results in a lot of movement, and change. Now we have a core group of five or six members in the sangha. Sometimes there are ten people. It seems to vary a lot. Olympia is not a large city and there are so many different events happening here. Many people are searching; they still need to find out who their teacher is, or develop the trust they need to have to be able to have a regular practice, and we give them a chance. Sometimes it is hard that we don't have a teacher here. Every month a sangha newsletter is emailed to the Northwest sangha, I host the webcast, and on Monday evenings we have a meeting for practice.

When Lynn passed, a lot changed here, because she was the *umdze* and I supported her. It was great to have a team of the two of us. Lynn had such humor, and a very magnetic personality, and I am lower key, more grounded. We have a very informal structure. I am the main organizer and coordinator, and people from the sangha help with all kinds of things. This year Rinpoche came

to teach in Oregon, and it was an interesting challenge for me to coordinate things from here with people over there. It is always a possibility to learn something new, how *dharma* translates into interacting in the world.

### **Did you participate in The 3 Doors Academy?**

I was in the first US Academy that began in 2011. Lynn and I were in The 3 Doors Academy together when she got sick and died. It was amazing; the level of support of that was offered by this small community of people who were all doing their deepest transformational work we could be doing. And that was the deepest transformation that could be happening in our lives. I was glad to be in The 3 Doors. I was not ready to let Lynn go, she was not ready to go, but it was time. And the level of support was tremendous, also from Rinpoche. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche called every week from wherever he was, to do practices with Lynn.

### **Do you want to tell more about the dying process of Lynn?**

Chaphur Rinpoche from Gyalshen Institute came for five days and did the *Phowa* with Lynn and helped her to transfer her consciousness. Yong-Dong Rinpoche, who lives on Vancouver Island, came here and did a ceremony after she had passed, blessed her body before she was cremated. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche invited me as his guest to a teaching in France. Lynn's cousin also lives in Paris, so I stayed there three weeks and went to the teaching. It was a huge process.



Teachings in 2016 with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in Olympia, WA.





Most of the women on this photo were in sangha during Lynn's final journey. We had such tremendous support from our sangha and the larger Olympia community. We were so blessed and felt so grateful to have so much love from so many people in our lives. Everyone helped on every level possible.

**Do you experience a difference in The 3 Doors teachings and the Bon teachings?**

I think in terms of how the 3 Doors and the original Bon teachings integrate is that, in The 3 Doors a lot of Dzogchen is involved in it. And the way Rinpoche is teaching now is a continuation, deepening and enriching the practices and the processes I was going through that I was doing in The 3 Doors Academy. Either he has simplified it even more in a way that it allows things to dissolve more quickly or my practice is deepening . . . maybe some of each.

**Do you want to tell more about your experiences in The 3 Doors Academy?**

The 3 Doors program resolving anything that had roots from long ago, those things have shifted in a way where nothing seems to take root that much. In a way that I don't have the same identity anymore. Those identities don't exist anymore on the level they once did, so there is less interest in having any identity really. I am amazed that those words came out of my mouth, and I think it is so true. It is like, "What is that about?" and I realize, there is no need for that. And it is so beautiful to recognize that and to know that, on so many levels – not from the ego level but from the heart. When we were going to the first 3 Doors teaching Lynn lost her identity, she lost her driver's license at the airport. [laughter] So then, she was many steps ahead of me. She graduated ahead of the

class. It is liberating to lose your ego identity, because there is no restriction. That speaks to the death process too: there is a liberation happening, letting go of the physical form and the attachments related to it. Lynn showed us how to do it, very gracefully, very beautifully, and that was liberating.

**Did the 3 Doors also affect the way you work as a psychotherapist with your clients?**

Yes, definitely! I use much more meditation in my practice with clients. It is helping them to go deeper in their own work, being able to provide that space, and rest in that space, and offering that space to them, and the discovery of that for them has helped a lot of people in my practice. More people than ever meditate now, and it is not about having them be involved in the sangha, it is more about having them be involved in their own life rather than in reaction to life. It is all about that ability to go in and find the refuge within.

**When I worked as psychotherapist, clients came with questions, and they wanted from me the answer. But most of the times, I did not give a solution or answer. I see that also in Bon tradition, we get help from the teachers in a different way than we expect it.**

Yes and usually it works better than what we think we need. [Laughter]



**Interview by Ton Bisscheroux**

Photos: courtesy of Carel Camerer





# WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN EUROPE

Here is our report from what's been happening in the European sangha. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche gave internet teachings, Geshes and senior teachers were invited by sanghas, and *Losar* was celebrated in Germany and in Poland.



## March 11 – 16:

The retreat *The Healing Practice of Sherap Chamma* with Marcy Vaughn in Pauenhof, Germany was wonderful.

Next year Marcy will be there from April 21 – 26. Everybody is invited to join us to practice the *The Healing Practices of the Peaceful and Wrathful Mothers, Sherap Chamma and Sidpe Gyalmo*.





# Losar Wilga 2016

## 12-14 Luty



**February 12 – 14:**

Geshe Choekhortshang Rinpoche together with his brother Geshe Gyatso performed the *Losar* ceremonies at Chamma Ling Poland in Wilga.







# **February 12 – 14:**

Geshe Khorden Lhundup Gyaltsen performed the *Losar* ceremonies in Buchenau, Germany during the 10th European Practice Weekend.







**January 15 – 17:**

Geshe Choekhortshang Rinpoche taught *bardo* with in Budapest, Hungary. More than one-hundred fifty people attended. You can watch a video with the [Bardo Prayer](#).



**February 6 – 7:**

Geshe Choekhortshang Rinpoche taught *Dream Yoga* in Wroclaw, Poland.







**February 6 – 7 and March 19 – 20:**

Geshe Khorden Lhundup Gyaltsen continued with his cycle of teachings on *A-tri* in the Netherlands in two places. On Saturday in Zwolle and on Sunday in Eindhoven.



**March 16 – 23:**

Geshe Chaphur Rinpoche taught and gave public talks in several cities in Poland.



## Free Live Webcast Guided Meditation for the New Year

From the Experiential Transmission Retreat  
with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

**January 1, 2016 17.00 – 18.00 h (C.E.T.)**

Translations in multiple languages available

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 with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche  
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**Free Live Webcast**  
**Cultivating Wisdom**  
 with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche  
**March 12, 2016, 21.00–22:30 (C.E.T.)**

Register for the webcast at [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)  
 This is Part 2 of a FREE six-month course in service.  
 Learn more at [www.ligminchalearning.com](http://www.ligminchalearning.com)

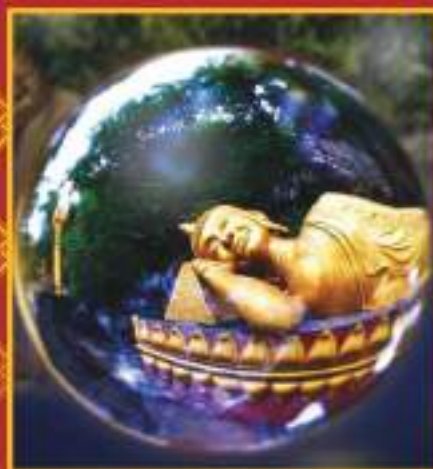


**You can watch the recordings here:**

Transforming Your World Through Service, Part 2: Cultivating Wisdom. [Introductory video \(2:24\)](#) / [Full Playlist](#) / [Closing Video \(9:51\)](#)







# WHAT DO YOUR DREAMS PREDICT?

## DREAM AND DIVINATION IN TIBETAN BON TRADITION GESHE CHOEKHORTSHANG RINPOCHE'S TEACHINGS – 27-29 MAY 2016

Geshe Choekhortshang Rinpoche Bon Buddhist lama accepted the invitation of Ligmincha Hungary again and he will come to introduce us to the ancient methods of divination and prediction from our dreams. In Tibet's ancient Bon tradition the history of divination goes back to thousands of years, and one of its aspects is foretelling the future from dreams. Through this teaching we can learn about those ancient methods that Tibetan Bon masters practice to predict future events based on one's dream. At the teaching Rinpoche will be available to ask him about the meaning of our own dreams.

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

### Program:

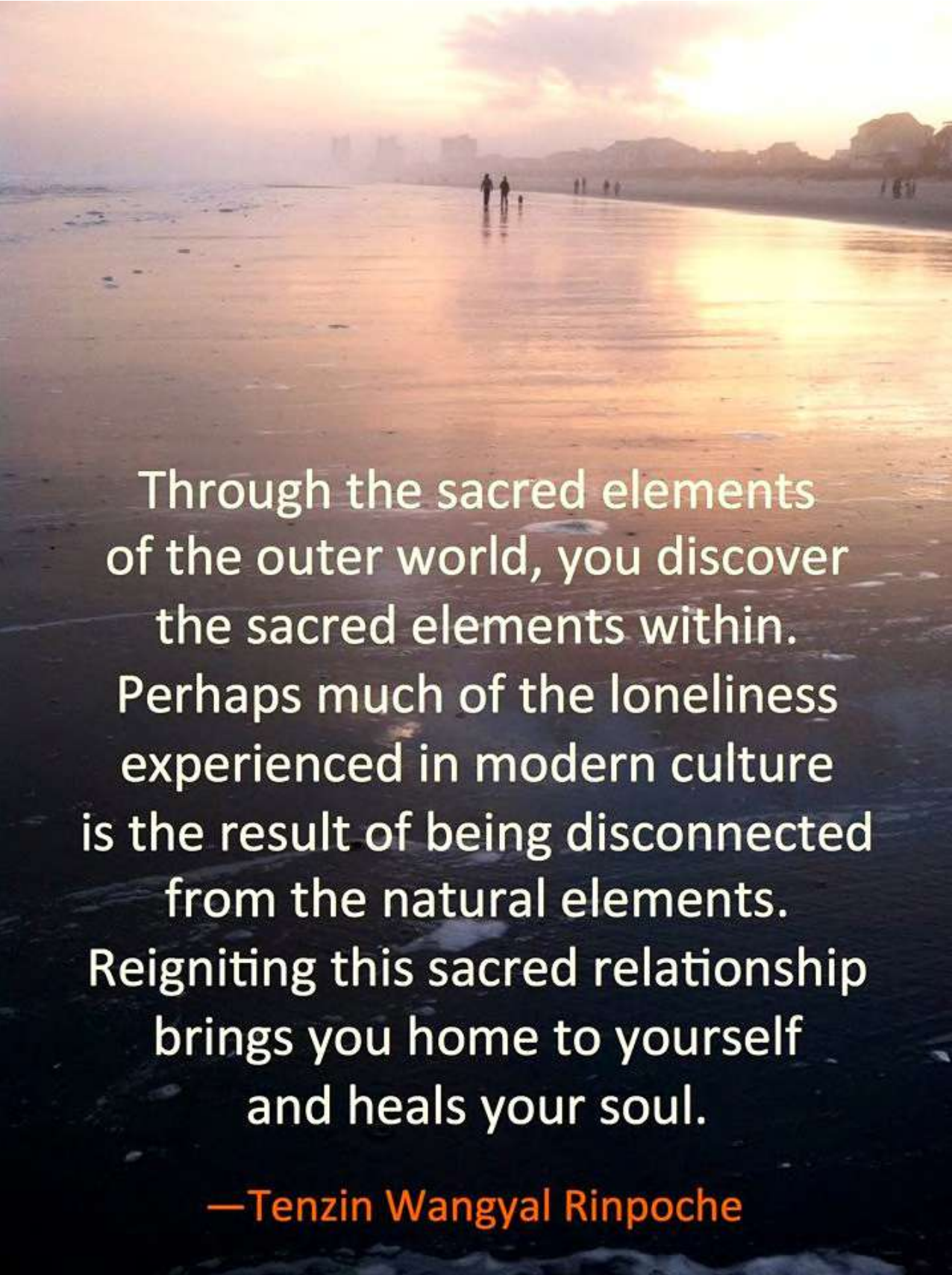
|                            |               |   |
|----------------------------|---------------|---|
| <b>05/27/2016 Friday</b>   | 18:00 – 20:00 | Introduction to dream divination and to the Tibetan Bon tradition |
| <b>05/28/2016 Saturday</b> | 09:00 – 10:30 | Teaching  |
|                            | 10:30 – 11:00 | Break   |
|                            | 11:00 – 12:30 | Teaching  |
|                            | 12:30 – 14:00 | Lunch break   |
|                            | 14:00 – 15:30 | Teaching  |
|                            | 15:30 – 16:00 | Break   |
|                            | 16:00 – 17:30 | Teaching  |
|                            | 17:30 – 18:00 | Questions and answers   |
| <b>05/29/2016 Sunday</b>   | 09:00 – 10:30 | Teaching  |
|                            | 10:30 – 11:00 | Break   |
|                            | 11:00 – 12:30 | Teaching  |
|                            | 12:30 – 14:00 | Lunch break   |
|                            | 14:00 – 15:30 | Teaching, questions and answers                                   |
|                            | 15:30 – 16:00 | Blessing  |

**With prior registration: 40 EUR**

**REGISTRATION:** please send your registration through the registration form on [www.ligmincha.hu](http://www.ligmincha.hu) or by email to [ligmincha.mo@gmail.com](mailto:ligmincha.mo@gmail.com)

**Catering:** vegetarian lunch on Saturday and Sunday at the College (3 EUR/day). Please send your lunch request at registration. Due to the limited capacity of the venue we can only guarantee the participation for confirmed registrants.

## THE SACRED ELEMENTS

A photograph of a beach at sunset. The sky is filled with soft, orange and pink clouds. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a long, bright reflection across the wet sand. In the distance, several people are walking along the shoreline. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

Through the sacred elements  
of the outer world, you discover  
the sacred elements within.  
Perhaps much of the loneliness  
experienced in modern culture  
is the result of being disconnected  
from the natural elements.  
Reigniting this sacred relationship  
brings you home to yourself  
and heals your soul.

—Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche







## ODE TO A FLOWER...

Ultimately sublime tendencies turning the wheel of life  
in an indiscriminately normal way.

Let me always be here now, and then now,  
as you unfold your magical  
10 000 wings of wisdom for a moment,  
before you fade into untold  
memories of glory fired dreams.

I will hum stories with the bees  
of your radiant rainbow bodies  
and your luminous colours and lights.  
Of your masses of joyful ornaments  
and the unspoken words you whisper  
in your divine inexhaustible fragrance.

I will sing songs to the birds and the breeze  
of how you bow silently in the dawn of the great eastern sun,  
and share your mystic cool scents and secrets with the fireflies and moonlight by night.

And in that vast sparkling ocean of immeasurable emptiness,  
we'll shout out to the sun as she inherits the sky for awhile  
as we celebrate the timeless magnificent presence - of you being.

© Sarah Edgchill



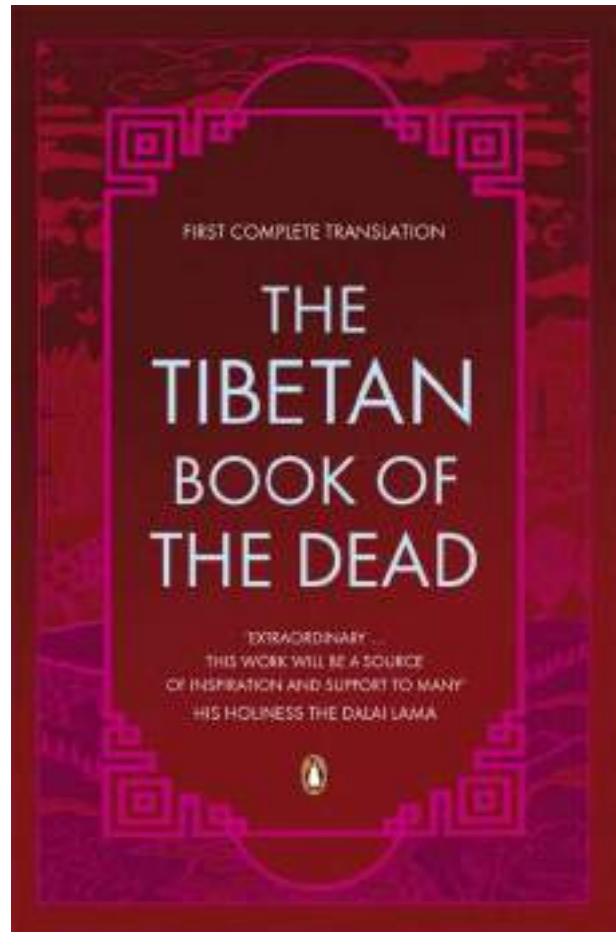


# THE TIBETAN BOOK OF THE DEAD

Many people in the West have read the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, compiled and edited by Walter Y. Evans-Wentz. Although this book has impressed many people, there is also criticism from buddhist scholars. There is now a new and complete translation. Frits de Vries has collected some comments on this matter.

*“The Bardo Thodol Liberation Through Hearing During the Intermediate State,” is a text from a larger corpus of teachings, the Profound Dharma of Self-Liberation through the Intention of the Peaceful and Wrathful Ones, revealed by Karma Lingpa (1326–1386). It is the best-known work of Nyingma literature, known in the West as the Tibetan Book of the Dead.*

*The Tibetan text describes, and is intended to guide one through, the experiences that the consciousness has after death, in the bardo, the interval between death and the next rebirth. The text also includes chapters on the signs of death and rituals to undertake when death is closing in or has taken place.” (1)*



This is the first complete translation of the original twelve chapters of a Tibetan text on which earlier partial translations were based, compiled and edited by Walter Y. Evans-Wentz. Chapter 11 was published in 1927 under the title: *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, and included *Aspirational Prayers* in Chapter 12. Chapter 4 was released in 1954 as a small part (Book II) of *The Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation*, subtitled: *Or the method of realizing nirvāna through knowing the mind*.

In the *Editor's Introduction* to the new English edition the importance of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* is emphasized and it is noted that the book compiled and edited by Walter Y. Evans-Wentz was incomplete:

*“The Tibetan Book of the Dead includes one of the most detailed and compelling descriptions of the after-death state in world literature. It is not surprising therefore that when Chapter 11 of our text, The Great Liberation by Hearing, first appeared in English, in 1927, it caused a considerable stir and*



Manuscript of the *Bardo Thodol*  
Tibetan: བར་དོ་ཐོས་གློམ་, Wylie: *bar do thos grol*

## First complete translation

After seventy-eight years a complete new English version of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* appeared in 2005 edited by Graham Coleman and Thupten Jinpa (2).



*has remained one of the most well-known of Tibet's literary works ever since. In our work, for the first time, we are presenting a complete translation of all twelve chapters of the compilation of texts known as the Tibetan Book of the Dead, which includes nine chapters not translated in W. Y. Evans-Wentz's original publication."* (p. XXIX - Editor's Introduction)

To this new edition is added *A Brief Literary History of the Tibetan Book of the Dead*. The history starts with the 1927 release of a Tibetan book compiled and edited by Walter Y. Evans-Wentz. The disputable title he then chose for his first book still stands for this new edition, but with the following explanation:

*"It is on account of this widespread popular recognition however that the title coined by the editor of the first translation, Evans-Wentz, has been retained in all subsequent translations and related studies. Following in this tradition, we too have retained the title the Tibetan Book of the Dead to refer to the first complete English translation of The Great Liberation by Hearing in the Intermediate States, which includes translations of all twelve chapters of the original compilation."* (p. XXXVIII - Brief Literary History)

As justification for this new edition it seems not only the completeness is stressed, but also the accuracy of the basic text for the new translation. This relates back to the long-running discussion on the precision of the published Tibetan works of Evans-Wentz:

*"As stated above, this is the first complete English translation of The Great Liberation by Hearing in the Intermediate States, otherwise known to the outside world as the Tibetan Book of the Dead, and it is based on a version of the original text which has proven to be far more accurate than those used in previous translations. All the chapters of the anthology standardised by Nyima Drakpa and later published in woodblock form at Dzogchen Monastery are contained in this book."* (p. XLVIII - Brief Literary History)

### Psychological Commentaries by Carl Gustaf Jung

Carl Gustaf Jung played an important role in the acceptance of the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* in the Western world. His famous commentary was

added in the third edition in 1955:

*"For years, ever since it was first published, the Bardo Thödol has been my constant companion, and to it I owe not only many stimulating ideas and discoveries, but also many fundamental insights. Unlike The Egyptian Book of the Dead, which always prompts one to say too much or too little, the Bardo Thödol offers one an intelligible philosophy addressed to human beings rather than to gods or primitive savages. Its philosophy contains the quintessence of Buddhist psychological criticism; and as such, one can truly say that it is of an unexampled superiority."* (3, p. xxxvi)

Jung hoped that his commentary was going "...to make the magnificent world of ideas and the problems contained in this treatise a bit more intelligible to the Western mind." (3, p. xxxvi)



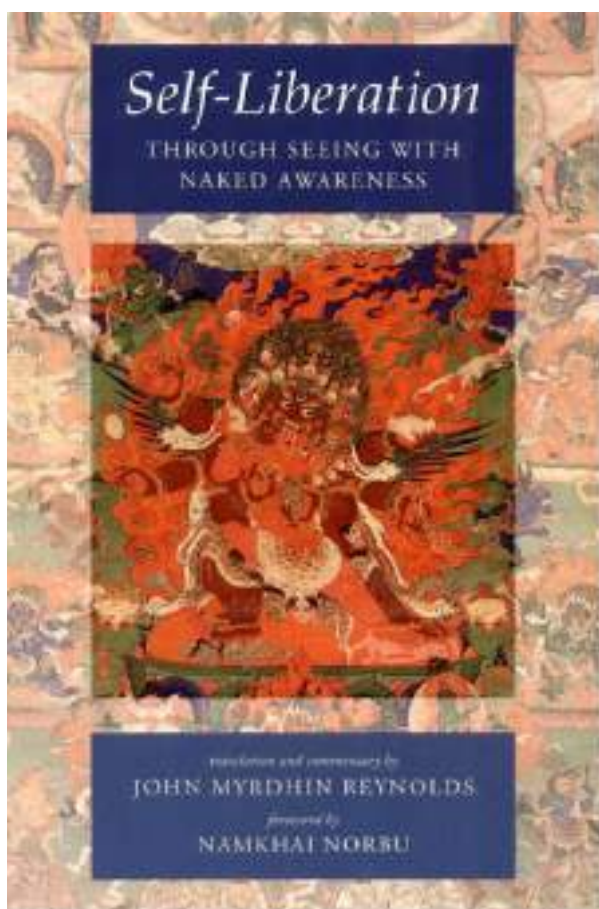
In 1954 the fourth and last text publication edited and compiled by Walter Y. Evans-Wentz was published entitled: *The Tibetan Book of Great Liberation*. Also in this publication appeared an extensive 34-page *Psychological Commentary* by C.G. Jung. This publication received far less attention than his first one, but Jung's commentary was noticed. In this publication, as we have seen above, a small portion was dedicated to a translation of what in the new *Tibetan Book of the Dead* edition is numbered Chapter 4. This Chapter in the new edition is titled: *"The Introduction to Awareness: Natural Liberation through Naked Perception"*. In the *Context* you can read:





*"This chapter is the essence of the esoteric instruction by which the student is introduced to the ultimate nature of mind. Prior to entering into this practice, which focuses directly on the nature of mind itself, this introduction should be received from an accomplished lineage holder. Then, whilst in solitary retreat, it is recommended that this text be read repeatedly as a guide between meditation sessions."* (p. 37 - Context Ch. 4)

The second *Psychological Commentary* that Jung wrote caused considerable stir: John Reynolds expressed his dissatisfaction and that of others by publishing a dedicated critique book in 2000, called: *"Self-Liberation, Through Seeing with Naked Awareness"*.



Reynolds did two things. First, he produced a complete new translation of the contested chapter (now Chapter 4) from the 1954 publication of Evans-Wentz. Secondly, he proved Jung was misled by using the wrong translations from the text of Evans-Wentz and therefore his commentary was based on false assumptions. Jung did not understand what the essence of Dzogchen is.

*"However, Dr. Jung's views, although provocative*

*and stimulating in themselves, have nothing to do with Dzogchen. More than half of Jung's commentary is devoted to his own psychological theories, and throughout the commentary he footnotes his insights to his own writings."* (4, p. 107)

*"All of this leads him to assert erroneously that the essential teaching of Dzogchen is the existence of a metaphysical entity which he calls the "One Mind.""* (4, p. 79)

*"All of these neo-theosophical speculations concerning life-fluxes, globes, rounds, root races, subraces, etc., everything occurring in groups of seven, have nothing to do with genuine Tibetan teachings."* (4, p. 95)

Evans-Wentz was not only criticized because of his weak translations, but also his lack of knowledge of Tibetan Buddhism and his deviant views, incompatible with the meaning of the Tibetan text. Summarized in Wikipedia:

*"According to John Myrdhin Reynolds, Evans-Wentz's edition of the Tibetan Book of the Dead introduced a number of misunderstandings about Dzogchen. Evans-Wentz was well acquainted with Theosophy, and used this framework to interpret the translation of the Tibetan Book of the Dead, which was largely provided by two Tibetan lamas who spoke English, Lama Sumdhon Paul and Lama Lobzang Mingnur Dorje. Evans-Wentz was not familiar with Tibetan Buddhism, and his view of Tibetan Buddhism was "fundamentally neither Tibetan nor Buddhist, but Theosophical and Vedantist." He introduced a terminology into the translation which was largely derived from Hinduism, as well as from his Theosophical beliefs. Also Jung's introduction betrays a misunderstanding of Tibetan Buddhism, using the text to discuss his own theory of the unconsciousness."* (1)

Knowing all this, it is not a surprise we cannot find a trace of the commentaries of Jung in the new complete edition of the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*. In fact Jung commented both Chapter 4 and Chapter 11, a total of more than fifty pages. This most eminent Western psychologist commenting on a most respected Tibetan book disappeared and left only one trace in the *Editor's Introduction*:

*"Carl Jung in his commentary to Evans-Wentz's 1927 edition of the Tibetan Book of the Dead*





*spoke about how compelling he found it to look at The Great Liberation by Hearing backwards. From a psychoanalytical point of view this is indeed interesting, as our text can then be seen as providing a guide for tracing our confused and deluded states, back through our conditioned attraction and aversion to selected aspects of our experience, back through the weave of our habitual tendencies and mental constructs and a relentless series of voluntary or involuntary mental choices, back through the illusory comfort generated by our sense of ego, right back to a pure original cognitive event.” (p. XXXII – Editor’s Introduction)*

Actually, an English translation of the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* needs an introduction from a respected Tibetan Buddhist, not a Western psychologist.



His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama.

### **Introductory Commentary by His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama**

This new edition has a complete new construction. Preceding the English translation of the original twelve chapters of Tibetan script are: an *Editor’s Introduction*, a *Brief Literary History* and an *Introductory Commentary*. Attached to the translations are two Appendices *Peaceful and Wrathful Deities*, extensive *Notes* on every chapter plus an excellent *Glossary of Key Terms*. Directly following some short *Acknowledgements* we find the *Introductory Commentary* by His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama. Without detour he starts in the opening sentence with the crucial question:

*“The question of whether or not there exists a*

*continuity of consciousness after death has been an important aspect of philosophical reflection and debate from ancient Indian times to the present.” (p. XIII - HHDL)*

Following is an extensive answer on fourteen pages to this question based on an explanation of the central concepts of Buddhism, the Highest Yoga Tantra and Dzogchen. While Jung tried to build a bridge, as we have seen, this commentary requires Buddhist study for the layman reader and Dzogchen practitioner alike. Do not expect to get a direct and simple answer to the central question humanity is puzzling about for so long. Elsewhere the writer of the present text, Padmasambhava, gives a straight answer:

*“So-called death is your own thinking. Though you part with the body of flesh and blood, your mind is not something from which you can ever part. Remind yourself of the meaning of your former view and meditation training.” (5)*

The following short characterization of the main parts of the present text reveals the kind of view and meditation training he is talking about:

*“Though generally and rightly classified as a Mahayoga text, the Guhyagarbha Tantra has also been obliquely interpreted from the perspective of Dzogchen, most famously by Longchen Rabjampa (1308-63). The meditative techniques of both Mahayoga and Dzogchen are clearly expressed among the chapters of our present work: the generation stage of meditation is emphasized in Chapters 5-7, and the Great Perfection in Chapters 4 and 11, these latter two chapters being based on the teachings of the two key aspects of the Great Perfection, namely Cutting through Resistance (khregs-chod) and All-surpassing Realisation (thod-rgal) respectively. Thus from the point of view of its theoretical foundation and practice, as well as in its iconography and symbolism, the Tibetan Book of the Dead echoes its roots in the Guhyagarbha Tantra but, in addition, vividly incorporates the classical teachings of Dzogchen.” (p. XXXVIII – A Brief Literary History)*

As Gyurme Dorje describes in *A Brief Literary History*, this cycle of teachings is based on the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*. We concentrate here on the important role Dzogchen plays, the highest of the nine vehicles according to the Nyingma school.





Padmasambhava (Guru Rinpoche).

Dzogchen knows no generation and perfection stages as in the Mahāyoga tantra:

*“Great Perfection is a synonym for Atiyoga, the highest of the nine vehicles according to the Nyingma tradition. Atiyoga is known as the Great Perfection because both the generation and perfection stages of meditation are effortlessly present. ‘Perfection’ (rdzogs) implies that the enlightened attributes of the Three Buddha-bodies are effortlessly perfected in the stabilisation of the meditator’s intrinsic awareness (rang-rig).” (p. 473 – Glossary)*

After the preliminary practices a ‘direct introduction’ to intrinsic awareness from a Vajra-master is required. From the Introduction of His Holiness the Dalai Lama:

*“Following the practices of the Dzogchen teachings of the Nyingma school the student is directly introduced by an authentic spiritual teacher to the very nature of his or her mind as pure awareness. This is the focus of the ‘Cutting through Resistance’ (khregs-chod) aspect of the Dzogchen path and this is complemented by the All-surpassing Realisation (thod-rgal) practices which focus on eliciting and recognising the radiances of pristine cognition.*

*‘Cutting through Resistance’ and the direct introduction to awareness are the subject matter of Chapter 4 of the present work. The introduction to the intermediate state of reality, in Chapter 11 of our text, is illustrative of the esoteric instructions on ‘All-surpassing Realisation,’ which is the pinnacle of meditative practice according to the Nyingma school.” (p.XXIII - HHDL)*

In the preceding paragraph we saw Jung’s two commentaries were on chapters 4 and 11 just mentioned. So, of all chapters on which he commented precisely on the key parts of Dzogchen although, according to John Reynolds, he really did not understand this. What’s more, Dzogchen practitioners who have made some progress do not have to read the text at all:

*“Those serious meditators who have meditated on [the practices of] the Great Perfection and the Great Seal will recognise the inner radiance that dawns during the intermediate state of the time of death and will attain the Buddha-body of Reality. For these meditators there is absolutely no need to read this Liberation by Hearing.” (Ch. 11, Part II, p. 257-258)*

What makes the Great Perfection path so special? The keyword is *inner radiance* and recognition of it. This keyword is singled out here from the excellent definitions in the Glossary because it plays a central role in the introduction of the Dalai Lama, where he mentioned it fifteen times:

#### **“Inner Radiance ‘od-gsal**

*Sometimes also translated as ‘clear light,’ the Tibetan term ‘od-gsal, which has been rendered here as ‘inner radiance,’ refers in the context of the perfection stage of meditation to the subtlest level of mind, i.e. the fundamental, essential nature of all our cognitive events. Though ever present within all sentient beings, this inner radiance becomes manifest only when the gross mind has ceased to function. Such a dissolution is experienced by ordinary beings, naturally, at the time of death, but it can also be experientially cultivated through the practices of Unsurpassed Yogatantra.” (p. 478, part 1, Glossary)*

The shortest path to liberation is offered by the Highest Yoga Tantra (or Unsurpassed Yogatantra, or ‘Great Perfection’ or Dzogchen) you can then be liberated from the cycle of reincarnation in a



single lifetime:

*“Generally speaking, the practices of Highest Yoga Tantra present a spiritual path which enables the individual to attain complete buddhahood within a single lifetime, prior to the moment of death. Yet, for those who are unable to achieve this, it becomes crucial to use the transformative opportunities offered by the naturally occurring processes of death, the intermediate state and rebirth.” (p. XVIII, HHDL)*

The basic buddhist ambition of serious Dzogchen practitioners is to reach liberation before death with the help of the Highest Yoga Tantra. If that fails we can utilize the processes of death, the intermediate state and rebirth which are specifically taught as the basis for achieving liberation from cyclic existence. Along the way three opportunities A, B and C, arise to recognize the inner radiance.

*“This achievement of perfect buddhahood entails the actualisation of the three dimensions or bodies of a buddha (trikaya). These fruitional bodies are related both to our ultimate natural state and to the emanational qualities of full enlightenment.” (XIX, HHDL)*

Perhaps needless to say, even a cowherd can attain buddhahood and liberation. You can find confirmation of this in the Dzogchen text *Cutting through Resistance (khregs-chod)* in Chapter 4:

*“Similarly, even though all beings actually possess the seed of buddhahood, sentient beings will not attain buddhahood without experiential cultivation. Nonetheless, even a cowherd will attain liberation if he or she engages in experiential cultivation. For, even though one may not know how to elucidate [this state] intellectually, One will [through experiential cultivation] become manifestly established in it.” (p.56, Ch. 4).*

|      | inner radiance recognition                | bardo state  | attainment of buddha body                    |
|------|---|--|--|
| A    | primary - ground - mother                 | Time of Death ( <i>chi-khai</i> )                    | Reality ( <i>dharma-kaya</i> )               |
| B    | secondary - path - child                  | Time of Death ( <i>chi-khai</i> )                    | Reality ( <i>dharma-kaya</i> )               |
| C    | tertiary                                  | Reality ( <i>chos-nyid</i> )<br>(intermediate state) | Perfect Resource<br>( <i>sambhoga-kaya</i> ) |
| also | recognition                               | Rebirth ( <i>srid-pa'i</i> )                         | Emanation<br>( <i>nirmana-kaya</i> )         |
|      | heard the teachings but<br>no recognition | Rebirth ( <i>srid-pa'i</i> )                         | reborn in higher existences                  |

Table constructed with information from: *Summary Introduction Part II* (p. 258) and *Glossary on Inner Radiance* (p. 478).

We find here in the table the concept of ‘inner radiance’ connected to central concepts of three buddha bodies, three *bardo* states and recognition moments. In the process of time these are precisely connected.

Depending on our spiritual ambition and the effort we are preparing to put in we can distinguish in the process of life, death, intermediate state and rebirth three opportunities for the recognition of inner radiance: A, B and C. Also there is an opportunity to reach liberation before death, prior to the moment of death, with the help of the Highest Yoga Tantra. Attainment of buddhahood means realization of three buddha bodies:

If recognition A fails plan B is to reach liberation in the three death processes with the methods of Highest Yoga Tantra, because:

*“It is exclusively in tantra, however, and particularly in Highest Yoga Tantra, that the methods for utilising the processes of death, the intermediate state and rebirth are specifically taught as the basis for achieving liberation from cyclic existence. These methods involve the development of a skillful relationship with certain experiential stages that an individual actually induces with the intention of enhancing spiritual realisation and the fruition of their capacities as a human being.” (p. XVIII, HHDL)*





With these methods the 'inner radiance of the child' can be experientially cultivated as reflected in the second part of the description of 'inner radiance' in the Glossary. Part 2 of the description in the Glossary of 'inner radiance' furthermore points to the attainment of buddhahood as a conjunction of 'mother' and 'child' radiance.

Students of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche know these terms, because he uses these metaphoric images a lot in his teachings:

*"A fundamental distinction is made between the inner radiance of the ground (gzhi'i 'od-gsal) and the inner radiance of the path (lam-gyi 'od-gsal). The former, which is also known as the 'mother inner radiance' ('od-gsal ma), occurs naturally at the time of death, when it indicates the presence of the Buddha-body of Reality (dharmakaya), but which may not be accompanied by an awareness of its nature. The latter, which is also known as the 'child inner radiance' ('od-gsal bu) is an awareness of the ultimate nature of mind cultivated by the meditator in life, i.e. the realisation of the nature of the 'mother inner radiance' as it is developed in meditation. Buddhahood is achieved when the 'mother inner radiance' and 'child inner radiance' conjoin." (p.478, part 2, Glossary)*

As a third opportunity we have the possibility of recognition during the 'Intermediate state of Reality.' We find the sequence of opportunities in the last part of the 'inner radiance' definition:

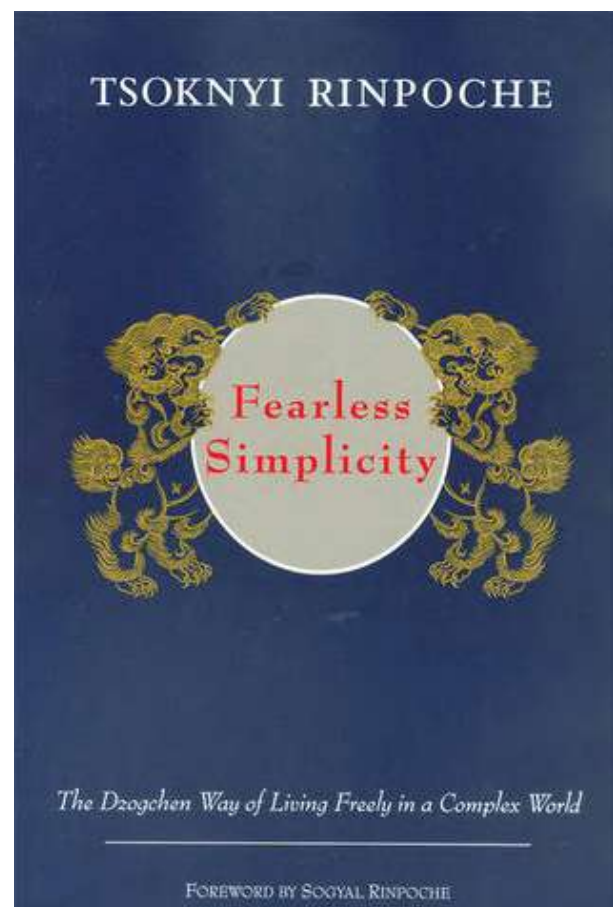
*"Chapter 11, in particular, differentiates three successive phases of inner radiance which are experienced at the time of death and immediately thereafter:*

- **the primary inner radiance** (bar-do dang-po chos-nyid 'od-gsal), which is identified with the inner radiance of the ground,
- **the secondary inner radiance** (bar-do 'od-gsal gnyis-pa), which is identified with the inner radiance of the path, and
- **the tertiary inner radiance** (bar-do 'od-gsal d gsum-pa), which is identified with the subsequent arising of the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities during the intermediate state of reality (chos-nyid bar-do)." (Glossary, p.478, part 3)

Although realization of the 'mother radiance' (dharma-kaya) seems far away, realization of the 'child radiance' may not be impossible if we

can find an authentic spiritual teacher and step seriously on the Dzogchen path:

*"However, in the Dzogchen view, all states of awareness or consciousness are thought to be pervaded by inner radiance, just as a sesame seed is permeated by oil. Therefore, in Dzogchen, there exist refined instructions which allow the recognition of inner radiance even while all the gross levels of sensory activity are still active. This is where we come to the important distinction made in the Dzogchen teachings between the Tibetan terms 'sems' and 'rig-pa'." (XXIII, HHDL)*



According to Tsoknyi Rinpoche (6) experiencing *rigpa* is not unusual when practicing the *Ngondro* preliminary exercises:

*".. doing ngöndro gives us little opportunities to let be in the state of rigpa, over and over again. In addition, the ngöndro training creates tremendous merit, which makes recognizing rigpa almost unavoidable. That is what merit does. You have almost no other choice than to recognize rigpa, because you repeatedly provide the circumstances for that." (p. 141)*



The prospect of experiencing moments of *rigpa* can be a great motivation for starting the *Ngon-dro* training and can be a great help in recognition of inner radiance in the *bardo* states. If the question of continuity of consciousness is not answered prior to death, we still have recognition opportunities during the processes of death, the intermediate state and rebirth. Finally:

*"Alternatively, at the very least, [individuals who have heard this teaching] will be born into the higher existences, where, based on the residual potency of their past actions, they will again meet with, and be able to practise, this [sacred] teaching in the next life. Since [this sacred teaching is based on recognition in the intermediate states] this Great Liberation by Hearing is the teaching whereby buddhahood can be attained without meditation."* (p. 258 – Part II, Introduction )

### Preparing to die

In the end of his introduction His Holiness the Dalai Lama writes that he is not afraid of the dying process. As a daily practitioner of the Highest Yoga Tantra, even he is not sure about what happens when the actual moment of his dying arrives, so how can we as modest practitioners, hope to be sure about our moment of death, about actualizing some of the inner radiance?

*"Normally in our lives, if we know that we are going to be confronted by a difficult or unfamiliar situation, we prepare and train ourselves for such a circumstance in advance, so that when this event actually happens we are fully prepared. As I have outlined, the rehearsal of the processes of death, and those of the intermediate state, and the emergence into a future existence, lies at the very heart of the path in Highest Yoga Tantra. These practices are part of my daily practice also and because of this I somehow feel a sense of excitement when I think about the experience of death. At the same time, though, sometimes I do wonder whether or not I will really be able to fully utilise my own preparatory practices when the actual moment of death comes!"* (p. XXVI, HHDL)

### Notes

- (1) [Wikipedia: Bardo Thodol](#)

(2) Coleman, Graham, with Thupten Jinpa (eds.), *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* [English title]; *The Great Liberation by Hearing in the Intermediate States* [Tibetan title]; composed by Padma Sambhava: revealed by Karma Lingpa; translated by Gyurme Dorje, 2005, London, Penguin Books.

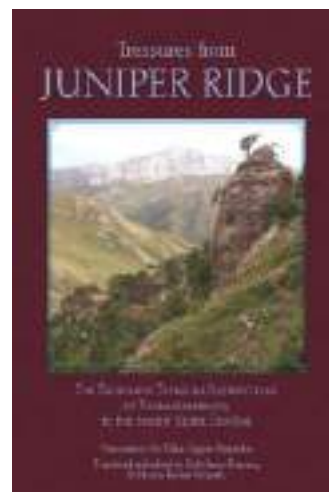
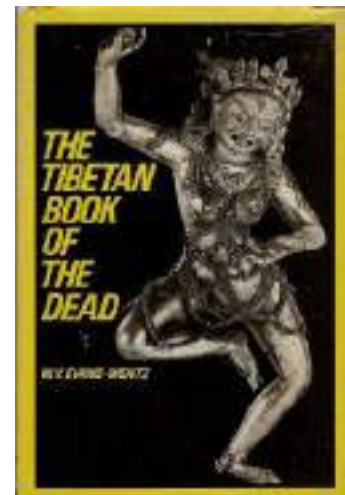
(3) *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition compiled and edited by W. Y. Evans-Wentz, Oxford University Press, 2000, p. xxxvi.

(4) John M. Reynolds, *Self-Liberation, Through Seeing with Naked Awareness*, Snow Lion Publications, 2000.

(5) Padmasambhava, *Treasures from Juniper Ridge*, Rangjung Yeshe Publications, 2008, p. 153.

(6) Tsoknyi Rinpoche, *Fearless Simplicity, The Dzogchen Way of Living Freely in a Complex World*, Rangjung Yeshe Publications, 2003, p. 141.

### Text by Frits de Vries



## FROM BUDDHA KUNTU ZANGPO TO CHAMMA LING POLAND

**Geshe Yungdrung Gyatso is the resident lama of Ligmincha Poland. He lives at the Chamma Ling Poland center in Wilga, near Warsaw. Both during and after his studies at Triten Norbutse Monastery, Geshe Gyatso travelled and taught throughout Europe. In 2014, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche asked Geshe Gyatso if he would like to stay in Poland and teach in the Polish and other European Sanghas. Geshe Gyatso officially became resident lama of Chamma Ling Poland in March 2015. In this interview he also talks about the Bon Refuge Tree.**

### **Geshe-la, where were you born?**

I was born in Tra village of Bijer area in Dolpo, Nepal. My village is located next to the famous Samling Monastery, and the Tashi Namgyal Monastery is located in the village itself. Both monasteries are connected with my family lineage.

The Samling Monastery is one of the oldest Bon monasteries in Dolpo. It was founded by the great Yangton lineage master Yangton Gyaltsen Rinchen. The Tashi Namgyal Monastery was founded by Yangton Lama Yungdrung Dradul, my paternal grandmother's father.

Yangton Gyaltsen Rinchen is an important lineage master in Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud. The Samling Monastery played an important role in keeping the Bon tradition alive after the Chinese occupation of Tibet. Many Bonpo lamas fled from Tibet and visited the Samling Monastery as pilgrims and to study old, traditional texts. They borrowed many ancient manuscripts in order to publish and distribute to preserve the Bon tradition.

My father was a *Nagpa* of Samling Monastery, a Bonpo lay yogi, and he was a doctor of Tibetan medicine. My mother is a Nyingma school practitioner. I heard my mother praying all through my childhood and I learned to chant many Nyingmapa prayers. I lived in my village till I was nine years old. From the age of five to nine I spent summers mostly taking care of sheep and yaks, because my homeland is half nomad and half farmer. During wintertime I was with my father in



H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche with Geshe Gyatso.

Samling Monastery for a kind of retreat for two or three months. There I learned Tibetan reading and writing, reciting mantras, and I helped my father with the preparation of retreats and rituals.

### **When did you go to a monastery to study for Geshe?**

When I was nine years old, my oldest brother Geshe Choekhortshang Rinpoche was studying at Menri Monastery in India, and he recommended our parents to send me to study in Triten Norbutse Monastery in Kathmandu, Nepal. My father wanted to send me, but my mother objected, because she wanted me to live with our family. So, one day in the end of 1989, people from my village started to travel to Kathmandu, as they do every winter. My father took me, and he told my mother that we would go to a nearby village for a few weeks, not to Kathmandu.

At the farewell my father asked my mother to give me a *khata*, a traditional scarf which is offered for travelers. That confused my mother and she didn't give me one, and ordered my father to bring me back. After a difficult journey of four weeks we arrived in Kathmandu, where we spent one and half months close to the *Boudhanath Stupa*. There my father expressed his wish that I should become a monk. He left this decision to me, and also which monastery to choose – Bon, Nyingma, or another tradition. I chose Bon, and in 1990 I was one of the first monks who started to study at Triten Norbutse Monastery. My father promised me that he would come back next winter to visit me.







Samling Monastery in Dolpo.



My father right after retreat with Yongton Lama Namgyal Wangdu.



Tashi Namgyal Gompa and Tra village.



Yangton Lama Sherab Tenzin and Nyelton Lama Yungdrung Dargye from Samling Monastery.





*Swayambunath Stupa in Kathmandu, Nepal.*

During that time in our monastery H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche gave teachings in the morning, and in the afternoon we did reading and writing. We did not have a dialectic school, or philosophy school, or meditation group, but we practiced as much as we could and we had meditation twice a day. In 1994 a new big temple was finished, and His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche was invited for the consecration. After that, dialectic school and meditation groups started, and I joined the dialectic school. At that time there were about sixty monks in the Triten Norbutse Monastery. At this point more than one hundred monks have finished their education in the dialectic and other schools, and about two hundred are still studying at Triten Norbutse Monastery.

**You were a small boy when you went to the monastery. Is that still a tradition in Tibet and the Himalaya region?**

For many centuries families sent small children to monasteries because monastery education is precious, and it was the best possibility for a child's education. My family made a great effort to give

me and my brothers good educations. It was very important for my father to keep the tradition in our family and I know that my father loved me. On his way home from Kathmandu my father died in an avalanche at an altitude of 5.350 meters, so he never met my mother again. I heard about this sad news a few months later, but I didn't believe it until the following winter when village people came to Kathmandu and confirmed it. My family sacrificed a lot for my wellbeing.

**What was the reason that you chose to study in a Bon monastery?**

It was because I spent a long time in Samling Monastery where I got my first experience in the Bon tradition and I spent time with great lamas like Yangton Lama Namgyal Wangdu, Nyelton Lama Tsewang Lhakyeb, Nyelton Yungdrung Dargye, my father Tsewang Tashi Choekhortshang and others. There were also *Tantric Yogis* and *Yoginis*, and through all of them I connected deeply to the Bon tradition.

**What did you do in the Triten Norbutse Monastery?**

I started my education in dialectic school in 1994 and finished in 2009, when I received the Geshe title. In dialectic school I learned Sutra, Tantra, Dzogchen and all the Tibetan sciences, like grammar, history of Tibet, Zhang Zhung and Himalaya, also astrology, poetry, astronomy, drawings, painting, calligraphy, ritual chanting, etc. I am very



Nyelton Lama Tsewang Lhakyeb, a great yogi of Samling Monastery in the 20th century.







Tritten Norbutse Monastery.

thankful to H.E. Yongdzin Rinpoche for all his loving kindness in teaching me all of these subjects during these years, and to my other teachers as well. H.E. Yongdzin Rinpoche cared for me and raised me like a parent.

During my study I also performed different roles, like being president of the dialectic school, and for three years I was guest manager of Tritten Norbutse Monastery. One year I worked as managing director of the Bumshi Medical School and also as a teacher of tradition and religious science. I also was a secretary of the Bonpo Foundation and Tritten Norbutse Monastery. I participated in several conferences and seminars devoted to Bon tradition, Tibetan and Himalayan culture, environment and managing a monastery.

Since getting my Geshe degree I have been teaching younger monks and lay people different subjects connected with Bon tradition.

I have been responsible for *Dreypoi Beltam*, a magazine of Tritten Norbutse Monastery, for the last 10 years, and have been chief editor since 2010.

#### **Have you done a long retreat?**

Yes, after the Geshe degree I did a hundred day retreat doing *Tsa Lung*, *Thrul khor* and *Tumo* practices.

#### **Why did you choose to come to the West?**

During my studies at Tritten Norbutse Monastery I had two chances to visit Europe, connected with a *Cham* dance group visiting France, Italy, Switzerland and Belgium. That got me excited about visiting European countries. And after I got my Geshe

degree, I was invited to visit several countries in Europe, like France, Germany, Czech Republic, Austria, Slovakia and Poland, where I gave public talks and some teachings. During my fourth visit to Europe in 2013 I spent one month in Vienna, Austria. I was travelling through Europe and started to teach at several places. In December 2014 I came to Chamma Ling Poland, and since then we have organized several retreats in Wilga, and teachings and practices in different cities in Poland. I do rituals on request. Every day in Chamma Ling we have practices in the morning and evening, and it is open for everyone.

#### **When did you meet Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche?**

We have known each other very long time, since I studied at Tritten Norbutse Monastery. In 2014 Rinpoche asked me to come to Chamma Ling Poland as a resident lama, to teach in the Polish sangha and other European sanghas. At that time I was the Secretary of the Tritten Norbutse Monastery so after approval by H. E. Yongdzin Rinpoche and Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche I came to Poland.

#### **Do you have plans to go back to Dolpo?**

I don't know. That is difficult, because I have decided to stay in Chamma Ling Poland, but I want to visit Dolpo. The last time I saw my mother was in 2011. It is difficult to have contact with my family in Dolpo, because there they don't have internet; phone calls are very expensive and the connection is not very good. Sometimes I talk to my brother and sister who live in Kathmandu, and I hear the family news through them.

#### **I would like to ask you some questions about the Bon teachings. Can you explain why the lineage plays an important role?**

It is very important to preserve the teaching lineages in the Bon tradition. The unbroken lineage is a reliable, pure and authentic source of all the teachings in the Bon tradition. It is also full of blessings beginning with Kuntu Zangpo, the primordial Buddha, and accumulating through the present time. It is like an authorized succession – from teacher to student and so on. So, lineage means connection with the original teachings and with the full blessings. The blessings that have continued unbroken from Kuntu Zangpo himself, and are passed through by our root master to us.

We can say that when the lineage is broken, it is







The primordial Buddha Kuntu Zangpo.

like a broken mala – all the beads are disconnected; you cannot use a broken mala. When you take refuge, vows, transmissions or teachings from someone who is not from the lineage, it will not be so fruitful since it is not fully blessed, because there is lack of connection with Bon.

**We have a Refuge Tree which depicts the ancient lineages of Bon all the way back to the primordial Buddha. I have seen explanations on the internet, but I still do not understand it. Can you give an explanation?**

This form of the Refuge Tree (Tibetan: *Tsogshing*) is from the Menri tradition and it is well known amongst Bonpo practitioners. This structure of the *thangka* was instructed by H.E. Yongdzin Rinpoche according to explanations based on texts. When you look at the refuge tree, it's not necessary to look from above to bottom. One can start from the main figure, which personifies your root master (see photo on page 50).

The main deity (Buddha, the biggest figure in this picture) sitting on the throne of snow lions, is our root lama in the form of Shenlha Odkar. We believe that our root lama is the embodiment of the Buddha of the Three Times (past, present and future), and all the *yidams* and *dakinis*. The Buddha, seated and well dressed with precious ornaments, is called Sambhogakaya (Tibetan: *Dzogku*).

Above Shenlha Odkar, in the middle of this picture, there is a group of masters of the lineage connected to the root master of the Menri Monastery, Nyammed Sherab Gyaltsen, who is the second greatest master in this picture. He is the founder and first abbot of Menri monastery.

Below Nyammed Sherab Gyaltsen, there are thirty

-two masters, the lineage abbots of the Menri Monastery. All the three lineages (outer – Sutra lineage; inner – Tantra lineage; secret – Dzogchen lineage, mind transmission) are assembled before the Nyammed Sherab Gyaltsen. The great master Nyammed is depicted in monk's form (Tibetan: *vinaya*), like the other masters described above.

To the upper side of Nyammed Sherab Gyaltsen are the five main lines of three lineages. The centre one starts from the Buddha Kuntu Zangpo. The three lineages are the lineages from *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud*. To the right side of the Nyammed Sherab Gyaltsen is a line with the lineage masters of the Dzogchen *Drakpa Korsum*. To the left side of the Nyammed Sherab Gyaltsen is the master lineage line of the Dzogchen *A-tri*. The twenty-four masters and Tapihritsa are in the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* lineage. The line to the right side of Nyammed Sherab Gyaltsen are lineage masters of *Sutra*, which consists of two lines. The line at the left are lineage masters of *Tantra* which also consists of two lines. Nyammed Sherab Gyaltsen is the main master from which all these three lineages are assembled.

To the right side of Nyammed Sherab Gyaltsen, in the upper corner of this picture, is Tonpa Shenrab Miwo in monk's form with his four main disciples, surrounded by groups of buddhas – the other eight buddhas, the buddhas of three times (Tibetan: *yugas*), the buddhas of the ten directions, and so on.

To the left side of Nyammed Sherab Gyaltsen, at the upper corner of this picture, is Dungsob Mucho Demdrug and below him there are four lines of *bodhisattvas* (Tibetan: *Yungdrung Sempa*).

To the right side of the Nyammed Sherab Gyaltsen are *yidams* of four *tantric* levels. Below the *yidams* are male protectors. On the left side of the Nyammed Sherab Gyaltsen is the main Dakini Khandro Kalpa Sangmo accompanied by three different kinds of *dakinis* (*dakinis* of wisdom, action and karma). Below the *dakinis* are female protectors.

**Can you elaborate a bit more about the three lineages?**

The *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* lineage starts from the Buddha Kuntu Zangpo (including Buddha





Shenla Odkar.



Nyammed Sherab Gyaltsen.



Tonpa Shenrab Miwo.

Kuntu Zangpo with eight Buddhas) and through twenty-four masters in unbroken lineage to His Holiness the Menri Trizin Rinpoche and the His Eminence the Yongzin Rinpoche. This is the most important Dzogchen lineage because it has never been kept hidden, like the treasures (Tibetan: *terma*). During all historical disturbances and deterioration, to keep Bon tradition alive, the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* lineage was taught and practiced through oral teaching from master to student as an unbroken lineage.

In this Refuge Tree, the Dzogchen *Drakpa Korsum* lineage starts from Buddha Shenlha Odkar to Nyammed Sherab Gyaltsen and this teaching was kept in a hidden place as a treasure. It was rediscovered by Shoton Ngodrub Drakpa around the 11th century.

The *A-tri* lineage started from the Gongzoe Ritroe Chenpo and *A-tri* text was also kept in a hidden place, and was rediscovered by Master Shenchén Lughá.

The Sutra lineage starts from the Buddha Tonpa Shenrab, which is depicted in the monk's form as Tonpa Tritsuk Gyalwa. This lineage was brought unbroken to the present from Tonpa Tritsuk Gyalwa.

The Tantra lineage began with Trulshen Nangdhen, Zangza Ringtsun and Chimed Tsugphud.

**Can you tell about the Yungdrung Bon and other**

### Bon traditions?

The Yungdrung Bon tradition comes from Tonpa Shenrab. Before the Yungdrung Bon, there was Bon but without any founder. The followers of this ancient tradition worshiped elements, mountains, rivers and so on, because they believed that some invisible (spirit) beings live there. At present, we can still find these kinds of Bonpos in Nepal, India, Bhutan and Mongolia.

The Yungdrung Bon means to analyze and gain experience, and through this one tries to solve or remove the suffering and misery of sentient beings. It is a method to help other beings and to do great actions or demonstrate great virtues. Yungdrung Bon consists of two different pathways: the first is connected with a subject and the second is connected with an object. 'Subject' means everything connected with words (for example books or teachings) and 'object' means liberation, compassion, the natural state.

**Thank you for your explanation. To conclude this interview, is there something you want to say?**

I wish all the students of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and all the other Bonpo sanghas to develop and continue their own practice. So it will be helpful for their own lives, and to reach enlightenment, and that the practice will benefit other beings.

**Interview by Ton Bisscheroux**

Photos: courtesy of Geshe Gyatso.







The Bon Refuge Tree.





# BODHICITTA AND GREAT COMPASSION

This is an edited excerpt from oral teachings given by Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche, the Abbot of Triten Norbutse Monastery in Kathmandu, Nepal, during a *Ngondro* Retreat at Serenity Ridge, November, 2003. Also some related excerpts on compassion and *bodhicitta*. Reprint from *The Voice of Clear Light*, January 2004.

“To practice *bodhicitta* is to generate and to develop enlightened mind on the basis of great compassion. That is, to develop buddha mind or enlightened mind for the benefit of all sentient beings. We are practicing not only for our own benefit, not only for our own peace, but in fact, we have to think that our practice is for the purpose of helping all other beings, not only a few beings, all sentient beings in all universes, not just this universe. We believe that there are thousands, billions of universes. So we have to think of

helping all sentient beings in all those billions of universes. So it is a very big mind, very huge! It seems to be impossible. On the basis of great compassion we develop this mind. If you don't have great compassion, this kind of mind, this intention, can not come. So, first we have to develop great compassion within ourselves.

Great compassion is very, very important. It is one of the two main pillars of the path of liberation. These two pillars are known as method and wisdom. Similarly, there are two kinds of *bodhicitta*, relative and absolute. Absolute *bodhicitta* manifests with one's development of wisdom, the meditation on and knowledge of the absolute truth. Relative *bodhicitta*, this great intention to help all sentient beings, is what we refer to mainly as method. Without this great compassion, we can not get fully enlightened. In order to get fully enlightened we have to be liberated from two extremes – the extreme of samsara and the extreme of nirvana. You see, sometimes, we are



Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche.



too peaceful. This can be dangerous as it can lead us toward falling into the extreme of nirvana, or thinking only of our own benefit. Upon experiencing some level of realization, we may then fall into a level of meditation like a cessation type of contemplation in which we are very peaceful and seem to have completely purified our negative emotions. We may easily remain in this situation for eons and eons. It is said that one sentient being from hell will attain enlightenment much faster than one who has fallen into this type of meditation.

This extreme is a kind of nirvana, but it is not the final result, not full enlightenment. We call it causality nirvana, relative nirvana. There are still many things we have to purify, very subtle defilements. But in this state, because it almost looks like we don't have any defilements, if we don't also have this practice of method, of great compassion, we're in trouble. Great compassion is something that reminds us not to simply look out for our own wellbeing or to only look for our own peace. It actually brings about our getting reborn back into samsara in order to help all other beings, and this leads more swiftly to our own enlightenment. Therefore, great compassion is a kind of antidote, a practice which can protect us from falling into the extreme of nirvana. We are protected from falling into the extreme of samsara mainly by the antidote of wisdom, the knowledge of the absolute truth. The real root of samsara can only be cut by this wisdom, and not by any other practices. Other practices help to purify many negative emotions, which then help bring us into knowledge of the absolute truth, but these practices themselves can not cut the root of samsara. The root of samsara can only be cut by knowledge of the absolute truth, also known as

the view. Therefore, view is most important on the path, and this view or wisdom must always be combined with method, or great compassion and *bodhicitta*. Always!

Therefore, we call the path of liberation a unification of method and wisdom."

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## RELATED EXCERPTS ON COMPASSION AND BODHICITTA

From *Luminous Emptiness: Understanding the Tibetan Book of the Dead* by Francesca Fremantle:

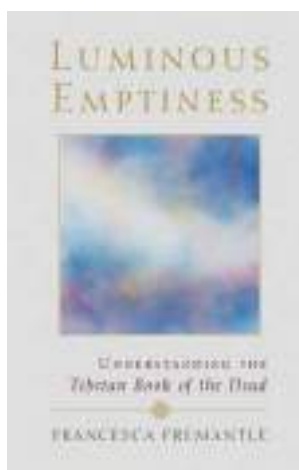
"Emptiness and compassion are completely intertwined. The relationship between them has been compared to that of a flame and its light or a tree and its leaves. Activity in the world is not truly enlightened unless it springs from the awareness that, in the absolute sense, nothing is being done or needs to be done. Yet at the same time, the awakened heart feels as its own the suffering of all who are not yet awakened. The bodhisattvas embody this activity for the welfare of all beings. Through wisdom the bodhisattva knows that samsara is illusion, and through compassion helps those who are under its spell. Both aspects go together all the way along the path. We cannot wait until we attain wisdom to manifest compassion.

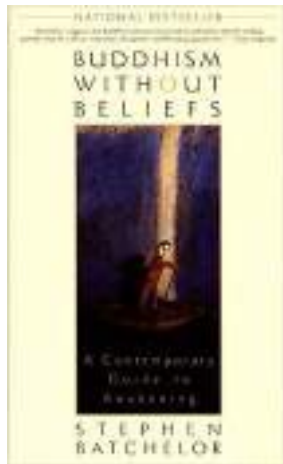
Simply being as compassionate and skillful as we can at every stage is what deepens our realization of emptiness. They grow together, they mutually inspire each other, they are the two indispensable elements of the awakened state."

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From *Buddhism Without Beliefs* by Stephen Batchelor:

"Insight into emptiness and compassion for the world are two sides of the same coin. To experience ourselves and the world as interactive processes rather than aggregates of discrete things undermines both habitual ways of perceiving the world as well as habitual feelings about it. Meditative discipline is vital to *dharma* practice precisely because it leads us beyond the realm of ideas to





that of felt-experience. Understanding the philosophy of emptiness is not enough. The ideas need to be translated through meditation into the wordless language of feeling in order to loosen those emotional knots that keep us locked in a spasm of self-preoccupation.

As we are released into the opening left by the absence of self-centered craving, we experience the vulnerability of exposure to the anguish and suffering of the world. The track on which we find ourselves in moments of centered experience includes both clarity of mind and warmth of heart. Just as a lamp simultaneously generates light and heat, so the central path is illuminated by wisdom and nurtured by compassion.

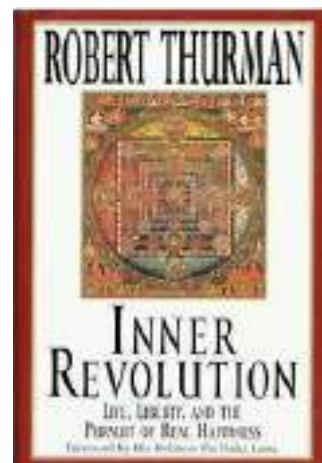
The selfless vulnerability of compassion requires the vigilant protection of mindful awareness. It is not enough to want to feel this way toward others. We need to be alert at all times to the invasion of thoughts and emotions that threaten to break in and steal this open and caring resolve. A compassionate heart still feels anger, greed, jealousy, and other such emotions. But it accepts them for what they are with equanimity, and cultivates the strength of mind to let them arise and pass without identifying and without acting upon them."

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From *Inner Revolution: Life, Liberty, and The Pursuit of Real Happiness* by Robert Thurman:

"We already feel our own pain and are powerless to do much about it. How much worse it is to feel the pains of others and be helpless to do anything for them. But when one makes the commitment

to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all, a compassionate energy is released and the artistry for living transforms immediate relationships from struggle into living play. As our empathy and love flow out to embrace all living beings on earth, the galaxies, and beyond, we come up against not only black holes of despair but also vast suns of confidence and determination. By becoming a being of radiant blissfulness, a bodhisattva is a living instrument that can effectively bring about the aim of all true lives – the happiness of infinite beloved others. This goodwill moves to tame the whole society, the whole world, even the universe so that it becomes a place in which the maximum number of people can attain the highest level of happiness. Since the universe is infinite, containing infinite beings in infinite universes within it, that will become a kind of messianic madness that explodes in the form of a vow to create a universe that itself works to liberate souls – a buddhaland or buddhaverse."



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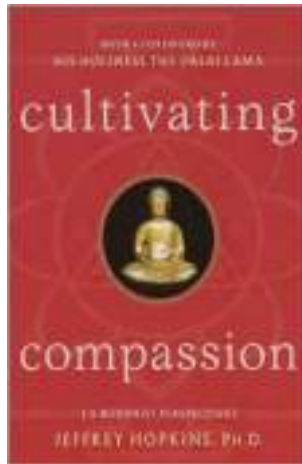
From *Cultivating Compassion* by Jeffrey Hopkins:

"Compassion is called the seed because it is the beginning of the path for bodhisattvas - those dedicated to becoming fully enlightened to be of benefit to other beings. Bodhisattvas are distinguished from other Buddhist practitioners in that they have great compassion, in that they themselves will free all sentient beings from suffering and the causes of suffering. They also have great love, in that they themselves will join all sentient beings with happiness and the causes of happiness.

The seed is what begins the harvest. Without the







seed, one cannot have the fruit. The source of Buddhahood is compassion. Though wisdom is required for the attainment of Buddhahood, unshakable compassion is the differentiating factor. Other types of practitioners must also understand the final nature of reality in order to attain their respective, but lower, types of enlightenment. Thus, compassion alone is the seed of Buddhahood.

Compassion is also like the water that rains down and grows the potential harvest, once the seed has been planted. Compassion moistens the mental continuum; through the continued practice of compassion, the bodhisattva's progress advances. In the state of Buddhahood, it has ripened; it is like a matured fruit for enjoyment by others in that only a fully mature compassion causes enlightened beings to appear to others to help them in whatever form is suitable to their needs."

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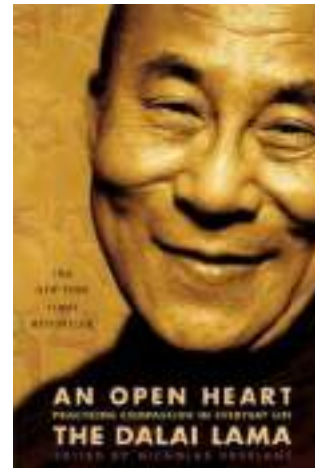
From *An Open Heart: Practicing Compassion In Everyday Life* by The Dalai Lama:

"True compassion has the intensity and spontaneity of a loving mother caring for her suffering baby. Throughout the day, such a mother's concern for her child affects all her thoughts and actions. This is the attitude we are working to cultivate toward each and every being. When we experience this, we have generated 'great compassion.'

Once one has become profoundly moved by great compassion and lovingkindness, and had one's heart stirred by altruistic thoughts, one must pledge to devote oneself to freeing all beings from

the suffering they endure within cyclic existence, the vicious circle of birth, death, and rebirth we are all prisoners of. Our suffering is not limited to our present situation. According to the Buddhist view, our present situation as humans is relatively comfortable.

However, we stand to experience much difficulty in the future if we misuse this present opportunity. Compassion enables us to refrain from thinking in a self-centered way. We experience great joy and never fall to the extreme of simply seeking our own personal happiness and salvation. We continually strive to develop and perfect our virtue and wisdom. With such compassion, we shall eventually possess all the necessary conditions for attaining enlightenment. We must therefore cultivate compassion from the very start of our spiritual practice."



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Text selected by Jantien Spindler



# TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE'S 2016 ON-LINE TEACHINGS

| When                                 | Where         | What   | More information   |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|--|--|
| April 16<br>21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.) | Your computer | Free live webcast:<br>Transforming Your World<br>Through Service, Part 3:<br>Generating Compassion     | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a> |
| April 16 – May 1                     | Your computer | Free interactive online course:<br>Meditation for Beginners —<br>Focusing and Calming Your<br>Mind     | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a> |
| April 30 – May 22                    | Your computer | Interactive online course:<br>Tibetan Meditation —<br>Achieving Great Bliss Through<br>Pure Awareness  | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a> |
| May 14<br>21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)   | Your computer | Free live webcast:<br>Transforming Your World<br>Through Service, Part 4:<br>Service and Spirituality  | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a> |
| June 11<br>21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)  | Your computer | Free live webcast:<br>Transforming Your World<br>Through Service, Part 5:<br>Inspiring Others to Serve | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a> |
| June 11 – July 3                     | Your computer | Interactive online course:<br>Tibetan Sound Healing  | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a> |
| June 25<br>18.00 – 19.15 h (C.E.T.)  | Your computer | Free live webcast:<br>Sleep Yoga   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a> |
| July 9<br>21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)   | Your computer | Free live webcast:<br>Transforming Your World<br>Through Service, Part 6:<br>Questions and Answers     | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a> |
| July 9 – 31                          | Your computer | Interactive online course:<br>To be announced  | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a> |
| August 6 –<br>September 4            | Your computer | Interactive online course:<br>Awakening the Sacred Arts —<br>Discovering Your Creative<br>Potential    | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a> |
| September 17 –<br>October 16         | Your computer | Interactive online course:<br>Tibetan Dream Yoga   | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a> |
| November 12 –<br>December 4          | Your computer | Interactive online course:<br>Healing from the Source —<br>Meditation as Medicine for<br>Body and Mind | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a> |



## TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE'S 2016 EUROPEAN SEMINARS

| When             | Where                      | What  | More information   |
|------------------|----------------------------|---|--|
| April 22 – 24    | Paris, France              | Weekend seminar:<br>Living with Joy, Dying with Peace                                     | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.fr">www.ligmincha.fr</a>   |
| April 28         | Bratislava, Slovakia       | Public talk:<br>Dream Yoga  | Facebook Page:<br><a href="https://www.facebook.com/LigminchaSlovenskarepublika">Ligmincha Slovenska republika</a> |
| April 29 – May 1 | Vienna, Austria            | Weekend seminar:<br>Outer, Inner and secret Tsa Lung                                      | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.at">www.ligmincha.at</a>   |
| May 6 – 8        | Berlin, Germany            | Weekend seminar:<br>From Inspiration to Manifestation: Unblocking Your Creative Potential | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.de">www.ligmincha.de</a>   |
| May 14 – 16      | Bulle, Switzerland         | Weekend seminar:<br>Bardo and Dream   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.fr">www.ligmincha.fr</a>   |
| May 20 – 22      | Amsterdam, The Netherlands | Weekend seminar:<br>A-tri, Part 4   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.nl">www.ligmincha.nl</a>   |
| May 27 – 29      | Helsinki, Finland          | Weekend seminar:<br>Awakening the Sacred Body   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.fi">www.ligmincha.fi</a>   |
| August 16 – 21   | Wilga, Poland              | Retreat:<br>Topic to be announced   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a>   |
| August 23 – 28   | Buchenau, Germany          | European Summer Retreat:<br>The Twenty-One Nails, Part 2                                  | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.de">www.ligmincha.de</a>   |
| September 3 – 4  | Budapest, Hungary          | Weekend seminar:<br>Sleep Yoga  | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.hu">www.ligmincha.hu</a>   |
| September 9 – 11 | Moscow, Russia             | Weekend seminar:<br>Six Lamps, Part 2   | <a href="http://www.garuda-bon.ru">www.garuda-bon.ru</a>   |

**YOU CAN FIND TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE'S 2016 ON-LINE TEACHINGS ON PAGE 55**

