



# Ligmincha Europe Magazine

*Special edition # 21 – # 30; Summer 2016 — Spring 2020*



Meet the Ligmincha Sanghas

H.H. the 33<sup>rd</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> Menri Trizin

The Three Doors

Preparing to Die









Dear Readers, Dear Practitioners of Bon,

In this book you will find a collection of the last 10 issues of *Ligmincha Europe Magazine*.

When we began publishing the magazine in 2010, we wanted to enhance communication with Ligmincha International sangha members from all the different countries in Europe and to keep everyone updated about Ligmincha's projects and activities.

We offered sangha members and teachers a chance to share their stories, poems and other creative expressions. Two of my favorite topics were the introduction of different sanghas worldwide and reports from the activities of the European sanghas. I loved to do these interviews and collect the information, because every sangha is unique and there is always something we can learn from each other.

Over the past years we also brought you news from The 3 Doors program and Lishu Institute, both established by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, founder and spiritual director of Ligmincha. We wrote about ceremonies for the 33<sup>rd</sup> Menri Trizin (leader of Tibetan Yungdrung Bön) His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche and, following his passing, the 34<sup>th</sup> Menri Trizin His Holiness Lungtok Dawa Dhargyal Rinpoche, along with His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, the most senior teacher in the Bön tradition. We reprinted some articles originally published in *Voice of Clear Light* many years ago, because they are still just as timely today. We had a section on preparing to die, and much more.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, who gave me his confidence in my ability to do the work of editing *Ligmincha Europe Magazine* even before I was aware of having the necessary qualities. I had the privilege of interviewing remarkable people and working with a wonderful team, which changed over the years.

I want to thank the editors, the proofreaders, all the contributors and last but not least you, the readers of *Ligmincha Europe Magazine*.

In the end, it was just me and one proofreader remaining. So, in Spring 2020 we published our last issue.

Every end is a new beginning: after this magazine ended, I began to do interviews and write articles for the *Voice of Clear Light*, hoping that my contribution there will benefit others.

Please enjoy these final 10 issues of *Ligmincha Europe Magazine*.

Ton Bisscheroux, Chief Editor











European Yungdrung Bön Center: Chamma Ling Poland





## SELECTION OF TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE'S EUROPEAN SEMINARS AND ON-LINE TEACHINGS FROM 2016 TO 2020

When	Where	What	More information
August 16 – 21, 2016	Wilga, Poland	Retreat: The Twenty-One Nails	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.org-poland">www.ligmincha.org-poland</a>
September 9 – 11, 2016	Moscow, Russia	Weekend seminar: Six Lamps, Part 2	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/LigminchaRussia">www.facebook.com/LigminchaRussia</a>
April 28 – 30, 2017	Paris, France	Weekend seminar: The Five Elements: Connecting with the Living Universe	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.org-france-and-suisse-romande">www.ligmincha.org-france-and-suisse-romande</a>
May 26 – 28, 2017	Bulle, Switzerland	Weekend seminar: Bringing More Light Into Our Lives	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.org-france-and-suisse-romande">www.ligmincha.org-france-and-suisse-romande</a>
September 1 – 3, 2017	Rome, Italy	Weekend seminar: Connecting to the Living Universe: Teachings on the Five Elements	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.org-italy">www.ligmincha.org-italy</a>
February 23 – 25, 2018	Amsterdam, The Netherlands	Weekend seminar: A-tri Essentials	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.org-netherlands">www.ligmincha.org-netherlands</a>
May 4 – 6, 2018	Berlin, Germany	Weekend seminar: The Seven Mirrors of Dzogchen,	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.org-germany">www.ligmincha.org-germany</a>
May 11 – 13, 2018	Vienna, Austria	Weekend seminar: The Five Wisdoms	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.org-austria">www.ligmincha.org-austria</a>
August 10 – 12, 2018	Helsinki, Finland	Weekend seminar: The True Source of Healing	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.org-finland">www.ligmincha.org-finland</a>
September 7 – 9, 2018	Budapest, Hungary	Weekend seminar: The Practice of the Six Lokas	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.org-hungary">www.ligmincha.org-hungary</a>
April 26 – 28, 2019	Almeria, Spain	Weekend seminar: Dream Yoga	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.org-spain">www.ligmincha.org-spain</a>
August 21 – 26, 2019	Buchenau, Germany	Retreat: Twenty-One Nails	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.org-germany">www.ligmincha.org-germany</a>
Anytime you like you can start	Your computer or other device	Free Online Course: Starting a Meditation Practice, Parts 1 & 2	<a href="http://ligminchalearning.com/starting-a-meditation-practice">ligminchalearning.com/starting-a-meditation-practice</a>
See for dates on website	Your computer or other device	Interactive online course: Tibetan Dream Yoga	<a href="http://www.glidewing.com/twr/dreamyoga">www.glidewing.com/twr/dreamyoga</a>
Flexible dates and times	Your computer or other device	On Facebook: Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche LIVE	<a href="http://www.cybersangha.net">www.cybersangha.net</a>

You can also view free recorded Internet teachings from your computer or other device, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Access them on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com), [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org), [www.ligminchalearning.com](http://www.ligminchalearning.com), [www.cybersangha.net](http://www.cybersangha.net), [www.oceanofwisdom.org](http://www.oceanofwisdom.org) and [facebook.com/tenzinwangyalrinpoche](https://facebook.com/tenzinwangyalrinpoche).







# Ligmincha Europe Magazine

**# 21 – Summer 2016**



Meet the sangha from Texas

Healing From the Source

Ask a Lama for Rituals

The 21 Nails





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## THE LIGMINCHA EUROPE MAGAZINE

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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





# MEDITATION AS MEDICINE FOR BODY AND MIND

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

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

We tend to view emotional and physical pain as the enemy. The *Healing From the Source* online workshop with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche reveals why we shouldn't – and shows us how meditation practice can transform our own pain and sickness through the healing warmth of loving-kindness. Based on ancient teachings of dzogchen from the Tibetan Bon Buddhist tradition, this online workshop helps one discover the "great healer within."

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

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

### **Call for Volunteers**

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

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



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

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

**[www.glidewing.com](http://www.glidewing.com)**







### The recommended level of participation includes:

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

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

### [Register for the workshop here](#)

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

### About the Workshop

A series of instructional videos are introduced in progression throughout the three weeks. Every few days a new teaching session is revealed to course participants, allowing them to view and practice on their own schedule. Each teaching session concludes with a guided meditation, along with an MP3 audio version that can be downloaded and kept for ongoing practice. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche answers questions in a special “Ask a Question” forum, and encourages free use of a discussion forum with participants from

around the world.

### About the Research

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

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

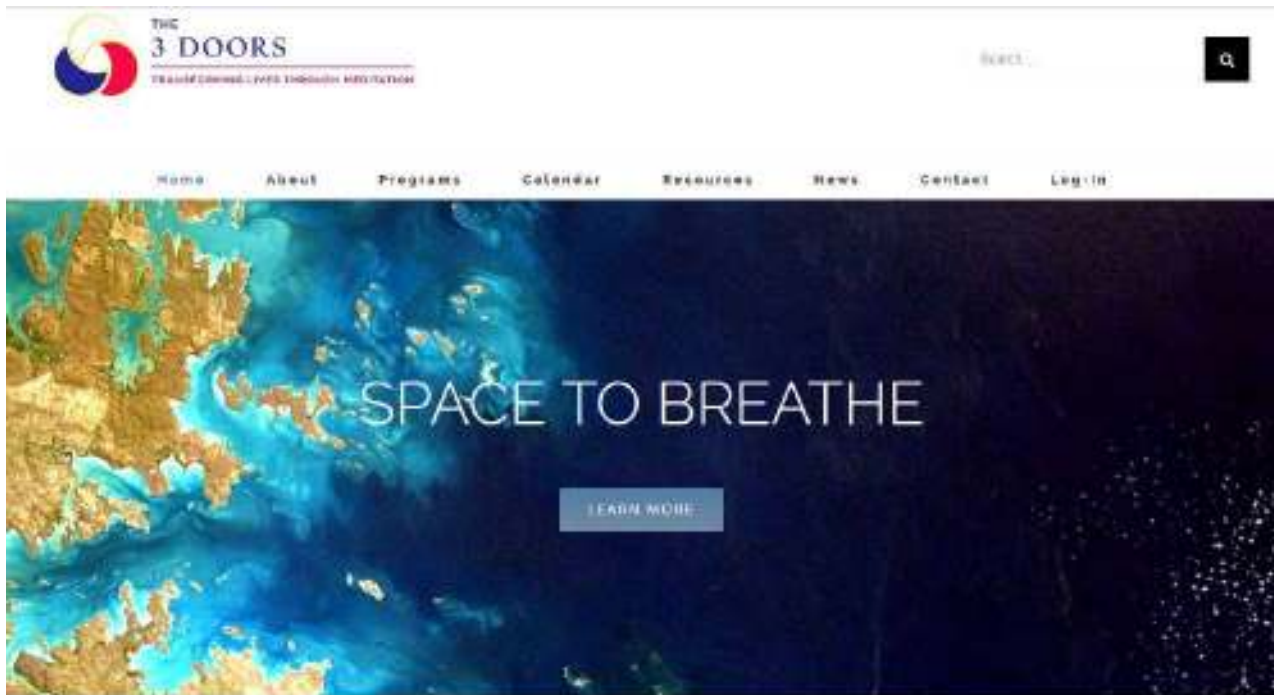
**The research team.** The three researchers involved in this study – Barbara Stefik, Ph.D., Alejandro Chaoul-Reich, Ph.D. and Claire Clark, Ph.D. – seek to understand the benefits of meditation on healing and transformation. Currently they are also conducting a longitudinal study on the two and one-half-year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

### [More About the Research](#)





# MEET THE NEW 3 DOORS WEBSITE



## Meditation practices for modern life

### EASILY FIND EVENTS AND RETREATS

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

### [Find Events and Retreats](#)

### EXPLORE THE NEW LOOK OF OUR PROGRAMS

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

### [Explore Programs](#)

### STAY TUNED – EXCITING DEVELOPMENTS AHEAD

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



### Overview of the Six Academy Group Retreats

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





# UNBROKEN LINEAGE OF WISDOM

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

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

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



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



Menri Lopon Thinley Nyima Rinpoche giving Mawe Senghe-initiation.

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

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







Menri Gompa on the initiation day.

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

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

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

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

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

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



Auspicious area for raising Prayer Flags nearby Menri Monastery.







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

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

Learn more about the second year program of Lishu: [www.lishu.org](http://www.lishu.org).

Apply for the second year program [www.lishu.org](http://www.lishu.org).

**Text by Anna-Kaisa Hirvanen**



The Lishu study group and their teachers.



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





# BONPOS IN LHASA

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

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

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

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

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



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





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



Making Prostrations in front of Jokhang Temple.

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

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



Yamdrok Yumtso Lake.







At Lishu Tagring's Cave with Yungdrung Tenzin.

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

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

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







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

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

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







With the Shen Family in Lhasa.

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

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

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

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







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

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

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

**Text by Anja Benesch**

Photos by Yungdrung Tenzin and Anja Benesch



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





# DO YOUR PRACTICE, ALL IS COMING

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

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

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

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



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

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

Ashtanga means eight limbs. The first two of these

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

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





# CAN WE PAY YOU IN PRAYERS?

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

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

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



## What kind of training was that summer program?

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

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

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







H.H. Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche.



H.E. Lopon Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche.



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

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

#### How did the center in Houston start?

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

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

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



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







Geshe Chapur Rinpoche.

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

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



Khenpo Tenzin Dargye.

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

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

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



Latri Khenpo Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche.



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







Lopon Thinley Nyima Rinpoche.



Geshe Denma Gyaltsen, our resident lama. Geshe YongDong.



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

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

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

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

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

### **Can you tell about the structure of Ligmincha Texas?**

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

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

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





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



Fundraising on the Bayou.

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

### **Can you tell about the practice groups in Houston?**

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

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

### **How many people come to the practice groups?**

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

the Long Life of our Teachers.

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

### **How many people come to seminars?**

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

### **Do you have plans for the future?**

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

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





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

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

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

**Do you get new sangha members from the Medical Center?**

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

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

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

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

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

**Interview by Ton Bisscheroux**



Blessing the new place, June 2016.





# WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN EUROPE

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



## April 22-24:

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



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



## May 14 – 16:

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

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

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







**May 6 – 8:**

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught in Berlin, Germany  
*From Inspiration to Manifestation: Unblocking Your Creative Potential*



**May 20 – 22:**

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

**June 26:**

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







**April 28:**

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



**May 26:**

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

**May 27:**

An evening talk in Zlin, Czech Republic.

**May 28 – 29:**

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



**May 27 – 29:**

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



**March 11 – 13:**

Geshe Lhundup gave a Chöd Seminar in Berlin, Germany.







**May 27 – 29:**

Geshe Choekhortshang Rinpoche taught *Dream and Divination in Bon tradition* in Budapest, Hungary. At

the teaching Choekhortshang Rinpoche introduced the ancient methods of divination and prediction from dreams.



**Free Live Webcast**  
**Enlightened Leadership**  
 From the Spring Retreat  
 with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche  
**April 2, 2016 21.00–22.30 h. (C.E.T.)**  
 Translations in multiple languages available  
[www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)



You can watch the recordings here:

[Enlightened Leadership](#)



**Free Live Webcast**  
**Generating Compassion**  
 with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche  
**April 16, 2016 21.00–22:30 h (C.E.T.)**  
 Register for the webcast at [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)  
 This is Part 3 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 3: Generating Compassion](#)







**Free Live Webcast**

## **Service and Spirituality**

with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

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

Register for the webcast at [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)  
 This is Part 4 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 4: Service and Spirituality](#)



**Free Live Webcast**

## **Inspiring Others to Serve**

with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

**June 11, 2016, 21.00 – 22.30 (C.E.T.)**

Register for the webcast at [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)  
 This is Part 5 of a FREE six-month course on service.  
 Learn more at [www.ligminchalearning.com](http://www.ligminchalearning.com)



You can watch the recordings here:

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



**Free Live Webcast**

## **Sleep Yoga**

From the Summer Retreat  
 with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

**June 25, 2016 18.00 – 19:15 (C.E.T.)**

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



You can watch the recordings here:

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





## TIME IN MENRI, ALWAYS FILLED WITH MANY BLESSINGS

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

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

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



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



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

ing, that I do, that it is familiar to me. And the presence of His Holiness would bring the sense of being connected to all Masters from the past. The expansion of his heart has no limits, no boundaries, is encompassing everyone and everything. Being so close to him, I feel his immense inner power, and it is an indescribable blessing which I am trying to put in the words. Spending time in Menri had deepened my understanding of the tradition immensely, the teaching and the connection to the lineage and to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche too, because Rinpoche had spend here a very important part of his life. All those experiences are very unique and I feel, they are truly precious gifts, which are guiding me to live my life in a more positive, open and joyful way. I remember some time ago, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche was





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

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

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



*Losar time: little monks and nuns.*

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

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



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

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

[www.menrimonasterypap.com](http://www.menrimonasterypap.com).

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

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

**Text and photos by:  
Mirka Janošková**

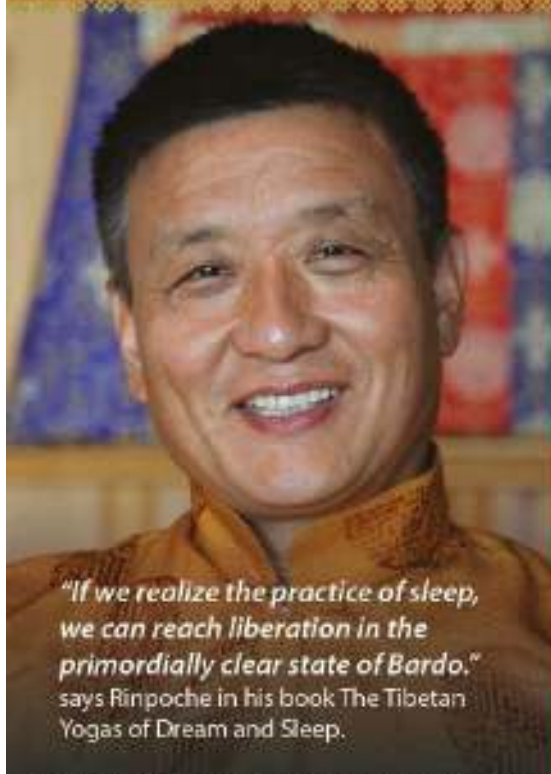




# Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

## in Budapest

### 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of September



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

## Sleep Yoga

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

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

### VENUE OF THE TEACHING:

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

### SCHEDULE OF THE TEACHING:

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> September, Saturday

9.00 – 18.00 Sleep Yoga teaching and Guided Meditation

12.30 – 14.00 Lunch Break

#### 4<sup>th</sup> September, Sunday

9.00 – 17.30 Sleep Yoga teaching and Guided Meditation, Blessing

12.30 – 14.00 Lunch Break

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

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

Please register at the following link: <http://goo.gl/forms/0zQEp1hRHOKppPvE3> and we will send you further information for the payment and about catering options.

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





# BEING A SHADOW OF A SWALLOW



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



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

***Tonny Maas***





# THE CYCLE OF THE FOUR BARDOS

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

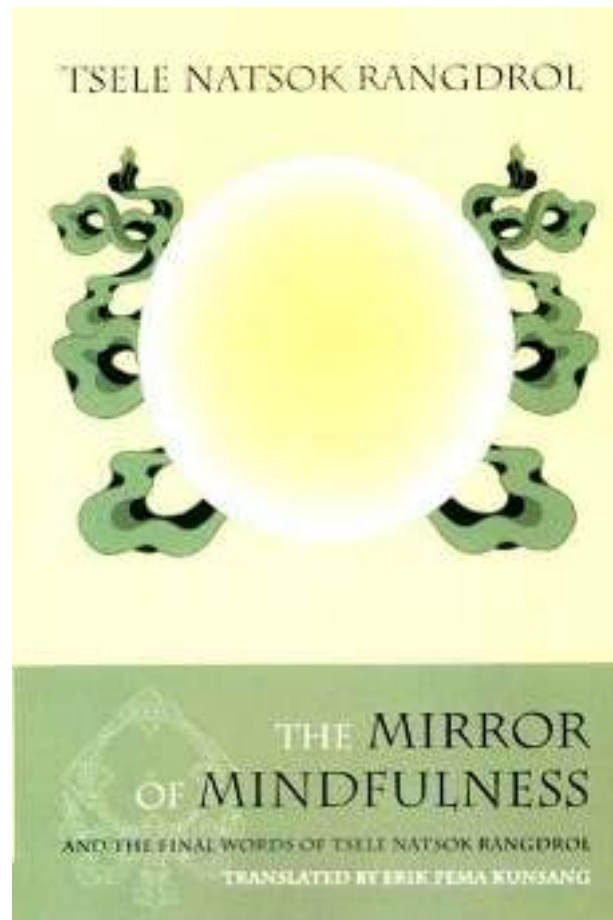
For most Western readers it is not easy to understand the Tibetan Book of the Dead. In the book *The Mirror of Mindfulness* (2), Erik Pema Kunsang emphasizes this as follows in the *Translator's Preface*:

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

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

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

*“An enlightened being like Buddha Shakyamuni,*



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

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

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

And then second:

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





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

The third and fourth intermediate states are:

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

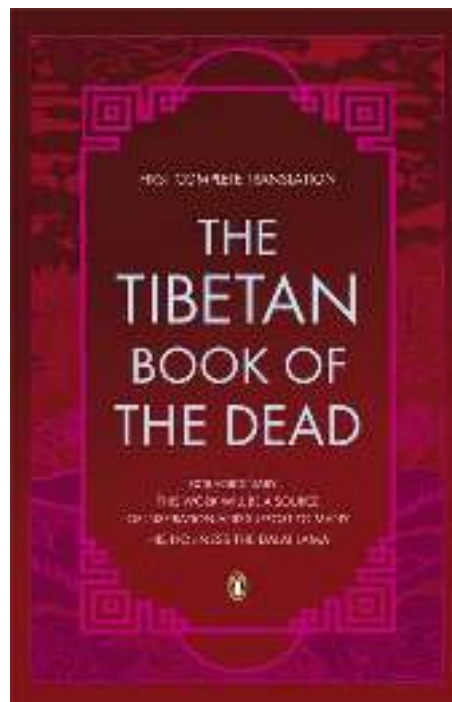
*When habitual tendencies of grasping at duality – which stems from lack of insight into the basic nature of mind and are embedded in one’s base of consciousness – regain power after their short lapse, one seeks reembodiment corresponding to one’s karmic habits, which are now ready to ripen. That is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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

*One has suddenly assumed a form such that*





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

#### Why read this book?

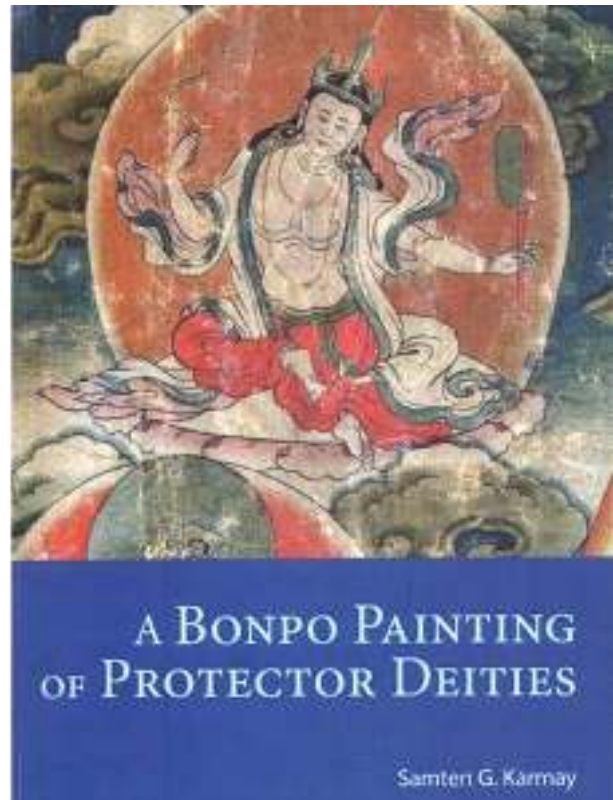
"The Mirror of Mindfulness is not merely an esoteric lesson in the pointlessness and futility of worldly concerns. Tsele Natsok Rangdröl gives key points on dealing with the situation in each of the four bardos — that is, how to face the situation directly and take advantage of the opportunities that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

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

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

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

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



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

#### References

- (1) 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.
- (2) Tsele Natsok Rangdröl, *The Mirror of Mindfulness: The cycle of the Four Bardos and The Final Words of Tsele Natsok Rangdrol*, Rangjung Yeshe Publications, pbk nov 2010, first edition 1987.
- (3) Samten G. Karmay, *A Bonpo Painting of Protector Deities*, Varja Books, First Published 2015. (Content: The Protector Deities of A Bonpo Funeral Rite.)

Text by Frits de Vries





# SERVING THE CULTURE AND TEACHINGS OF BON

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

## Where were you born?

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

## Can you tell us something about your family?

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

## What made you decide to become a monk?

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

## When did you meet Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche?

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





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

### **Why did you choose to come to the West?**

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



Yanggon Monastery in Chharka Village, Dolpo, Nepal.

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

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



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





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

**How do you like it at Serenity Ridge?**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Geshe Tenzin Yangton at Serenity Ridge International Retreat Center.





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



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

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

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

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

**Does every lama perform the same rituals?**

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

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

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

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

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







Taking exams at the Nunnery.



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







Geshe Tenzin Yangton with his mother, nieces and uncle.

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

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

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

**Interview by Ton Bisscheroux**



Geshe Tenzin Yangton with his brother Yungdrung Wodser in 2006.



Geshe Yangton with his niece and mother.



At Serenity Ridge.





## REQUESTING PRAYERS FROM LIGMINCHA INTERNATIONAL RESIDENT LAMAS

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

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

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

### Prayers Offered by Ligmincha International Resident Lamas

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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





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

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

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

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

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

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

## Death Prayers



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

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

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

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

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

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

Geshe Gyatso at Ligmincha Poland:

[info@bongaruda.pl](mailto:info@bongaruda.pl)

Lama Kalsang and Lama Yungdrung at Ligmincha Mexico: [ligminchamexico@ligmincha.mx](mailto:ligminchamexico@ligmincha.mx)

Geshe Lhundup at Ligmincha France:

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

Geshe Denma at Ligmincha Texas:

[info@ligminchatexas.org](mailto:info@ligminchatexas.org)

Geshe Tenzin Yangton at Serenity Ridge:

[sr.lama.committee@ligmincha.org](mailto:sr.lama.committee@ligmincha.org)





# THE 21 NAILS

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

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

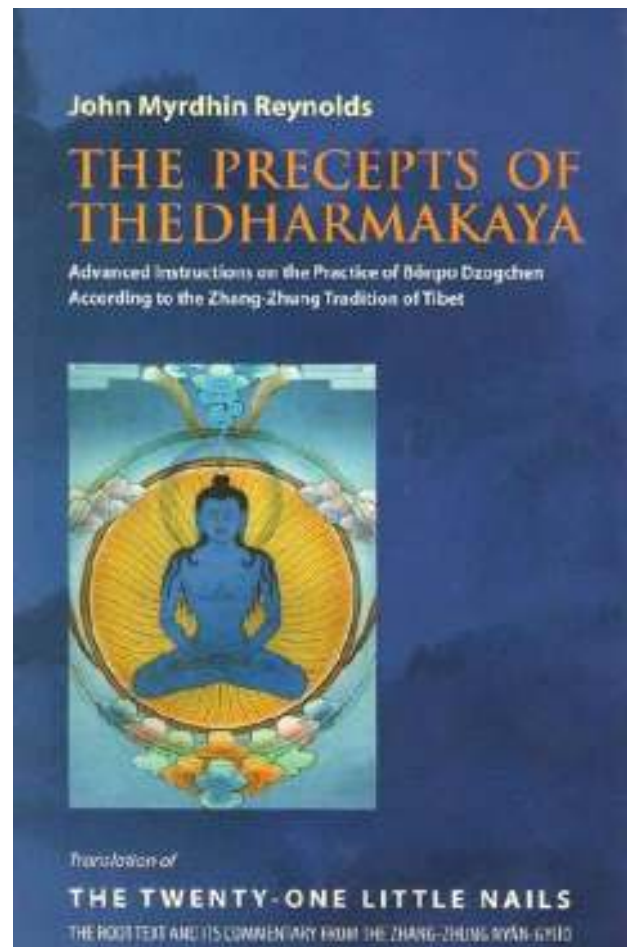
Here is contained the text of "The Twenty-One Little Nails," according to the Oral Transmission from Zhang-zhung for the Great Perfection Teachings.

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

## Introduction

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

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



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

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

## 1. The Little Nail of Recognizing the Basis of Everything

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





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

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

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

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

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

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



Kuntu Zangpo.

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

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

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

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

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





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

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

**Text selected by Ton Bisscheroux**



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

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

*Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.*

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

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

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

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





# BODHICITTA AND COMPASSION

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

## BODHICITTA AND COMPASSION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche

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## AT HOME IN THE HEART

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

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

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

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

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

**Text selected by Jantien Spindler**





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

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







# Ligmincha Europe Magazine

**# 22 – Autumn 2016**



Meet the Sangha from Costa Rica

Bodhicitta

The Three Realms

Art in the Newsletter

A Deity for your Shrine





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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 are delighted to let you know that Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will be offering another free online course on [www.ligminchalearning.com](http://www.ligminchalearning.com). It begins on November 1, 2016, and then it will be open always. The topic is 'Starting a Meditation Practice.' This self-paced course is designed for people who would like to begin meditating on a daily basis.

In the recent free *Healing From the Source* workshop – offered on [GlideWing](http://GlideWing) – more than two thousand people registered and close to one thousand actively participated. Filling in the 'practice tracker' survey each evening during the workshop made me aware of patterns and qualities in my life. I realized that when I am ill that lives goes on a hold. Then I stop with practicing till I feel better. Actually, that is the time when the practice benefits most. So, I want to express my gratitude for the generosity of Rinpoche and all the volunteers who make the free internet teachings possible.

We share with you stories of the Teachers and members of the sangha we have interviewed. They are inspiring, informing and there are always amusing parts. Others expressed themselves by writing poems, by drawing, making a website or a calendar. We also show two pages from Polish newsletters, because of their simplicity and beauty. When you click on the photos you will find the information of the activities.



In 2011 we put the first Newsletter for the European sangha on the internet, when Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche celebrated his 50th birthday in Nepal with sangha members from all over the world. With the Ligmincha Europe Magazine we want 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. Now we are looking for sponsors who will make it financially possible that we make a book of the second ten issues, and give it to Menri Monastery, Triten Norbutse Monastery, Serenity Ridge, Chamma Ling Poland, Chamma Ling Colorado, Chamma Ling Mexico, Ligmincha Texas, Ligmincha France, Lishu Institute the European Center, H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. Being a sponsor of € 108 gives you a unique chance that your name will be mentioned in a book in all the above mentioned libraries. When you want to participate, please write an e-mail to [magazine@ligmincha.eu](mailto:magazine@ligmincha.eu).

Kunto Zangpo (All Good),  
**Ton Bisscheroux, chief editor**





# STARTING A MEDITATION PRACTICE

**A New, Free Self-Guided Course with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche on Ligmincha Learning.**

We are excited to announce a new, free course with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche on [www.ligmincha-learning.com](http://www.ligmincha-learning.com) beginning November 1. The course, "Starting a Meditation Practice, from the Bon Tradition of Tibet," provides a complete introduction on beginning a meditation practice, with clear and easy-to-follow instructions.

Recorded over several weeks at Rinpoche's home in California, these videos, images and written instructions discuss why it is important to develop a regular meditation practice and how to cultivate one's practice. Rinpoche discusses practical matters such as how to sit in the five-point posture, what time of day is best for practice and how long to sit. He then guides participants the practices of the *Nine Breathings of Purification*, the *Five Outer Tsa Lung*, and the *Refuge of the Body*, or Stillness. The videos are presented in short segments, each one on a specific topic or aspect of practice.

To begin with, this new course will be offered in English and with English subtitles. Over the coming months, Spanish, German, Polish and other languages as subtitle options will become available, along with guided meditations as MP3 files for download in the same languages. In the future, expanded access will be available to online teach-

ings in multiple languages. Registration details are on the [Ligmincha Learning](http://Ligmincha Learning) website.

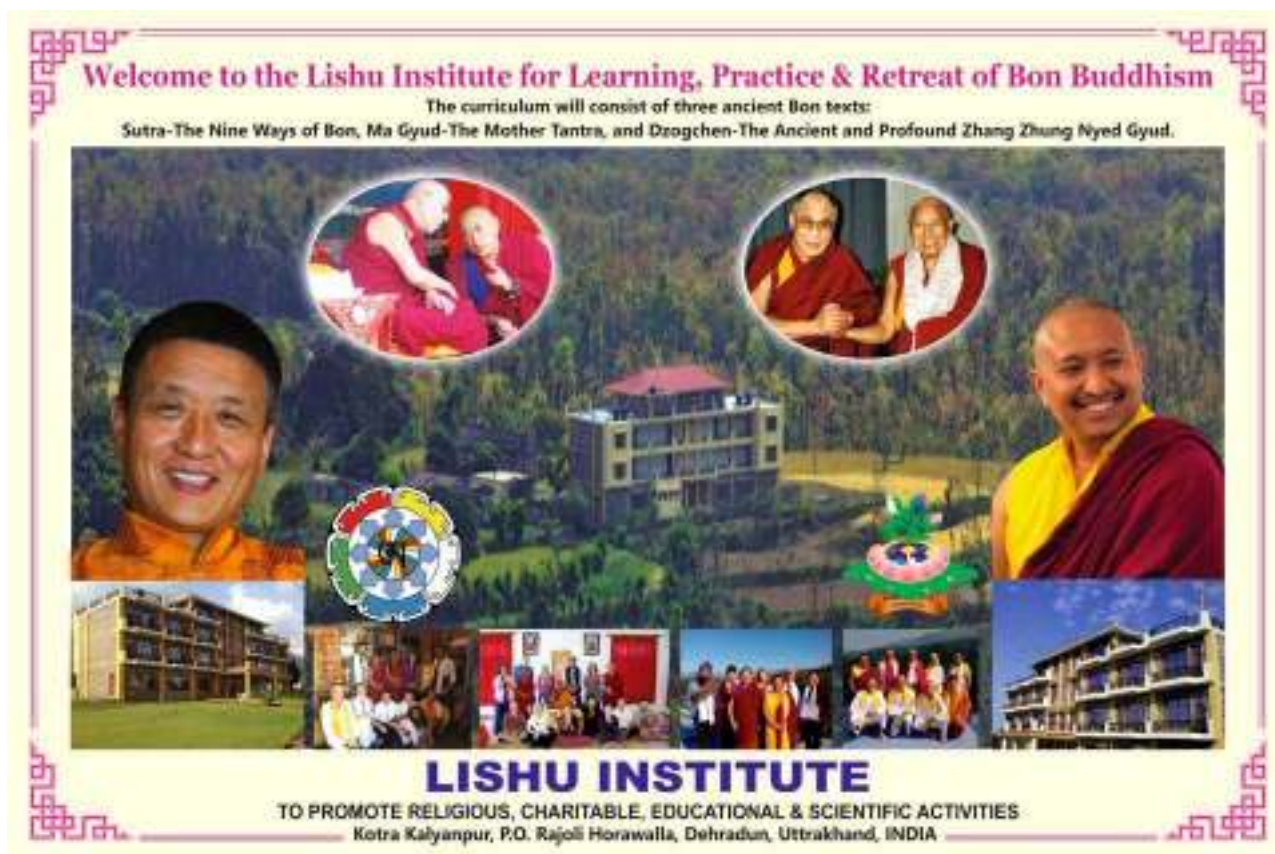
It is hoped that this will be the first of many courses or tutorials offered by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, resident lamas and senior Western students through the online learning platform. Several new courses on Ligmincha Learning are already being planned, including the practice of *Sherab Chamma, the Wisdom Loving Mother*; another course introducing the *Outer, Inner and Secret Tsa Lung* practices in greater detail, and a follow-up course by Rinpoche on cultivating a personal practice at home.

Providing this and other online programs, like Rinpoche's live webcasts, is the work of a sizeable team of volunteers and, on occasion, paid professionals. For Ligmincha to continue to make such content available, financial support of practitioners all around the world is needed. If you have benefited from the teachings and practices offered on line, whether the live webcasts or courses or both, please consider making a donation to support activities online. Your contribution will help ensure that you and others like you all around the world will continue to have access to the precious Bon teachings and to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche online.

[Donate now](#)







**September 8 to November 11, 2016:** After the initiations of *Gekhod* and *Sherab Chamma* the Lishu students completed a forty-nine days intensive Tummo retreat, and *Dream Yoga* teaching. The retreat was closed with a *Sang offering*.

From **January 9 to March 17, 2017**, Lishu Institute offers a ten weeks *Chöd* and *Phowa* teachings and practice retreat from the *Mother Tantra*. Application is open. You can download the application form at [www.lishu.org](http://www.lishu.org) or send an email to [yangrisangmo@gmail.com](mailto:yangrisangmo@gmail.com).





# THE 3 DOORS COMPASSION PROJECT LAUNCHES

**The 3 Doors, an international meditation organization founded by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, has just launched a nine-month compassion project for healthcare, education, and social service providers.**

This project examines empathy burn-out, obstacles to compassionate caregiving, and the development of self-compassion. Led by Senior 3 Doors Teachers Gabriel Rocco and Marcy Vaughn, participants are learning ancient Tibetan meditation methods to strengthen their resilience in relation to suffering.



“You can't talk about compassion without talking about suffering. How do you experience the suffering of others? How do you acknowledge and care for your own suffering?” asks Marcy Vaughn, who teaches Tibetan meditation internationally. “The 3 Doors Compassion Project is bringing together an amazing group of doctors, body workers, educators, therapists, and hospital administrators to explore how experiences of suffering affect our natural ability to be compassionate.”

Participants will experience how these Tibetan meditation practices can clear blocks and open up their natural caregiving abilities. In addition to a daily meditation commitment, the 28 participants will meet monthly for day-long workshop retreats held at the Contemplative Arts Studio in Bryn Mawr, PA. The teachings include an integrated process of meditation and self-reflection to cultivate love, compassion, joy, and equanimity in relation to self, family, and community. This project has been generously funded by an anonymous donor who is dedicated to supporting healthier, happier workplaces and communities.

The 3 Doors Compassion Project includes a research component to document the effects of these Tibetan meditation methods on mindfulness, compassion, work burnout, anxiety and depression, quality of relationships, and Quality of Life (QOL). The research is led by Principal Investigator Mike Gawrysiak, Ph.D., Delaware State Uni-

versity and University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, with the support of The 3 Doors research team: Claire Clark, Ph.D., University of Utah School of Medicine; Alejandro Chaoul, Ph.D., University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center's Integrative Medicine Program, and Scott Clearwater, Ph.D.

“All of our participants have had experience with some form of mindfulness practices or mindfulness training. We plan to build on this base and provide them with workplace meditation tools that can help them resolve issues as they arise, moment to moment. Once learned, these meditation methods can be quickly used to effectively remove blocks and restore energy levels. Marcy and I are so excited to be bringing these teachings to our local community,” explains Gabriel Rocco, who also serves as a Senior Instructor at the Penn Program for Mindfulness.

## ABOUT

**The 3 Doors** is an international meditation organization founded by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche that teaches Tibetan meditation methods with practical applications for everyday life. *Transforming lives through meditation.* [www.the3doors.org](http://www.the3doors.org)

**The Contemplative Arts Studio** (Bryn Mawr, PA), integrates meditation and personal reflection for health and creativity. Founded by Gabriel Rocco and Marcy Vaughn, this studio is located Bryn Mawr, PA. [www.contemplative-arts.com](http://www.contemplative-arts.com)

For additional information about this project or media inquiries, please contact [chelsea@the3doors.org](mailto:chelsea@the3doors.org).



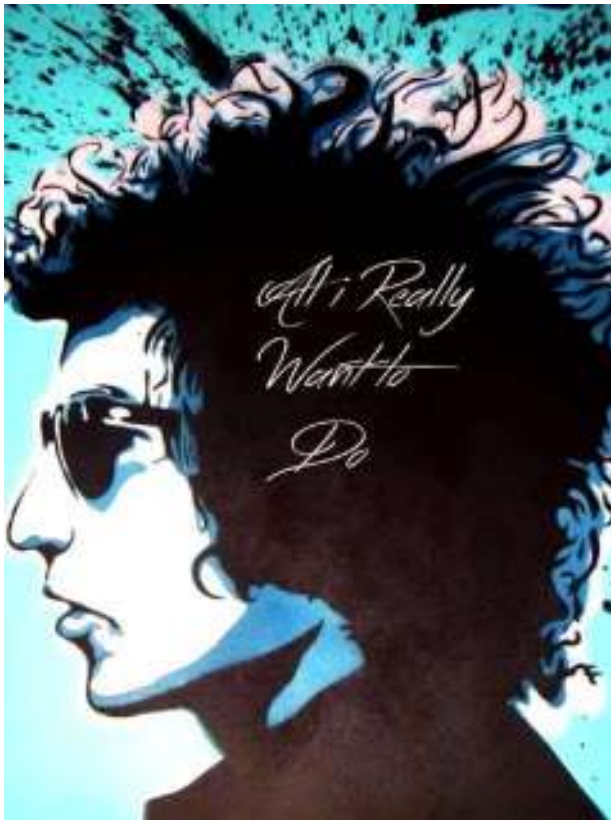
Gabriel Rocco and Marcy Vaughn at their Contemplative Arts Studio in Bryn Mawr, PA .





# ALL I REALLY WANT TO DO

We want to share inspiring texts from other Buddhist streams and traditions. This time we give you the lyrics of a song by Bob Dylan – the Nobel Prize Winner for Literature in 2016. It is a teaching on compassion, because it tells you what you should *not* do! Selected by Ton Bisscheroux.



I ain't lookin' to block you up  
Shock or knock or lock you up  
Analyze you, categorize you  
Finalize you or advertise you  
All I really want to do  
Is, baby, be friends with you.

I don't want to straight-face you  
Race or chase you, track or trace you  
Or disgrace you or displace you  
Or define you or confine you  
All I really want to do  
Is, baby, be friends with you.

I don't want to meet your kin  
Make you spin or do you in  
Or select you or dissect you  
Or inspect you or reject you  
All I really want to do  
Is, baby, be friends with you.

I don't want to fake you out  
Take or shake or forsake you out  
I ain't lookin' for you to feel like me  
See like me or be like me  
All I really want to do  
Is, baby, be friends with you.

I ain't lookin' to compete with you  
Beat or cheat or mistreat you  
Simplify you, classify you  
Deny, defy or crucify you  
All I really want to do  
Is, baby, be friends with you.

No, and I ain't lookin' to fight with you  
Frighten you or tighten you  
Drag you down or drain you down  
Chain you down or bring you down  
All I really want to do  
Is, baby, be friends with you.





# THE 'HUG LAMA' OF COSTA RICA

**We interviewed Oscar Jiménez and his son Jeal Jiménez as a way to introduce the Costa Rica sangha. It is a small sangha — with great plans for the future!**

**Where did you first meet Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche?**

**Jeal:** The first time for me and almost the entire Costa Rican Sangha was in 2011 at our International airport, when we invited Rinpoche to Costa Rica to teach a weekend seminar on *Dream Yoga*. We were surprised that the approach of the teacher and the lamas in Bon is different from the other Tibetan schools we had visited before. In the other schools there was more distance, with protocols regarding touching the lama, etc. The first time we met Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche at the airport, we approached him with a *khata*, and basically he just gave us a warm hug and this touched us to the heart. We call him the 'Hug Lama.' Through the years we have experienced a lot of warmth and accessibility from all the lamas and teachers connected to Ligmincha International.

**Oscar:** I met Rinpoche the first time in 2010 in Mexico, when I went to the opening ceremony of

the *Great Stupa for World Peace*. Precious teachings about the *Heart Drops of Dharmakaya* were given by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche, and H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche.

**How did you get interested in Bon and Buddhism?**

**Oscar:** I have always been on a spiritual path, and at some point in my life was even preparing to become a Catholic priest. But I got married, and my spiritual quest continued. We live in a small country where Buddhism and the Oriental spiritual traditions were not that very well known in the 80's. 1995 was the first time I found a Tibetan Lama in Costa Rica. Khensur Rinpoche Lobsang Tsephel was in a Gelugpa Dharma center founded by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Later we got to know the Dzogchen teachings from Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. Through him, we heard about and got interested in the Tibetan Yogas. In 2008 I found out that a teacher, Alejandro Chaoul, is married to a Costa Rican. So, we invited him for a *Tsa Lung* seminar in 2009. These first Bon teachings in Costa Rica caught us.

**Jeal:** I got involved through my father. When he started to practice Buddhism in 1995, I was nine years old. So, first I was the son of a Buddhist, and



Oscar and Jeal Jiménez.







Seminar with Alejandro Chaoul.

later I became a practitioner myself. There was a time in my life that I was looking for something, and by going to these seminars I found it. It was an experience that had to happen.

**Can you tell about the seminar with Alejandro?**

**Jeal:** It was a great experience for all of us. We discovered that through some breathing and movement exercises, simple in appearance, we were able to connect easily with a deep experience of a balanced body, energy, and mind.

After the first weekend seminar we decided to start practicing together as a group, and we have been inviting Alejandro at least once a year since. He taught the *Sacred Warrior Syllables*, the *Nine Breathings of Purification*, some *Thrul khors*, and the *Sherab Chamma* practice. About thirty-five to fifty people came to these seminars, and many people have been coming every year. This way and through him, we got to know about Ligmincha and invited Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. Alejandro translated into Spanish.



Seminar with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.







Meditation with Kalsang Nyima in forest.

### Can you tell about the practice group?

**Jeal:** We practice every week, and sometimes we are up to fifteen or twenty people, sometimes only five. We do the *Nine Breathings of Purification*, *Tsa Lung*, and the *Five Warrior Syllables*. Sometimes we do the practice of *Sherab Chamma*. We have been at different places, often at sangha members' homes.

About ninety percent of the people in Costa Rica are Christian. We see a lot of people that are open to meditation and yoga. We share with them that the most important thing is to feel the benefits of these practices, rather than to become a Bonpo or

Buddhist. Buddhism and yoga are not that well known here, but in the last few years that number has been increasing, because people discover that yoga and meditation is good for physical and mental health. We recognize what Alejandro said in the *Ligmincha Europe Magazine # 21*, that some people are just looking for meditation but not religion, and people can confuse the Bon tradition with what we know in the West as religion. So, we keep it simple, as H.H. the Dalai Lama said: "*Buddhism is a Science of the Mind.*"

Recently we were invited by a community that organizes cultural activities, where we shared the



In the Gompa with Kalsang Nyima





*Tsa Lung*. People could feel its effects. They liked it, and asked where they could practice it. For some people, seeing a *Thangka* or other religious objects could be obstacles. People ask where the *Tsa Lung* is originated. We normally don't talk much about that, because we want to share the method, not explain the background. If people are really interested, we share everything we can.

**Oscar:** When I instruct the *Tsa Lung* I follow the book *Awakening the Sacred Body*. I always say that I am not a teacher, nor an official instructor, I just share with you these instructions as a practitioner, and you can practice at home following the book and videos.

Some time ago I met with an old friend from high school, who works in the most famous library of Costa Rica. They had a new section in the library with spiritual books, and among them, books from Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, H.H. the Dalai Lama and other Buddhist teachers. So, she invited us to give a talk, and guide a *Tsa Lung* practice in the library based on the book *Awakening the Sacred Body*. We had the opportunity to tell around fifty people that we had a practice group, and that everybody interested could join us. Some people had already started to practice on their own, using the book with the DVD.

**Do you organize other activities?**

**Jeal:** Every year we invite at least one lama. After Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's visit, some of the sangha members, including my father and me, visited Serenity Ridge for different retreats, and three sangha members participated in a two-year *Soul Retrieval* course there. They got to know Geshe YongDong. We invited him four times, and we always had between thirty and fifty participants.

Recently we organized a first-ever retreat with Lama Kalsang Nyima – the resident lama in Mexico in Valle de Bravo – in a beautiful Tibetan Sakya center located in the mountains. There, we stayed with sixteen people. A weekend seminar is great, but it is different when you can stay longer at one place with a lama, so we will organize another similar retreat whenever we get the chance.

When there is a webcast we organize a place where we can watch together. We also try to organize a monthly daylong practice on a Saturday or Sunday.

**Can you describe the structure of Ligmincha Costa Rica?**

**Jeal:** Ligmincha Costa Rica was founded when Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche visited us in 2011. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche is the founder, I am currently the Executive Director, Oscar Solano is the social media and communications manager,



Seminar with Geshe Yongdong.





and Oscar Jimenez is the *umdze*. When we organize a seminar or a retreat, there are always a lot of people supporting with the organization.

**Are you familiar with The 3 Doors practices in Costa Rica?**

**Jeal:** Sure, we actually have one sangha member, Maria Ester Lezama, who participates in The 3 Doors Academy in Mexico. I am also interested, but right now I am in a phase in life where it is difficult due to my job, so in the future I might do it.

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

**Jeal:** We will continue to invite at least once a year both a lama and Alejandro. We don't have a resident lama, but we would like to have one. He does not necessarily have to stay here all year, but for us it is important that he speaks Spanish.

We stay connected with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's teachings and webcasts and we are happy with the Spanish translations by Lourdes Hinojosa.

Our dream is to have a center where we can organize retreats for lamas and for The 3 Doors. We would like to host sangha members from all over the world. We live in a special country. It is very easy to be a tourist here, so people could combine a retreat with a vacation. We have beautiful rainforests, and beaches on both the Carib-

bean Sea and Pacific Ocean. We have a peaceful culture, mainly because we are one of the few countries in the world without an army, so promoting teachings and methods for the internal and world peace is part of our tradition.

**I can't image how that is, a country without an army, but I am sure a lot of money will not be wasted on weapons.**

**Jeal:** You are right, instead of wasting money on weapons, we have invested in public education. We don't miss an army, and we don't compete with other countries who spend more and more on the military budget. I trust that the *Dharma* will protect me if I have to defend myself.

**Is there something else you would like to share?**

**Oscar:** What I appreciated in Bon is the way Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche shows us how to integrate the teachings in our daily life, in our jobs, in our families, and every aspect of our lives.

**Jeal:** It is wonderful how we are connected worldwide as a sangha with the free Internet Teachings, *The Voice of Clear Light*, the *Ligmincha Europe Magazine*, Facebook, the website and through Rinpoche's books.

**Interview by Ton Bisscheroux**

Photos: courtesy of Ligmincha Costa Rica



Costa Rica Aerial view of Manuel Antonio.





# WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN EUROPE

Here is our report from what's been happening in the European sangha. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche visited a few countries and gave internet teachings; and sanghas invited Geshes. A lot of activities take place in Poland, but we don't have a report from there. To give you an impression, and because it is so beautiful we publish Polish newsletters in the section *Art in the sangha*.



**September 10 and October 8:**  
Sangha Day and Webcast.



**July 8 – 10:**  
Ngondro Part 1 with Geshe  
Choehortshang Rinpoche.

**September 30 – October 2:**  
Geshe Lhundup taught *Trul Khor*.







**August 23 – 28:**  
In Buchenau, Germany, was the Summer Retreat with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.



**September 3 – 4:**  
Weekend teaching in Budapest, Hungary, with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche on *Sleep Yoga*.



**September 22 – 23:**  
The first day Geshe Lhundup taught *Guru Yoga* in Sittard, and the second day *A-tri* in Utrecht, the Netherlands.







**In August and September:**  
 Geshe Thupten Negi traveled through Europe to promote Lishu Institute and gave teachings and meditation in: Austria, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia and Switzerland. He was with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche during the retreats in Buchenau, Germany, and in Wilga, Poland.







#### September 3 and 4:

In Budapest, Hungary, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught *SleepYoga*. For the first time a whole seminar was broadcasted live, and sangha members all over the world could watch live, or later look to the videos on Facebook. About two hundred sixty people attended the seminar.

You can watch the recordings here:

- [Sleep Yoga teaching in Budapest, Day 1, Session 1](#)
- [Sleep Yoga teaching in Budapest, Day 1, Session 2](#)
- [Sleep Yoga teaching in Budapest, Day 1, Session 3](#)
- [Sleep Yoga teaching in Budapest, Day 1, Session 4](#)
- [Sleep Yoga teaching in Budapest, Day 2, Session 1](#)
- [Sleep Yoga teaching in Budapest, Day 2, Session 2](#)
- [Sleep Yoga teaching in Budapest, Day 2, Session 3 \(final\)](#)



You can watch the recording here:

[Transforming Your World Through Service, Part 6: Questions and Answers](#)







**Free Live Webcast**  
**Releasing Attachments,  
 Finding Freedom and Joy**  
 with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche  
**September 10, 2016 21.00–22.10 (C.E.T.)**

Register for the webcast at [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)  
 This is Part 1 of a FREE six-month course on living & dying.  
 Learn more at [www.ligminchalearning.com](http://www.ligminchalearning.com)



You can watch the recording here:

[Living with Joy, Dying in Peace, Part 1: Releasing Attachments, Finding Freedom and Joy](#)



**Free Live Webcast**  
**Transcending Fear, Finding Hope**  
 with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche  
**October 8, 2016, 21.00–22.10 (C.E.T.)**

Register for the webcast at [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)  
 Part 2 of a FREE six-month course on living and dying.  
 Learn more at [www.ligminchalearning.com](http://www.ligminchalearning.com)



You can watch the recording here:

[Living with Joy, Dying in Peace, Part 2: Transcending Fear, Finding Hope](#)



**Free Live Webcast**  
**Fear and Attachment:  
 Doorways to Liberation**  
 From the Fall Retreat  
 with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche  
**October 15, 2016 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:

[Fear and Attachment: Doorways to Liberation \(the Practice of Chöd\)](#)





# ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A DEITY ON YOUR SHRINE?

For several years there has been an interesting website, called [www.bonpo-arts.com](http://www.bonpo-arts.com). Recently we took a look at the beautiful photos of *Thangkas* and Statues from the Bon-Pantheon which are displayed on the webpage, and wanted to know more about it. So we asked the creator, Maximilian Möslers, for an interview.

**Ton: Why did you create this website?**

**Max:** When I made my first visit to Menri Monastery and Triten Norbutse Monastery in 2006, I learned a lot about the iconography and different deities of the Bon religion. Being inspired by them I took a lot of photos. Later on I researched on the internet and found out that it was not easy to obtain pictures of *Thangka* paintings and statues in the Bon tradition. On the internet you can find many Buddhist *Thangkas* and statues, for example on [www.himalayanart.org](http://www.himalayanart.org), but rarely Bonpo art. There were some small photos on the Ligmicha website, but no high quality photos which could be printed on a bigger scale.

Creating this website in 2007 would give Bon practitioners all around the world the possibility of gaining access to the most inspiring and exceptionally beautiful spiritual works of art. On my website you see mostly modern Tibetan Bon *Thangkas* in a high resolution. This way people who aren't able to travel to India and the holy places would get a chance to see the very powerful and wonderful statues from our tradition.

The website also enables practitioners, who can't buy a big *Thangka* or statue, to print it and put it on their shrine and meditate on it. It is not only about art, but more important how that art is connected to our spiritual practice.

**Ton: What is the origin of the photos?**

Many photos on the website are pieces of art



Thomm and Maximilian Möslers in Buchenau, Germany, August 2016.

from our family collection, some I took on retreat and as already mentioned a lot on my trips to the east. At each photo I described where it's from.

**Frits: What is the origin of the descriptive texts beside the photos on the website?**

**Max:** Some of them are lines about deities or prayers dropped by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche during several teachings through the last years. Other texts come from Per Kvaerne, who wrote a very interesting book about the more specific cultural aspect of Bon religion. Also during my time in Menri I received teachings and explanations from Menri Lopon Rinpoche and Geshe Asonam (the former head of the guest house in Menri).

**Ton: How many visitors do you have on your website?**

**Max:** In the beginning I had about four visitors a day and three visits were from my computer. [laughter] Now there are days with around two hundred visitors. When I found out that many people from around the world – also from Tibet and China – visited my website, I added information about the books published by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, and how to support Rinpoche, Menri





Monastery and Tritten Norbutse Monastery. After my father and me did the internet workshop *Five Warrior Seed Syllables*, and were so enthusiastic about these teachings, I started to promote Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's *Glidewing workshops*. These courses are very good organized and really nice for people who want to go deeper into the practice.

**Frits:** At present I participate in the *Glidewing Dream Yoga* course. We are halfway in the four weeks. Although Rinpoche is in Korea now, he is available to answer our questions. There are sixty people following this workshop, where 'lucid dreaming' is the keyword. It is an important workshop, because we can use the night to practice.

**Max:** These courses are really wonderful and a great way to practice beside your daily life.

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

**Max:** In 2003, when I was fifteen years old, my father went to look for a new master, after his root Guru – which was a Gelugpa lama – had died. We wanted to see different Buddhist masters. First we went to see Sogyal Rinpoche. The second was Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, who was teaching in Buchenau, Germany. We didn't know anything about Bon. We received the *Bardo* teachings and

the *Five Lines of Dawa Gyaltsen*. I was impressed and amazed about the richness of the Bon tradition. Especially all the details of the *Bardo* teachings, the specific descriptions of the post-mortem, when we die, what we are going to experience and what we see. And the possibilities we have to find liberation and enlightenment when we die. Rinpoche talked about it in a very positive way, not in a sad manner, that we have to die, and that everything is impermanent and horrible. Instead it was warm, open and playful. Of course we have to die and everything is impermanent. But we can gain a lot from these findings. During the retreat I found such a strong connection to Rinpoche, and felt very familiar with the deities and the prayers of the Bon tradition. I took refuge with Rinpoche on that retreat, and since then I attended retreats and seminars in Germany, France, the Netherlands, Poland and Spain. My father, who is my strongest support in practice, and his colleague Sandra were always with me. Later my sisters and different friends also joined.

**Frits:** Can you tell something about your visit to Menri Monastery?

At the age of eighteen, I felt an inner wish to connect more with Bon and meditation, and wanted to go to India. I had already started my medical education in Brussels, Belgium, but could not give my full focus and attention to the medical studies.



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche with Maximilian Mösler in Paris, April 2015.





At that time I had a lot of dreams about the Menri Monastery and especially linked to Chongtul Rinpoche, who is a tulku from Menri. My whole family, except my father, objected about my going. So, I asked Rinpoche what he thought about me visiting Menri Monastery. Rinpoche advised me to finish my study first, and go later. But probably every student hears what he wants to hear, and part of the answer seemed to me that I could go. [laughter]



Chongtul Rinpoche.

Soon after I received teachings from Chongtul Rinpoche in Munich, Germany, and he invited me to visit Menri Monastery. He said he would take care of me. So I quit my studies and in 2006 I went to India. In Menri Monastery Chongtul Rinpoche was very busy, so Geshe Asonam, a very kind monk took care of me. My wish was to see the root of these wonderful teachings, which had helped me already a lot in my life before. Also, I wanted to see the place where Rinpoche got his education.

I stayed four months in Menri Monastery, and I have memorable experiences, especially during the winter time. The contrast between my life in Germany and India was strong. Being a spoiled brat, I was directly confronted with difficult conditions, like no running water because of frozen water pipes, and no heating in my room. Every day I praised my sleeping bag and worshipped it, because it was the most precious thing I had with me. I almost brought it to His Holiness to bless it. [laughter]

I was a full carnivore, and had to switch to a vegetarian diet: every day in the morning *chapatti* with eggs, lunch rice and *dahl*, in the evening *Thugpa* (Tibetan vegetable noodle soup). Every day I tried through Tantric practice to transform the rice and

*dahl* in a grilled chicken, but I never succeeded; not in the outer world and not in my mind. [laughter]



“... a plate of food with potatoes, tomatoes, and beans appeared and then transformed ...”

– *Wonders of the Natural of Mind*, p. 29

I had a deep wish to practice, and went to His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche. He asked me what an eighteen year old Western boy wanted in the monastery. I answered that I wanted to receive the *Bardo* teachings, learn the rituals which you do when somebody dies, receive teachings about the *nagas* and of course Dzogchen teachings. He said: “You just go back to Germany.” Now it is funny to talk about, but at that time it was hard.

In my room I started to do *Zhine* meditation for many hours a day. The most important guide was Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's book *Wonders of the Natural Mind*. I tried to experience each line he wrote about the practices as mentioned in the book. Rinpoche gives very clear instructions of how you set up your spot where you do the *Zhine*, and what kind of experiences could arise.







Geshe Asonam and Max at Menri Monastery.

I was blessed that I could talk to Chongtul Rinpoche and Geshe Sonam and after some weeks as His Holiness saw my true interest he started to give me teachings.

**Ton: What other places did you visit?**

**Max:** I visited some of the holy Buddhist places like Bodhgaya. After that I travelled to Kathmandu, Nepal, to visit Triten Norbutse Monastery. I had met H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche before, but there he gave me an audience. I had plans what I should say and what I wanted to offer to him. But when we met I was blown away by his energy and kindness. I feel blessed that I had the chance to meet so many wonderful lamas in my young life.



Big stone Buddha in Sarnath, India.

In the Tibetan colony Majnu Ka Tila, in Delhi, I met Tenzin Rinpoche and he told me that the most important thing is to integrate practice in daily life. That is more important than staying in the cave or in the monastery. I found out that it is very true.

**Frits: Have you done the *Ngondro*?**

**Max:** Yes, but I have to admit that after fifteen

years I have not done all the practices yet. I have done most of the mantras, but not the prostrations and the other prayers. I integrate parts from the *Ngondro* in my daily life, like observing the impermanence. The *Ngondro* gives us such a good intention, motivation and direction in life that I really want to finish it in this life.

**Ton: Do you find time to meditate every day?**

**Max:** I work in a hospital as a medical doctor and at the moment I'm studying to become an eye doctor. I think it was His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche who said "The eyes are the doors to enlightenment." It is a nice profession, because every day I look into the doors of enlightenment. *[laughter]*

In the morning when I drive to work, for half an hour I recite prayers and mantras. That is a nice way to put myself in the right motivation for the day, before I start working. During the day I do some informal practice that Rinpoche taught us in many teachings. For example, putting my attention to the space between me and the opposite. When I come home from work I do formal practice for thirty to sixty minutes. I like to do the *Tsa Lung*, the *Five Warrior Seed Syllables* and contemplation (*trekchöd*).

Every two weeks I guide a Ligmincha practice group in Nurnberg, where we do *Guru Yoga*, *Tsa Lung*, the *Five Warrior Seed Syllables* and sometimes *Zhine*.

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

**Max:** I am always interested to be in touch and communicate with the people who visit my [web-site](#), and I am very happy when they write in the guestbook or send me an [e-mail](#).

May our doing and resting help facilitate the teachings and thereby benefit all sentient beings.

**Interview by Frits de Vries and Ton Bisscheroux**

Photos: courtesy of Maximilian Möslér

Next page: photo and information from the website







## Drenpa Namkha

Bön > Thangkas

“Drenpa Namkha, “Recollection-Sky,” is beyond doubt the most important and, in some respects, complex figure in the history of Bon during the reign of the great Tibetan kings. He is, above all, the chief protagonist of Bon during the eight century in the bitter struggle with the Buddhist faith, introduced into Tibet under royal patronage; when Bon finally fell out of favor with the king of Tibet, Drenpa Namkha allowed himself to be converted to the new faith. According to the historical tradition of the Bonpos, he did so with an impressive gesture: he cut of his hair himself, in imitation of Buddha Shakyamuni, and then proceeded to ordain himself, scornfully refusing the assistance of the Buddhist monks and justifying his actions by stating that Bon and Buddhism are distinct only on the plane of rela-

tive truth. There can be little doubt as to the historical reality of Drenpa Namkha. He is also mentioned in Buddhist sources.” (...)

“According to the tradition of Bon, Drenpa Namkha is the father of another important sage, Tsewang Rigzin, to whom he transmitted Tantric teachings. In addition, a strong (but not universally accepted) tradition asserts that Drenpa Namkha was also the father of Padmasambhava.”

*(Quoted from Per Kvaerne, The Bon Religion of Tibet, p. 119)*

He was a great master and Siddha and is the source of the teachings of the Yetri Thasel (one of the four bonpo Dzogchen-lineages)

*(Thangka: in possession of Yungdrung Wangden Kreuzer)*





# CALENDAR FOR 2017



## September 2017

| 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       |        |

You can download this calendar from: [www.scribd.com](http://www.scribd.com)





# LIGMINCHA POLAND NEWSLETTER



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Art in the sangha





# THE CONCENTRATION OF ZHINE



© Ligmincha Polska, Katowice





# THE NINE BREATHINGS OF PURIFICATION



EINFACH NUR ATMEN, UND ALLES  
WIRD KLAR!

MP 8  
16

**JUST BREATH, AND EVERYTHING BECOMES CLEAR!**

By Michaela Plaga





# LIFE-LONG PRACTICE WITH THE ‘ROOT VERSES’

A new and complete translation of the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* was previously discussed in [Ligmincha Europe Magazine # 20 and # 21](#). In this contribution Frits de Vries focuses on the content of Chapter 3, called *Root Verses of the Six Intermediate States*.

At the beginning of each chapter of the new *Tibetan Book of the Dead* the editors summarize and clarify the content of the chapter and then the original text of Padmasambhava follows.

Although the *Root Verses* are part of the formal liturgy performed for the dying and deceased, they are also suitable as an independent prayer or poem to read or recite. The editors of the new *Tibetan Book of the Dead* have created a separate chapter for it, i.e. Chapter 3. What now follows is the full content of Chapter 3, beginning with the *Context*, linked up with the complete text of the *Root Verses of the Six Intermediate States*.

## “CONTEXT”

According to this cycle of teachings, the circle of birth and death can be seen as being composed of six intermediate states. These six modalities of existence: our waking living state, dreaming, meditation, the time of death, and the two successive phases of the after-death state are defined in the glossary.

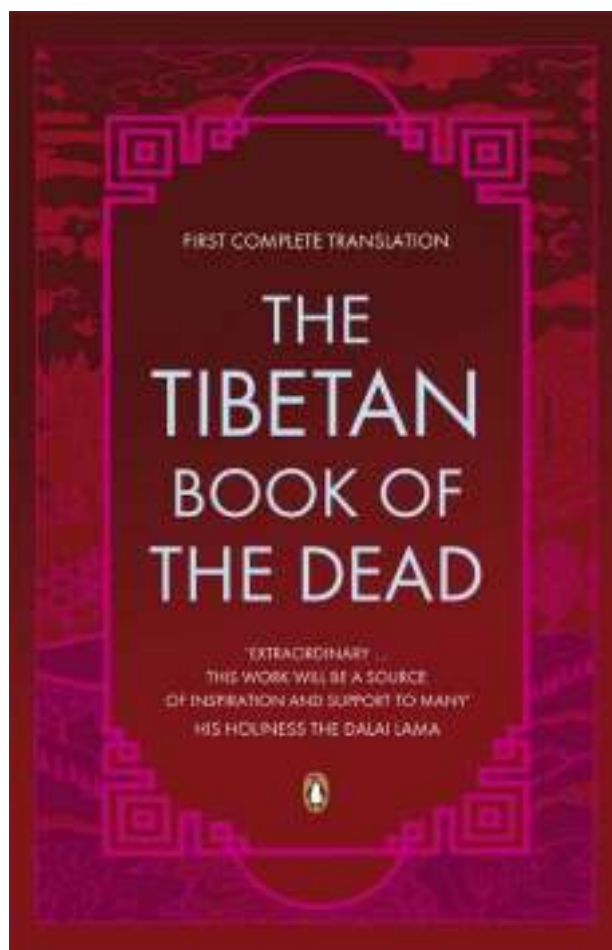
This poem emphasises the centrally important perspective that relates to each of these states. It is recommended that practitioners should memorise these verses and recite them repeatedly, while reflecting on their meaning, throughout their lives.

*Herein is contained the Root Verses of the Six Intermediate States.*

*I bow down to the Conquerors, the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities.*

*The root verses concerning the six intermediate states are as follows:*

*Alas, now as the intermediate state of living arises before me,  
Renouncing laziness, for which there is no time in this life,*



*I must enter the undistracted path of study, reflection and meditation.*

*Taking perceptual experience and [the nature of] mind as the path,*

*I must cultivate actualisation of the three buddha-bodies.*

*Now, having obtained a precious human body, this one time,*

*I do not have the luxury of remaining on a distracted path.*

*Alas, now as the intermediate state of dreams arises before me,*

*Renouncing the corpse-like, insensitive sleep of delusion,*

*I must enter, free from distracting memories, the state of the abiding nature of reality.*

*Cultivating [the experience of] inner radiance,*

*Through the recognition, emanation, and transformation of dreams,*

*I must not sleep like a beast,*

*But cherish the experiential cultivation which mingles sleep with actual [realisation].*





*Alas, now as the intermediate state of meditative concentration arises before me,  
Renouncing the mass of distractions and confusions,  
I must undistractedly enter a state,  
Which is devoid of subjective apprehension, and free from the [two] extremes,  
And attain stability in the stages of generation and perfection.  
At this moment, having renounced activity,  
And having attained a singular [concentration],  
I must not fall under the sway of bewildering mental afflictions!*

*Alas, now as the intermediate state of the time of death arises before me,  
Renouncing [all] attachment, yearning and subjective apprehension in every respect,  
I must undistractedly enter the path, on which the oral teachings are clearly understood,  
And eject my own awareness into the uncreated expanse of space.  
Immediately upon separation from this compounded body of flesh and blood,  
I must know [this body] to be like a transient illusion.*

*Alas, now as the intermediate state of reality arises before me,  
Renouncing the merest sense of awe, terror or fear,  
I must recognise all that arises to be awareness, manifesting naturally of itself.  
Knowing [such sounds, lights and rays] to be visionary phenomena of the intermediate state,  
At this moment, having reached this critical point,  
I must not fear the assembly of Peaceful and Wrathful Deities, which manifest naturally!*

*Alas, now as the intermediate state of rebirth arises before me,  
I must with one-pointed intention concentrate my mind,  
And resolutely connect with the residual potency of my virtuous past actions.  
I must obstruct the womb entrance and call to mind the methods of reversal.  
This is the time when perseverance and purity of perception are imperative.  
I must give up all jealousy and meditate on my spiritual teacher with consort.*

*From the mouth of the accomplished masters come these words:  
'O, [you], with your mind far away, thinking that death will not come,  
Entranced by the pointless activities of this life,  
If you were to return empty-handed now, would not your [life's] purpose have been [utterly] confused?*

*Recognise what it is that you truly need! It is a sacred teaching [for liberation]!  
So, should you not practise this divine [sacred] teaching, beginning from this very moment?'*



*And it is also said,  
'If I choose not to take the oral teachings of the spiritual teacher to heart,  
Am I not the deceiver of myself?'*

*This completes the Root Verses of the Six Intermediate States."*

In the Context of the Six Intermediate States, it is recommended that "practitioners memorise these verses and recite them repeatedly, while reflecting on their meaning, throughout their lives." In my experience while reciting aloud the Root Verses daily for my deceased brother, the verses began to have an effect on me. With first readings, they were interesting short poems about the cycle of life and death, but more and more they became for me main instructions on how to live and prepare for dying.

It is a life-agenda, not only renouncing laziness in the state of living, but also integrating aspects of other states, like transforming dreams, attaining a singular concentration and fearlessness. It also encourages us to delete pointless activities of this life, in order not to leave this life empty-handed.

## References

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 Padmasambhava: revealed by Karma Lingpa; translated by Gyurme Dorje, 2005, London, Penguin Books.

**Text selected and reviewed by Frits de Vries**





# AND ONES HEART NATURALLY OPENS

We have chosen another edited excerpt on compassion. It is an oral teaching given by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, 2005. Reprint from *The Voice of Clear Light*, February 2006.

As practitioners of Bon, every single day, before every single practice, we recite the refuge and *bodhicitta* prayers. I would like to speak a little bit about the sense of *bodhicitta* that we are cultivating.

There are a lot of complex details and distinctions between different doctrines with regard to what *bodhicitta* means. But very simply, the core intention of *bodhicitta*, or compassion, is: I care about others. It's quite simple, this notion of I care about others. But, how much do I care? In what way do I care? What do I do when I care? What don't I do when I care?

I can care in so many different ways. I care therefore I remain silent. I care therefore I speak through my awareness. I care so I go out of my way to help. I care so I pay attention. Even if I'm not in any position to help, nevertheless I still care.

So, at the heart of *bodhicitta* is this deep sense of I care. I care about others. I care because others have life. I care because others have pain. I care because I know what that pain means. I care because I know what they're going through. I care because I know their weakness and the way they see the world. I care because of the way they are caught up in that world.' There are so many hun-



dreds of thousands of ways to reflect a little closer on others situations. And when you see those situations clearly, it's very easy to care about others.

As human beings we are all able to share others pain. If you realize what someone is going through, you'll feel your heart open. Most of the time, probably 99 percent of the time, it's just human nature to be open, you are also less angry. When you're open, you are less greedy. When you're open, you are more clear. You're open, so you are less jealous. You're open, therefore you don't feel so much ego. That is the power of opening the heart. Then it just becomes a question of What can I do? When we're talking about a major crisis such as war, we can feel helpless. I know the situation, I understand, but there is nothing I can

## Bodhicitta Prayer

འཇམ་མཁའ་མོན་ཐུག་པའི་མཆོག་ལ་སྐུ་སྐྱེད། ལམ་ལ་མཆོག་པོ་ལ་བཞིན་ལུགས་རྒྱུ་རྒྱུ་ལ།  
མངལ་ཞིང་ལས་འཇམ་མཁའ་མོན་ཐུག་པའི་མཆོག་ལ་སྐུ་སྐྱེད། འཇམ་མཁའ་མཆོག་ལ་སྐུ་སྐྱེད་ཐུག་པའི་མཆོག་ལ་སྐུ་སྐྱེད།

*Sang wa bön chen Sangchog Tharthug Gyal  
Sang chog yi zhin thug gyi nor bu la  
Dag gi le jug dro kün dren par gyi  
Tha ye sem chen dön chir sem gye do*

I am entering well into the practice of the great Bön secret deity, Sangchok Tartuk Gyal (Excellent Secret King of Complete Liberation). The excellent secret compassionate wish-fulfilling jewel. In order to benefit limitless sentient beings, I generate a compassionate mind intent on enlightenment.





do about it. But from the point of view of the teachings, you are not helpless, you very much can help. You can cultivate *bodhicitta*. You can open your heart, instead of simply opening your anger.

So you open your heart and feel, I want to enter into the teachings in order to help other people. What this Mahayana *bodhicitta* prayer is saying is that ultimately the solution for human suffering is selfrealization, not simply helping through providing material means.

Of course, providing material goods can be helpful, but they are not the means for truly overcoming human suffering. That is clear from the teachings: The only way to overcome one's own suffering is to realize one's self.

For sure people can feel better when their painful circumstances and situations improve. But they can always find another pain in any given situation they're in, because the seed of their suffering is within themselves. They will not get rid of the seed of suffering by simply removing the external conditions that support one particular pain. So, the ultimate solution for overcoming pain is selfrealization.

When this truth is seen clearly, then the sincere wish naturally arises, May I enter into the *dharma*



to help other people. Of course you may ask, How clearly can I feel that intention? How clearly do I understand the conditions of our suffering? It seems that the teachings on the very nature of human suffering would first have to make sense to me in order for me to even begin working on developing that compassionate intention. I hear the teaching; I understand it. But do I really, really feel that every morning I am getting up and practicing truly to help other people? It's a good question to ask yourself. But right now, can you simply open your heart toward the idea of becoming that way? Yes, I think everyone can do that.

**Text selected by Jantien Spindler**





# DON'T COMPLAIN, AND YOU GET YOUR WORK DONE

**In August and September 2016 Geshe Thupten Negi travelled through Europe to promote Lishu Institute. While he visited the Netherlands, Ton Bisscheroux interviewed him, and used the opportunity to ask a few questions about pain speech.**

## **Geshe-la, where were you born?**

I was born in 1975 in a village called Lippa, in Kinnaur. It is located in the northeast corner of Himachal Pradesh, bordering Tibet to the east. Kinnaur is a tribe, with significant territorial and ethnic diversity of life styles, culture, customs and traditions. They generally follow Buddhism and Hinduism, which has a rich culture with a lot of festivals. Every village has a deity which is worshipped. The people are very hospitable, and everybody wants to host visitors without charging anything. Kinnaur was originally part of the Zhang Zhung area. Later the Kinnaur area got isolated, just like Ladakh. In 1947, when India became independent our area became part of India.

## **Can you tell about your family?**

My great-grandfather, Pandit Deva Ram (Lama Jangchub Gyaltsen), was a very famous astrologer in the Indian Himalayas and in Tibet. He published the first Indo-Tibetan almanac and was honoured by the 13th Dalai Lama of Tibet with two kilograms of gold, because, according to his almanac, a moon eclipse and solar eclipse predicted an aus-

picious time. He was also the lineage holder of Drukpa Kagyu in Kinnaur.

My grandfather, Lama Sonar Dubgys, was also a famous astrologer in Himachal Pradesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet. Being a lama and holder of the Kagyupa lineage, he built several temples, different villages in Kinnaur: Nari Choling in Ropa village, Gaden Choekhor in Lippa village, Kagyu Choeling in Ashrang village, Dubgyat Choling in Pangi village, and Dho Nags Choling in Moorang village. Many people in Kinnaur used to come to our home to learn about Buddhism, rituals, prayers and meditation.

My father, Tenzin Premi, went to Tibet, to learn Tibetan medicine and astrology, and he also published an almanac, called Lama Sonam Duggye Lotho. Before my father passed in 2001, he told me that he was satisfied with his life. The children were grown up, every one had an education; and he trusted that we would take care of our mother. She is now seventy-five and still enjoys working every day in the apple orchard and on the fields. Together with one of my sisters and one of my brothers she grows green peas, corn, barley and wheat, and takes care that the terraced fields are watered. We pray that she will not be weakened by old age sickness. I have three sisters and two brothers. One brother is assistant professor at Calcutta Shantiniketan University.



Geshe Thupten Negi with his family in 1992 (l), and with His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche (r).







Geshe Thupten Negi with his mother, Sita Mani, in Kinnauri traditional dress.

### **Do you often visit your family?**

At Lishu Institute I have a lot of responsibilities. Since we started offering teachings in September 2015, students have been coming from the US, Europe, Mexico, Russia, and Brazil. As well as making provisions for the daily needs of the visitors and taking care of legal paper work, Menri Monastery and other monasteries sometimes want my help. So I don't have much time, and see my family about two times a year. Kinnaur is about eighteen hours drive from Lishu Institute in Dehradun. I was very happy when my mother visited me in 2011 for one month. My brothers and sisters sometimes visit me as well.

### **Why did you want to become a monk?**

Serving the people in Kinnaur like my grandfather did was my deepest wish. I did not want to be useful as a government servant, like several cousins. At the age of eight I shared with my parents

that I wanted to become a monk. My father told me that I should go to school first, because I did not speak Hindi, only the Kinnauri language. I studied at the village school up to seventh class, and at the age of fifteen I asked my father to take me to the monastery. At that age I could read Tibetan books, say prayers and do rituals in Tibetan, but I couldn't speak Tibetan and didn't understand the meaning.

My father received a letter from H.H. the 16th Karmapa, who wanted to send me to Rumtek Monastery in Sikkim. He also received a letter from H.H. the 14th Dalai Lama, who wanted to send me to the Buddhist Dialectic school in Dharamsala. But my karma was to be a monk in the Bon tradition, even though I never heard about Bon until I came to Dholanji, when my father brought me to Menri Monastery on May 11, 1988. Having the Indian nationality, I became







a Tibetan Bonpo monk.

#### **Can you tell about your education as a monk?**

At the first meeting with His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche I felt that we had met before. Because I didn't speak Tibetan, His Holiness sent me to the Central School For Tibetans, Dholanji. There I learned Tibetan language and English writing at the same time. Enjoying the education I lost the aspiration to become monk. When my father visited me in 1990, he took me on a tour to Delhi and Varanasi, where H.H. the Dalai Lama performed the *Kalachakra*. There, a strong feeling to become a monk came back. After the tour we went to Menri Monastery, where H.H. Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche agreed to give me a place in the monastery. After fourteen years of study and practice of Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen I received the Geshe Degree in 2004.

#### **Did your parents have to pay for your study at Menri Monastery?**

We don't need to pay for studying and living there. We only have to pay for personal items, like travelling, clothes and other personal things.

#### **Why is Bon sometimes called Bon-Buddhism?**

Tonpa Shenrab is a Buddha, so we can call it Buddhism. Sakyamuni is a Buddha, so we call the followers of him also Buddhist.

Some people have negative associations with Bon. They think of shamans making animal sacrifices. But in the Bon teaching and tradition we do not sacrifice animals. If you want to sacrifice something, you should sacrifice your five poisons: ignorance, pride, jealousy, anger and attachment. Then you will become a Buddha, not just Buddhist or Bonpo. The basis of Bon teaching is compassion.

Last year I visited Triten Norbutse Monastery in Nepal. At that time there was a Hindu festival in Nepal called Dashain or Dashara, where thousands of animals were sacrificed. Many people think it comes from the Hindu tradition, but I say it comes from the individual. People make these sacrifices to a deity because they hope the deity will help them to become richer, healthier, whatever. I give you an example: when your brother is arrested [in India or Nepal], and you go to the police to get him released, what will you do? The police never asks for money, but you know when you give them money your brother will be released sooner. People have the same expectations when they make a sacrifice. In Tibetan Buddhism we don't sacrifice animals and flesh, but we make tormas from wheat, offering representations of the five poisons. Bon is the Tibetan native religion. Before the arrival of Buddhism in the 7th century AD, many Tibetans came to Nalanda University in India to study, and after their study they went back to Tibet. They told their kings they thought they'd found something new, and that it was good for the Tibetans. Today, Tibetan Buddhism is similar to Bon Buddhism. It is a matter of controversy whether Bon influenced Tibetan Buddhism or the other way around.

Tibetan Buddhists who have a problem with Bon are ignorant about Bon, and criticise it because they are attached to their own lineage. The rest of the world does not have such a problem, and they benefit from Bon teaching, rituals, culture and prayers. I know many monks and lamas from the other Tibetan Monasteries, Nyingma, Kagyupa, Sakya and Gelugpa, and I talk regularly with them about the teachings, particularly the Tibetan schools, and whether they could have copied the Bon traditions. There is no doubt that Buddhist traditions in Thailand, India, Burma and Sri Lanka are closer to the original teachings from Sakya-muni Buddha, so I am surprised when Buddhist people say that Bon copied Buddhism. I am born





in India; I am not a Tibetan and have no attachment to this controversy. During a conference I asked a high lama, who wrote on his business card 'Himalayan scholar,' about the differences between Tibetan Buddhism and Indian Buddhism. He didn't answer the question, but I don't know if that was because he didn't want to answer or if he didn't know the answer.

#### **When did you meet Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche?**

The first time I heard his name was in Menri Monastery. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche had sent a postcard from Italy, and His Holiness told me that Rinpoche's red car – not a Ferrari – was stolen. A few years later when Rinpoche visited Menri Monastery he talked with the old monk who took care of us. I saw him, but didn't talk to him. When he came later with a group from the US, we just said hello. The next visit he talked with His Holiness and other people about the Lishu Institute project. We didn't meet, but later he called me several times from the US to ask for help finding the land in India. We decided not to search in Nepal because the political situation was not stable there. I thought it would be better to search for the land together.

One day, I got a call at Menri Monastery that Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche was coming the next day together with Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche from New Delhi to Dehradun. After spending the night in a hotel, we went to the Rishikesh area. There we did not find a nice place, so we went to Za Mongyal Yungdrung Ling Monastery, in Dehradun, where we had lunch. A Tibetan who heard we were looking for land came up and suggested that we look on the other side, so we took a visit and decided to buy the land that he showed us. Before Rinpoche left, he opened a bank account in my name, deposited six thousand Indian Rupees and told me to take care of everything. Since then I have been in charge – founder member and Secretary of Lishu Institute.

#### **Why did Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche choose you?**

I don't know who passed my name on to him, but having the Indian nationality makes it easier to deal with authorities. Most monks in Menri Monastery have the Tibetan nationality. Also, I have a big network, I know the officials, the land measurements, etc. I like to make things happen.

Once I organised a visit of H.H. the Dalai Lama, on

his way to his way to Menri Monastery, in Solan Town and with the help of my cousins I arranged a helicopter free of cost. For the Kinnauri Buddhist people it was very special.

With my Geshe convocation I invited the Governor of Himachal Pradesh to Menri Monastery. His Holiness and H.E. Yongdzin Rinpoche were both very happy and impressed, because they had wanted to do that, but had not found a way. Because of the Governor's visit, the Geshe convocation ceremony was broadcasted on national TV.



#### **I would like to talk with you about pain speech. Why do we use pain speech?**

People using pain speech want compassion from others, but they don't know how to give it.

#### **One of the expressions of pain speech is when people are complaining. From the Buddhist point of view, can you explain why people complain?**

Human beings don't always know how to deal with disappointment. People complain because they have expectations, which are not fulfilled. Then they do not look inside themselves. Children have expectations towards their parents. Sometimes parents don't give what children expect. Then they start complaining, saying that the parents are not good or nice. They might say: "My father has a nice car, but he didn't let me drive in it." His expectation was to drive in his father's car with a friend. His father didn't give him the key of the car because he might have thought that his son was too young, if the car had to be fixed after an accident that would be expensive, or that his son could get hurt or lose his life in an accident. And he didn't tell his son his reasons.

When people start complaining to other people problems start. People who complain about a person often don't know what he does or has to do.





The complaining does not solve anything, because you only solve things when you do something. People who complain never get their work done. I never complain, and always try to get the work done the best way I can. In the teachings it is said that you have to be the light for others. The teacher will help you by giving the teachings, but you will have to do it yourself. Some students and some monks also complain about the teachers, but it is their own problem. At the end of the day everybody is responsible for his own actions.

#### **Is ignorance the root poison of pain speech?**

When we complain all the five poisons come together: ignorance, pride, jealousy, anger and attachment. We can check which one was first, and see what comes after. When we love someone, desire is there: you always want to be with him/her. When someone talks or flirts with your loved one anger will come, and then jealousy. Ignorance is there because you don't know what their conversation was about, but you blame your loved one and the other person.

#### **Is there a way to stop the complaining when you notice it?**

First you realize that it is your own dissatisfaction, and nobody else is responsible for it. Then, absorb the situation, and stop the complaining.



**Yes, that really works. In my last job I noticed myself complaining every day, because the person who worked there before made a complete mess and I had to clean it up. Every day I asked myself “Oh my god, how is this possible?” At some point I realised that this complaining exhausted me, and I decided to stop complaining. In the beginning it was not easy to stop completely, but I managed to complain less, and I enjoyed the work again.**

**Another thing about complaining is that people often go to the wrong person. They don't come to you, but go to your boss.**

Something goes wrong in the communication. People go to your boss, because they want to be closer to the boss and want to show off that they are better than you. That is not smart: when you complain to your boss, he knows he cannot trust you, and that you are not the one who is able to solve the situation.

#### **Do you have any advice about what to do when somebody complains?**

You can watch and practice Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's advice given in the free online teaching [Enlightened Leadership](#) and the six webcasts [Transforming Your World Through Service](#).

Here is my advice. Be nice to the other person, and don't start complaining yourself. When you respond in a negative way, the other person feels that the complaining is working. When you respond in a positive way, the other person feels that you take him/her seriously, and it is not right to complain.

When somebody complains, I listen. And after that I have to take action. While working in Lishu Institute a few times the neighbours came, complaining that visitors of Lishu Institute disturbed them. I told them not to worry, that I didn't want them to be disturbed, and that I would ask my friends not to talk so loud. That way I took my responsibility.

Also when working in a team people sometimes complain about the others. Then I tell them to focus on their job, do their best, and leave the rest to me. And when I see someone do something wrong, I will tell him/her right then.

In monasteries there are also problems because of complaining, and that makes me sad, because we are not taught to fight or disagree.

#### **Concluding this interview, is there something you want to say?**

When you complain about someone else, you are really complaining about yourself. When you do your best you will be in the flow. If you don't take responsibility you will never be able to do anything. Honesty is the best policy, be honest with your responsibility, be honest with your three doors (Body, Speech, and Mind), then you can achieve your goal. If you need Love, you love others; if you want to receive kindness, be kind to others; if you need help, you should be helpful to others.

#### **Interview by Ton Bisscheroux**

Photos: courtesy of Geshe Thupten Negi





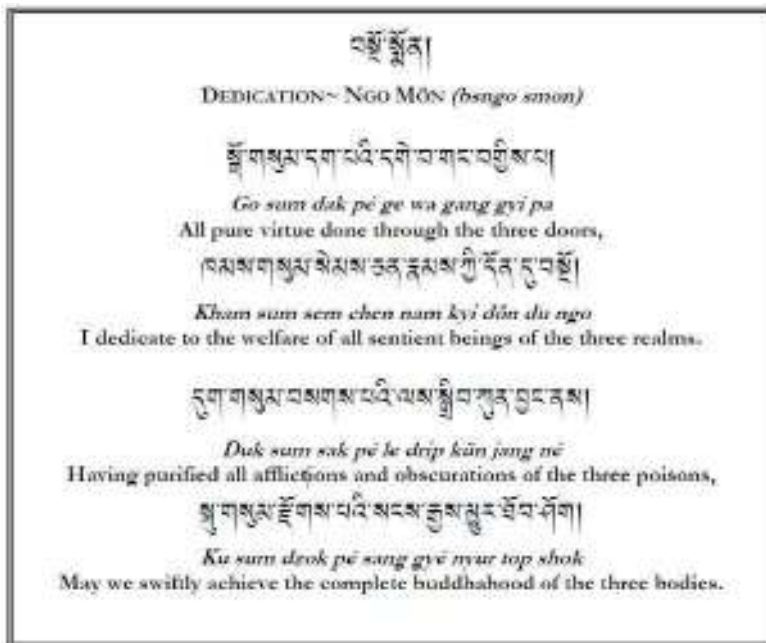
# THE SENTIENT BEINGS OF THE THREE REALMS

During a meeting of the practice leaders of the Dutch sangha somebody inquired about the meaning of the three realms – desire, form, formless – mentioned in the *Dedication Prayer*. Nobody could give an answer, so we asked Geshe Khorden Lhundup Gyaltsen to explain.

I don't know if the text, taught in the Bon monasteries, are already translated into English.

**Tonny:** We want to have an idea what it means when we practice. It is good to know what we relate to, so we can connect to it from our heart.

**Geshe Lhundup:** On the website of the [Institute of Buddhist Dialectics](#) I found a handout, posted and prepared by Geshe Kelsang Wangmo, explaining the three realms.



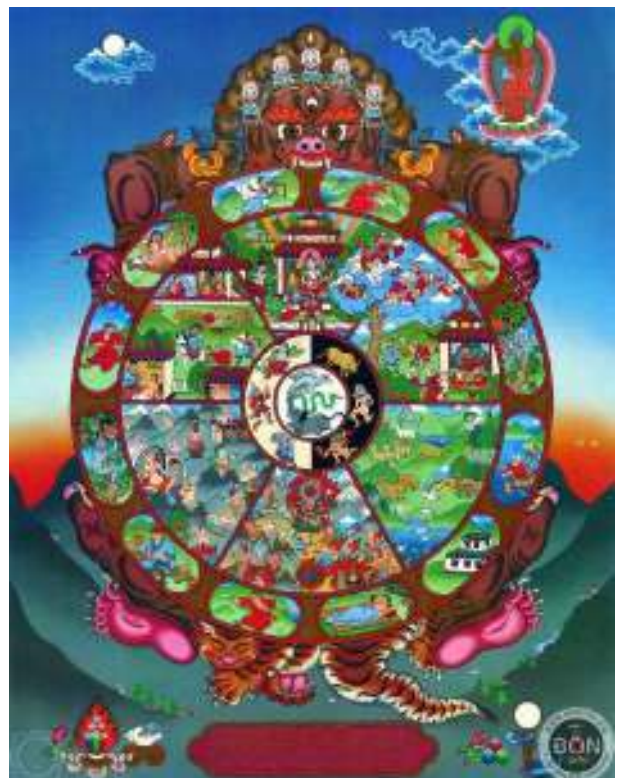
The Institute of Buddhist Dialectics was founded by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama in 1973. This Tibetan institute provides a combination of traditional and modern education aimed at addressing the new educational needs that arose for many young Tibetans in the upheaval of exile. It is located in McLeod Ganj, Dharamsala, in the northern Indian state of Himachal Pradesh.

On the next pages you can read the handout.

**Ton:** In the *Dedication Prayer* we say “I dedicate to the welfare of all sentient beings of the three realms.” Can you explain the realm of desire, the realm of form and the realm of formless?

**Geshe Lhundup:** In the West Geshes do not teach much on this subject because we can only talk about the realm of attachment. The other two realms we cannot see, because they are invisible. There is a great risk that people approach it only on an intellectual level.

*Donkam* is the realm of attachment, *Zunkam* is the realm of the form, and *Zumikam* is the realm without form. In the *Donkam* are the realms of hell, hungry ghosts, animals, humans, demi-gods and gods. *Zunkam* is on top of Mount Meri, and there are seventeen steps. It is a realm of the gods, and their form is like light, and they don't have a body like we have. And *Zumikam* is without body. They have consciousness, but they don't have a body.



The Wheel of Life, representing the realm of attachment.





*The three realms and nine levels*

The Buddhist scriptures describe Samsara as consisting of three realms and nine levels. The three realms are:

- i. The Desire Realm (comprising the six realms of hell beings, pretas, animals, etc.)
- ii. The Form Realm
- iii. The Formless Realm

The nine levels of the three realms refer to the **Desire Realm**, the four levels of the **Form Realm**, and the four levels of the **Formless Realm**.

Thus, the nine levels are:

- (1) The **Desire Realm**

The four levels of the **Form Realm**:

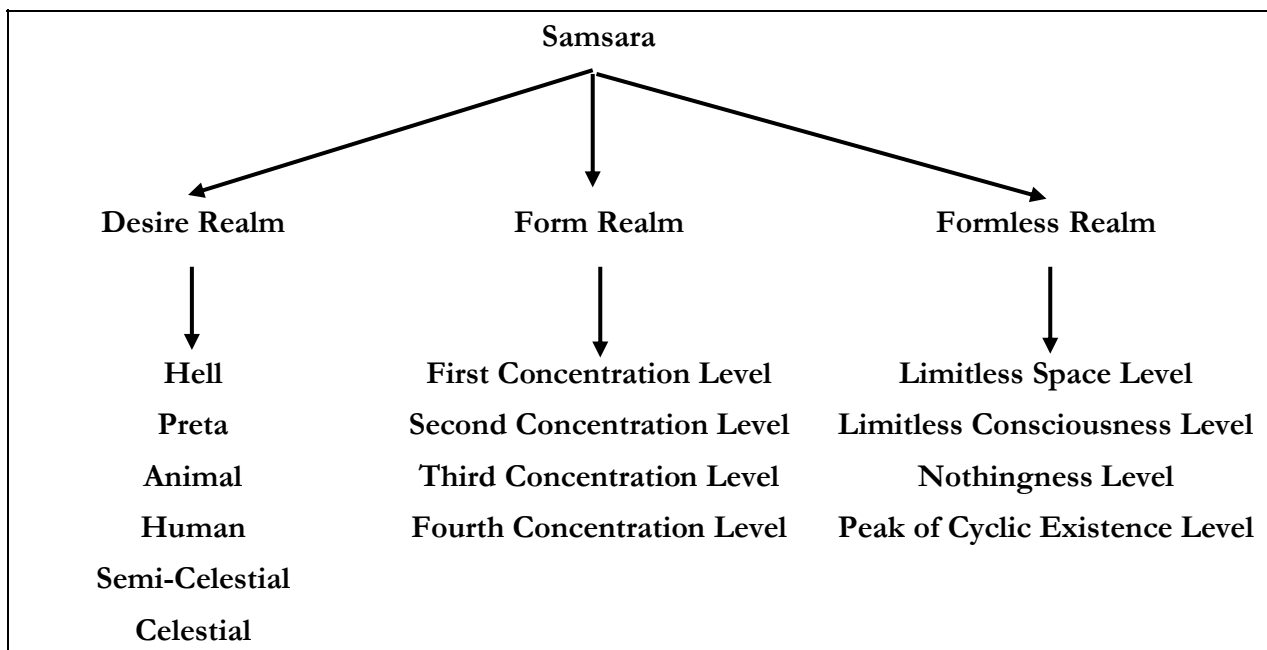
- (2) The First Concentration Level/Abode
- (3) The Second Concentration Level/Abode
- (4) The Third Concentration Level/Abode
- (5) The Fourth Concentration Level/Abode

The four levels of the **Formless Realm**

- (6) Limitless Space Level/Abode
- (7) Limitless Consciousness Level/Abode
- (8) Nothingness Level/Abode
- (9) Peak of Cyclic Existence Level/Abode

with each one corresponding to one of the eight levels of the Form or Formless Realms. These eight meditative absorptions are the product of intense meditation; they are cultivated by both Buddhists *and* non-Buddhists. So it is important to bear in mind that the following explanation is not unique to the Buddha Dharma but can also be found in non-Buddhist traditions.

The eight meditative absorptions consist of four concentrations and four formless absorptions. The four concentrations are simply known as ‘first concentration,’ ‘second concentration,’ ‘third concentration,’ and ‘fourth concentration,’ whereas each of the four formless absorptions has a particular name that corresponds to its object of meditation. The first formless absorption is called ‘limitless space,’ the second ‘limitless consciousness,’ the third ‘nothingness,’ and the fourth ‘peak of cyclic existence’ (even though they are sometimes also referred to as ‘first formless absorption,’ ‘second formless absorption,’ and so forth). Each of the four concentrations causes rebirth in one of the four Form Realm Levels and each of the four formless absorptions causes rebirth in one of the four Formless Realm Levels. This means that in order to be reborn



The nine levels are states of existence within Samsara, and on each level different afflictions arise in the mental continua of those born there. The reason for this is that rebirth in one of the eight levels of the Form or Formless Realm is the result of increasingly subtle meditative absorptions, while sentient beings who have not cultivated any meditative absorption are born in the Desire Realm.

In general, there are eight meditative absorptions,

in the First Form Realm Level (the First Concentration Level) one must have attained the first concentration, in order to take rebirth in the Second Form Realm Level (the Second Concentration Level) one must have attained the second concentration, and so forth. Likewise, in order to be reborn in the First Formless Realm Level (the Limitless Space Level) one must have attained the first formless absorption, called ‘limitless space,’ in order to be reborn in the Second Formless Realm Level (the Limitless Con-





sciousness Level) one must have attained the second formless absorption, called 'limitless consciousness,' and so forth.

*Cultivation of the eight meditative absorptions*

Of the eight meditative absorptions, it is easiest to attain the first concentration. Each subsequent meditative absorption is increasingly more difficult to attain, which means that cultivation of the fourth formless absorption (peak of cyclic existence) is the most difficult.

Furthermore, the cultivation of the meditative absorptions that are easier to attain must precede the cultivation of the meditative absorptions that are

tration, the cultivation of the first formless absorption (limitless space) must be preceded by cultivation of the four concentrations, and so forth.

Since the first concentration is easiest to attain, meditators intent on cultivating meditative absorptions first set out to cultivate this meditative awareness. The first concentration is an extremely focused state of mind that is also able to engage in very effective analytical meditation. It is preceded by a preparatory stage that is responsible for the attainment of the first concentration. The first moment of the preparatory stage of the first concentration marks the first moment of calm abiding. This means that a meditator who attains the first moment of

| <i>Three Realms</i> | <i>Nine Levels</i>                       | <i>Eight Meditative Absorptions</i>                               |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Desire Realm     | Desire Level/ Realm                      | -----                                                             |
| 2. Form Realm       | First Concentration Level/Abode          | First concentration                                               |
|                     | Second Concentration Level/Abode         | Second concentration                                              |
|                     | Third Concentration Level/Abode          | Third concentration                                               |
|                     | Fourth Concentration Level/Abode         | Fourth concentration                                              |
| 3. Formless Realm   | Limitless Space Level/Abode              | Limitless space absorption/<br>First formless absorption          |
|                     | Limitless Consciousness Level/<br>Abode  | Limitless consciousness absorption/<br>Second formless absorption |
|                     | Nothingness Level/Abode                  | Nothingness/<br>Third formless absorption                         |
|                     | Peak of Cyclic Existence Level/<br>Abode | Peak of cyclic existence/<br>Fourth formless absorption           |

more difficult to attain. Therefore, the cultivation of the second concentration must be preceded by cultivation of the first concentration, the cultivation of the third concentration must be preceded by cultivation of the first and second concentration, the cultivation of the fourth concentration must be preceded by cultivation of the first, second, and third concen-

calm abiding also attains the first moment of the preparatory stage of the first concentration, for that first moment of calm abiding is the first moment of the preparatory stage of the first concentration.

Likewise, the remaining meditative absorptions are also preceded by their respective preparatory stages.



Bridging the worlds of traditional Tibetan Buddhist philosophical training and modern education





**Geshe Lhundup:** In *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, the three realms are called the ‘Three World-systems.’ In the *Glossary of Key Terms*, p. 518, you can read the definition.

### “Three World-systems

According to Buddhism, cyclic existence includes three world-systems, namely: the world-system of desire, the world-system of form, and the world-system of formlessness. Among them, the world-system of desire is a state of existence dominated by sensual experiences, particularly the sensations of suffering and pleasure. It is inhabited by all six classes of sentient beings, including humans and six categories of gods. The world-system of form, in which beings have a comparatively subtle level of consciousness, temporarily devoid of gross sensations of pain and pleasure, is regarded as a state beyond ordinary human existence and inhabited only by gods. Birth in such a realm requires the attainment of one or all of the four meditative concentrations, in past lives. *Abhidhanna* literature mentions twelve ordinary realms of form and five ‘pure abodes,’ above them, where birth can be taken consequent on these four concentrations. Lastly, the world-system of formlessness is regarded as the highest level of rebirth within cyclic existence and a state where an individual's physical faculties exist only as potencies and the individual functions only at the level of consciousness. It is said to be inhabited by those who have mastered the four formless meditative absorptions.”

**Geshe Lhundup:** In the *Introductory Commentary His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama says* (p. XVI-XVII):

“Now, let us look at the possible states of existence one can be born into. From the Buddhist perspective, rebirth in conditioned existence can take place in one of three realms: the formless realm, the form realm or the desire realm. The form and formless realms are fruits of subtle states of consciousness, attained upon the realisation of certain meditative concentrations. Our realm, the desire realm, is the most gross of these three. Six classes of beings are described as inhab-

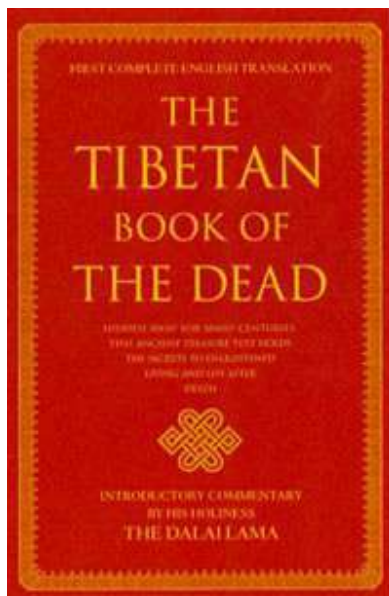
iting the desire realm: gods (mundane celestial beings whose primary mental state is exaltation), antigods (who are predominantly hostile and jealous), human beings (who are influenced by all the five dissonant mental states), animals (who are under the sway of delusion), anguished spirits (who are under the sway of attachment and unsatisfied craving) and hell beings (who are overwhelmed by hatred, anger and fear). In the literature of Highest Yoga Tantra, the evolution of all the three realms of conditioned existence are described in terms of differing expressions or states of energy and, as I have mentioned, it is said that our fundamental ignorance is the root of conditioned existence and that karmic energy is its activating force. In the Buddhist view, therefore, it is the nature of our habitual tendencies that generates our

future existence, driven by the natural law of cause and effect.

Further, when we observe the patterns of arising and subsiding that underlie the dynamic nature of the physical environment, the cycle of days and nights and the passing of the seasons, for example, and we observe how matter arises from insubstantial subatomic particles and we look at the patterns of causal connectedness in the arising and dissolution of our mental experiences from moment to moment, across the differing phases of deep sleep, dreams and our waking state, the notion of continuity of consciousness can come to be seen to be in accord with both the nature of our environment and the nature of our mental experience.

Certainly, it has often been argued that one advantage of accepting the notion of continuity of consciousness is that it gives us a more profound ability to understand and to explain the nature of our existence and of the universe. In addition, this notion of continuity and causal interconnectedness reinforces a sense of consequences for our own actions, in terms of both the impact on ourselves and the impact on others and the environment.”

**Interview by Tonny Maas and Ton Bisscheroux**





## TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE'S 2016 AND 2017 EUROPEAN SEMINARS AND ON-LINE TEACHINGS

| When                                          | Where                                 | What                                                                                                                                                                             | More information                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Beginning November 1,<br>then always open     | Your computer                         | Interactive online course:<br>Starting a Meditation Practice                                                                                                                     | <a href="http://ligminchalearning.com">ligminchalearning.com</a> |
| November 12<br>21.00 – 22.10 h (C.E.T.)       | Your computer                         | Live Webcast:<br>Living with Joy, Dying in<br>Peace, Part 3: Asleep but not<br>Unconscious: Discovering<br>Awareness in the Sleep State                                          | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a>         |
| November 12 –<br>December 4                   | 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>         |
| December 3 – 4                                | Bourg-en-Bresse<br>(Peronnas), France | Discovering Inner Joy through<br>the Tibetan Sacred Sounds                                                                                                                       | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.fr">www.ligmincha.fr</a>           |
| December 10<br>21.00 – 22.10 h (C.E.T.)       | Your computer                         | Live Webcast:<br>Living with Joy, Dying in<br>Peace, Part 4: Sleep and<br>Death as Doorways to<br>Wisdom                                                                         | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a>         |
| December 31<br>15.00 – 16.15 h (C.E.T.)       | Your computer                         | Free Live Webcast:<br>Experiential Transmission of<br>Zhang Zhung, Part 3<br>Broadcast live from the<br>Annual Winter Retreat at<br>Ligmincha's Serenity Ridge<br>Retreat Center | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a>         |
| January 7 – 29, 2017                          | Your computer                         | Interactive online course:<br>Awakening the Sacred Body:<br>The Tibetan Yogas of Breath<br>and Movement                                                                          | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>         |
| January 14, 2017<br>21.00 – 22.10 h (C.E.T.)  | Your computer                         | Free Live Webcast: Living<br>with Joy, Dying in Peace, Part<br>5: Finding Peace with Death                                                                                       | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a>         |
| February 11, 2017<br>21.00 – 22.10 h (C.E.T.) | Your computer                         | Free Live Webcast: Living<br>with Joy, Dying in Peace, Part<br>6: Helping Loved Ones<br>through Sickness and Death                                                               | <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](https://www.youtube.com), [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org),  
[www.ligminchalearning.com](http://www.ligminchalearning.com) and [www.oceanofwisdom.org](http://www.oceanofwisdom.org).**







# Ligmincha Europe Magazine

**# 23 – Winter 2016-2017**



Meet the Mexican sangha

Geshe Denma on organ donation

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche LIVE

Rainbow Body and Resurrection

Meditation in Education



Bringing  
Ancient Wisdom  
Teachings to Life



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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 bring you articles that celebrate Ligmincha's 25th anniversary, a book review on the Rainbow Body and Resurrection, and an introduction to the Mexican sangha. We also spoke to Geshe Denma about organ donation, and report on activities from Europe, including a personal retreat and a poem from one of our sangha members.

When I started to use Facebook a few years ago it was because members of our sangha were sharing information about teachings, books and activities. Since then, I have also been using Facebook, not as a social tool, but in order to share posts about Rinpoche's activities, including his visit in November 2016 to a primary school in Mexico where they teach the Three Precious Pills meditation. If you are interested you can watch a video here: [HECAT School Meditation Program](#).

**IF YOU HAVE TIME FOR FACEBOOK  
YOU HAVE TIME TO MEDITATE**



You may be interested to know that in December 2016 Rinpoche began spontaneously broadcasting on his [Facebook page](#). Only about fifty people saw him live, but after a few hours thousands of people tuned in to see the replay and the number kept increasing. Because of this success, Rinpoche formed a TWR *LIVE* team. Since January he now regularly broadcasts every Tuesday and Thursday to share his wisdom, and every month he has conversations with interesting guest presenters.

Finally, according to the Tibetan lunar calendar, Tibetan New Year, or *Losar*, takes place on Monday, February 27. *Losar* is an opportunity to reflect on the year past and what we aspire to in the year ahead. So we would like to take this opportunity to wish you an auspicious and spiritually rich new year.

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





# LIGMINCHA IS 25 YEARS OLD!

Dear Sangha,

It is my pleasure to announce the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Ligmincha's founding and to inform you of several events scheduled to take place in this New Year, the year of the Fire Bird.



So much has happened since Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche first took steps to create Ligmincha. Our anniversary is an opportunity to reflect on all that he and we have accomplished together and to celebrate these achievements. Through Rinpoche's constant activity, kindness and grace five retreat centers, dozens of practice groups, many online courses, thousands of hours of recordings and many books have come into being. More importantly, in this time tens of thousands of people around the world have discovered these teachings and practices and as a result seen their lives change in extraordinary ways. Whether we attend retreats in person or are part of the cyber-sangha, we are all part of the Ligmincha community.

But more importantly than celebrating the past this is a time to reconnect to the teachings, to our true nature and to one another as we look toward the future. Celebrations throughout the year will emphasize building and growing as communities of practice, both online and in person. You can learn more about regional and local events at our [website](#), and on [Facebook](#).

Our first collective opportunity to gather together will be on Saturday, March 4, at 16.30 h C.E.T. (10.30 a.m. New York time). Ligmincha *sanghas* and individual practitioners will come together to celebrate Losar, the Tibetan New Year. At this time we will have a live webcast. Rinpoche and our resident lamas will be offering prayers and blessings to all. To learn more about this and other Losar activities please visit: [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org).

Later in the year I invite you to attend two special occasions at Serenity Ridge, the headquarters of Ligmincha International. First, during summer



Rob Patzig.

retreat from June 25 – July 8, Rinpoche will teach on both Dzogchen (pith instructions from Bon Dzogchen lineage masters) and the *Bon Mother Tantra*. These teachings are very close to his heart and the heart of his personal practice. During both weeks the morning teachings will focus on the pith instructions of Bon Dzogchen lineage masters.

Dzogchen, which translates as “great perfection” or “great completion,” is the highest among the array of profound teachings of the Bon and Tibetan Buddhist traditions. These teachings point out our true nature, the source of wisdom and all positive qualities. In the afternoons Rinpoche will teach from the *Bon Mother Tantra*. His focus will be on the six great methods of the path of the *Ma Gyüd* cycle, one of the major tantric cycles of Bon. These six methods include the teachings of the elements, *Chöd* (cutting fear and attachment), *Bardo*, *Powa* (the transference of consciousness), and the *Yogas of Sleep and Dream*. They compose the principal tantric teachings for our *sangha* and provide support for the practice of Dzogchen.

In the fall Rinpoche will offer teachings on *The Knowledge and Wisdom of Longevity* at Serenity Ridge for first time. In this unique four-day





retreat Rinpoche will, teach and offer transmission of *Tsewang Jarima*. This text, by the great Tsewang Rigdzin (son of the great master Drenpa Namkha) and its associated practices, can help us retrieve, extend and enhance our life force: healing environmental, physical, emotional and energetic imbalances in our lives. Extending our lives and committing to realize our true nature with its inherent wisdom and compassion, we can serve and benefit sentient beings, including ourselves.

Immediately following Fall Retreat a celebration of Ligmincha's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and the opening of a new building at Serenity Ridge will occur and we will re-establish the annual *Science and Spirituality Conference*. On Sunday, October 22 Serenity Ridge will host an open house with many free events, including guided practice, music, dance, visual arts and food. Beginning that same evening will be Rinpoche's keynote address to conference attendees. The conference has as its theme, *The Medicine of the Mind: Healing Physical and Emotional Pain*. A select group of top investigators will present research and findings related to how meditation and other spiritual practices can bring about healing of physical and emotional pain. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will deliver the keynote address on Sunday, October 22 as well as guide meditation sessions throughout the conference and participate in a panel discussion.

While Ligmincha is an organization – running retreat centers, managing websites, organizing teachings and managing a small staff to support Rinpoche, our resident lamas and Western teach-

ers – it is so much more. Ligmincha is us: all of us. Ligmincha is a collective of people speaking many languages, living in many countries and at different stages of life. Ligmincha is people who attend retreats and people who watch the teachings online without ever visiting a retreat center. Ligmincha is all of us working together to ensure that these teachings and the transformations they are capable of effecting are kept alive. Whether you practice alone in an apartment in Moscow, Russia, lead a weekly practice session at one of our practice communities like in Torreon, Mexico, or are part of the collective of practitioners known as the “cyber-sangha,” you are Ligmincha. Together, we are Ligmincha. Many people have benefited from the *dharma*, the work of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Ligmincha. But, there is still so much suffering in the world and so many opportunities to help others. As a community of practitioners, we can accomplish more together than by working alone.

Please stay tuned as there will be other activities planned online and around the world as a part of the celebration of our first quarter century of bringing the ancient teachings of Bon to the modern world.

In Service



President



Serenity Ridge Retreat Center.





# CONNECT WITH TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE LIVE ON FACEBOOK

With the start of the new year, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche has launched an innovative way to connect with students around the world through regular, live broadcasts that can be easily viewed on his Facebook page. Access TWR *LIVE* [here](#).

TWR *LIVE* brings you immediate connection to Rinpoche, the online spiritual community, and the pith teachings to broaden your knowledge and deepen your connection to the ancient wisdom traditions of Tibetan Bon Buddhism. Here, you can learn meditation practices and cultivate awareness for greater social and personal transformations. As author of many books, such as *The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep* and *Awakening the Sacred Body*, Rinpoche will also share overviews of his written works and expand on those

teachings. Additionally, you can enjoy impromptu live streams from Rinpoche's cell phone where he will, from time to time, share his travels and family life.

## The Healing Power of Your Breath

January 24-March 9, 2017

Tuesdays and Thursdays at 19.00 h (C.E.T.)


This seven-week series reveals the power of your own sacred breath (*prana, lung*) to bring profound healing at all levels of body, energy, and mind. Each Tuesday Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche offers a free teaching and/or guided meditation; each Thursday he answers questions and elaborates on the previous Tuesday session. There is a total of 14 sessions, and you can view recordings of any session at a later point in time. Real-time translations of each session are available.



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche is live now.

26 mins ·






Bringing Ancient Wisdom Teachings to Life

## THE HEALING POWER OF YOUR BREATH

WITH TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE



Discover the power of your own sacred breath (*prana, lung*) to bring profound healing at all levels of body, energy, and mind. Each Tuesday Tenzin Rinpoche offers a teaching and/or guided meditation; each Thursday he answers questions from the previous Tuesday session.

January 24 - March 9, 2017

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 19.00 h (C.E.T.)

**FREE! 7-WEEK SERIES LIVE ON FACEBOOK**

VIEW LIVE AT [WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/TENZINWANGYALRINPOCHE](http://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/TENZINWANGYALRINPOCHE)

Full Schedule and Archives at: [WWW.LIGMINCHALEARNING.COM/twr-live](http://WWW.LIGMINCHALEARNING.COM/twr-live)

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In the spotlight

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6



### Schedule:

- January 24 & 26: You Are Not Your Pain. [View recordings](#)
- January 31 & February 2: An Introduction to Your Eternal Body. [View recordings](#)
- February 7 & 9: Meditation on Body, Speech and Mind. [View recordings](#)
- February 14 & 16: Healing Through Awareness of Your Precious Winds. [View recordings](#)
- February 21 & 23: Meditation on Dissolving the Ego. [View recordings](#)
- February 28 & March 2: Meditation on Dissolving Fear.
- March 7 & 9: Meditation on Dissolving Pain.

### Conversations LIVE on Facebook

In this special feature of TWR *LIVE*, Rinpoche will converse with experts in the fields of science, healing, philosophy, medicine, spirituality, and more. Presenters will share from their specialties while exchanging perspectives on relevant issues of our time. Rinpoche will weave in pertinent aspects related to the ancient Tibetan Bon Buddhist teachings. You'll receive timely knowledge to help enhance your physical and emotional well-being and support your spiritual growth, with opportunities to engage in question-answer sessions with Rinpoche and presenters.

These broadcasts are free and open to all. You don't need an account to watch Rinpoche live on Facebook – simply go to:

[www.facebook.com/tenzinwangyalrinpoche](http://www.facebook.com/tenzinwangyalrinpoche).

The upcoming schedule, plus archives of all recorded broadcasts, can be found at:

[www.ligminchalearning.com](http://www.ligminchalearning.com).

### Through TWR LIVE, you can:

- Deepen your connection to Rinpoche and the worldwide *sangha*.
- Receive pith teachings from the ancient wisdom tradition of Bon Buddhism.
- Engage in lively conversations between Rinpoche and his guest presenters.
- Enjoy impromptu live streams featuring Rinpoche, his family, and/or his travels.
- Learn, be inspired, deepen your practice, and further connect to the teachings.

[Learn more.](#)

Your ideas for future broadcasts are most welcome! We also welcome your support, whether

through online technical assistance or monetary donations. To send us your ideas or learn more, contact us at [socialmedia@ligmincha.org](mailto:socialmedia@ligmincha.org). To donate [click here](#).

### Recent Conversations LIVE on Facebook

Sunday, January 29

#### **A Conversation with Kallon Basquin, Director of The 3 Doors**

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and his guest presenter Kallon Basquin discussed the history, inspiration and growth of The 3 Doors, an international non-profit organization founded by Rinpoche that teaches ancient Tibetan meditation methods for modern life.



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche      Kallon Basquin

### **Some thoughts about this first Conversation LIVE - by Ton Bisscheroux**

In the conversation of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche with Kallon Basquin you can learn how the 3 Doors program is applicable in daily life, and how it finds its way into medical centers, schools, universities, companies and of course in the personal life of people and their families. They also elaborate on how the ancient teachings are presented in a modern context, so everybody – including people who are not religious – can profit from them. And why it benefits you, even when you have been practicing Buddhist meditation for many years.

One of the videos presented afterwards shows testimonies of children from underprivileged families of the HECAT school in Mexico, who learn to meditate. It is heartbreaking to hear one of the children say that when he gets angry, he remembers to take the 3 pills, and instead of beating his brother he stays calm. A girl says she finds peace through the meditation. That does not only have an impact on these children, but on all the people they will meet in their life.





Watch the recording here: [www.facebook.com/tenzinwangyalrinpoche](https://www.facebook.com/tenzinwangyalrinpoche)

Together the presenters gave a taste of how the 3 Doors meditation practices are positively transforming people's lives and inspire actions that benefit others. These days The 3 Doors is pursuing projects in Mexico, Peru and Northern America.

Learn more about these projects:

- the HECAT School Meditation Project in Mexico: [www.the3doors.org](http://www.the3doors.org)
- the 3 Doors Compassion Project: [www.the3doors.org](http://www.the3doors.org)
- the Conscious Leadership Project in Peru: [www.the3doors.org](http://www.the3doors.org)

### Sunday, February 12

#### **A Conversation with Alejandro Chaoul, Assistant Professor and Director of Education at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center**

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and his guest presenter Alejandro Chaoul discussed the benefits of Tibetan Yoga and Sound Meditation for cancer patients as revealed in research findings at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas. Since 2000, they formed a team that included MD Anderson researchers and Ligmincha Texas practitioners to investigate the possible benefits of the ancient Bon Mind-Body practices of *Tsa Lung* and *Trul Khor*, with different cancer populations (lymphoma, breast, lung) and their caregivers. They have also researched the benefits of Tibetan sound meditation to help cognitive impairment after chemo-therapy in women with breast cancer. These helped reshape the clinical group and individual meditation sessions that MD Anderson provides to their patients and caregivers, and now also to faculty and staff. This, in fact, was one of the aims of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, since when he founded Ligmincha Texas (then Houston Khyung Dzong) it was for the Meditative and Healing Arts of Tibet.



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

Alejandro Chaoul

Alejandro Chaoul taught at Rice University, the University of Houston and the Jung Center of Houston before he started his position at MD Anderson. Since 1995, he has been teaching Tibetan meditation and Tibetan yogic practices under the auspices of the Ligmincha Institute in various parts of the US, Latin America and Europe, and is a senior teacher of The 3 Doors. In 1999 he began teaching meditation techniques at the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas, and for the last fifteen years has conducted research on the effect of these practices in people with cancer. Learn more: [www.alechaoul.com](http://www.alechaoul.com).

Watch the recording here: [www.facebook.com/tenzinwangyalrinpoche](https://www.facebook.com/tenzinwangyalrinpoche)

The two presenters talked about the effect of the Bon practices to release suffering. Focusing on the breath reduces stress, working with sound (*The Warrior Syllables*) has a positive effect on the cognitive state of the mind, and the movements (*Tsa Lung and Trul Khor*) have a positive effect on sleep. This is now proven by scientific research. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche is happy with the results of this research. Although the Tibetans never doubted about the effects, people in the West need that confirmation.

Learn more:

- [Publication on Mind-body practices in cancer care](#), by Alejandro Chaoul and others
- [M.D. Anderson Cancer Center's Integrative Medicine Program in Houston, Texas](#)
- [M.D. Anderson Cancer Center's Clinical services, including meditation page in Houston, Texas.](#)

#### **Preannouncements for Upcoming Conversations LIVE on Facebook**

**Tuesday, March 21, 18:00 CET**

**A Conversation with Kristin Neff  
(Researcher in Mindful Self-Compassion, University of Texas at Austin)**



**Saturday, March 25, 17:00 CET**

**A Conversation with David Presti (Neurobiologist, Psychologist, Cognitive Scientist, University of California, Berkeley)**

For updates and more information visit:

[www.ligminchalearning.com](http://www.ligminchalearning.com)





# MEDITATION IN EDUCATION – HECAT SCHOOL PROJECT

**In a primary school in Mexico meditation is taught to the children, parents and the staff of the school. In this article you can read about this project and its results.**

Can learning about body posture change student behavior? How will practicing meditation affect the academic experience of elementary and middle school students? A school in Torreón, Mexico integrates meditation practices into their classrooms with the support of a Meditation in Education project team from The 3 Doors international meditation organization. The HECAT (Hermandad Educativa CAT A.C.) School Project is in its second year of assessing the benefits of the 3 Doors meditation practices with two hundred and ten students ages 8-16 in classroom environments.

*“What I like about meditation is that I relax. I can concentrate more and I like the posture and listening. Every time we meditate I’m more open; we can hear what is around us and what lies within us. I use the three meditation spheres: red, white and blue.”*

César A., fourth grade, 8 years old

For the past year and a half, The 3 Doors HECAT School Project team has been working with school administrators, teachers and parents to study the benefits of 3 Doors meditation practices. This program uses the 3 Doors meditation methods that are rooted in the ancient Tibetan Bon Buddhist tradition and appropriate for those of any or no religious affiliation.

The educational portion of this program includes instruction on how to use body posture to facilitate greater self-awareness. The 3 Doors meditation methods taught are known as Inner Refuge or “Internal Shelter,” *Three Precious Pills* or “Precious Spheres,” *Nine Breathings*, and *Tsa Lung*. This year *The Five Warrior Syllables* will also be introduced. There is a self-reflection and sharing portion of this program, which allows participants to discuss their practice experiences and ask questions. The students practice daily by themselves and weekly in small groups. One of the reasons this project has been so successful is the inclusive approach the project team and school administrators are taking with its implementation. It isn't just the students who receive meditation instruction; teachers, staff and parents are also supported.



Students from the HACAT school.





## PRACTICE SCHEDULES

### Students

Half an hour a week for each student group.  
Cultivate Silence: daily for twenty minutes during their reading session, also they do it once a week during practice in the Silence Room.

### Management, Administrators, Teachers and Parents

Once a week with the students for 30 minutes.  
Once a month in the adult group for an hour.

### Parents

Once a month for 30 minutes.

## ASSESSMENT OF HECAT SCHOOL PROJECT

73% of the students report they use the three Precious Spheres of Stillness, Silence and Space in everyday life situations, with their family, friends and classmates. Others reported using their Breathing, the *Nine Breathing* practice or some exercise from the *Tsa Lung* body movements.

### Student Self-Reported Benefits:

- Better concentration in tests
- Better attention
- Emotion control such as avoid and diminish the anger
- Feel calm, peace and relaxed
- Eliminates stress
- Feel happy
- Be a better person
- Harmony at home

*"Meditation has created an atmosphere of self-understanding and expression among my students. In addition to being able to control body movement and awareness, they are focusing more easily in class. There is more harmony in the classroom."*

Academic Director Professor José de Jesús Cuellar

*"I am pleasantly surprised at how the practice of meditation has helped children identify their emotions, stop for a moment and use the tools such as the sphere of Silence in order not to shout, Stillness to not react physically, and the Spaciousness of the mind to pause their thoughts. I see how the students use all this with their peers, parents, brothers, etc. It is very rewarding. The teachers and I, after practice, are calmer, clear headed, lighter, and released."*

General Director C.P. Rocio Guadalupe García Ortega

*"I can concentrate on what I do every day and I have changed my way of behaving. If I take a deep breath I can relax faster and this helps me with my schoolwork. I have applied the three spheres when I've been working out an examination and also when I think about other things. I focus on a sphere and its easier resolve test questions; I am more focused."*

Citlali M., sixth grade, 12 years old

## THE 3 DOORS MEDITATION IN EDUCATION TEAM

Pilar Revuelta

HECAT School Project Coordinator and Creator,



In November 2016 Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche visited the HECAT school.





3 Door Academy Graduate and Authorized Presenter

Carlos Villarreal  
HECAT School Project Co-Creator,  
3 Door Academy Graduate and Authorized Presenter

Alejandro Chaoul Reich  
HECAT School Project Mentor,  
3 Doors Academy Senior Teacher

José Antonio Ramos  
HECAT School Project trainee,  
3 Doors Academy Graduate



## ABOUT HECAT SCHOOL

Located in Torreón, Coahuila, Mexico, HECAT (Hermandad Educativa CAT A.C.) was born out of

the desire to improve our community, designing a program focused on families with limited resources who are looking for a quality education for their children. The mission of HECAT is to educate new generations by contributing to the reconstruction of the social fabric. HECAT is a non-profit school, where the schedule is extended with the intention to keep children protected in safe and secure spaces. Three daily meals are offered as well as meditation, bilingual education, sports, music, arts, and a school for parents and teachers to create and promote peace. There are currently three hundred thirty students and our projected growth is one thousand two hundred students.

Founded in 2011 by the Advisors of the American College of Torreón; José Antonio Ramos Moreno, Chairman of the Council; Dr. Gerardo Rosas Villarreal, Treasurer; Darío Jiménez Berumen, Miguel Angel del Hoyo, Alberto Hermosillo Morales, President of the Board of Trustees, María del Pilar Revuelta Rivas, currently serving as Honorary Advisor in addition to Dr. Alberto Salas Cepeda current Chairman of the Council and Mrs. Isabel Nava de Rebollar current President of the Board of Trustees.



Teachers with 3 Doors "Precious spheres" meditation tools. Sitting in the middle: Carlos Villarreal and Pilar Revuelta.





# INDULGING IN THE WORLD OR GOING BEYOND THE WORLD

We want to share inspiring texts from other Buddhist streams and traditions. Ajahn Chah (17 June 1918 – 16 January 1992) was a teacher of the Theravada Buddhist School, and the founder of Cittaviveka, also known as the Thai Forest Tradition, that spread throughout Thailand, Europe, the United States and the British Commonwealth. Here is a text Ton Bisscheroux read on [Facebook](#).

“In our lives we have two possibilities: indulging in the world or going beyond the world. The Buddha was someone who was able to free himself from the world and thus realized spiritual liberation.

In the same way, there are two types of knowledge: knowledge of the worldly realm and knowledge of the spiritual, or true wisdom. If we have not yet practiced and trained ourselves, no matter how much knowledge we have, it is still worldly, and thus cannot liberate us.

Think and really look closely! The Buddha said that things of the world spin the world around. Following the world, the mind is entangled in the world, it defiles itself whether coming or going, never remaining content. Worldly people are those who are always looking for something, never finding enough. Worldly knowledge is really ignorance: it isn't knowledge with clear understanding, therefore there is never an end to it. It revolves around worldly goals of accumulating things, gaining status, seeking praise and pleasure: it's a mass of delusion which has us stuck fast.

Once we get something, there is jealousy, worry and selfishness. And when we feel threatened and can't ward it off physically, we use our minds to invent all sorts of devices, right up to weapons and even nuclear bombs, only to blow each other up. Why all this trouble and difficulty?

This is the way of the world. The Buddha said that if one follows it around there is no reaching an end.

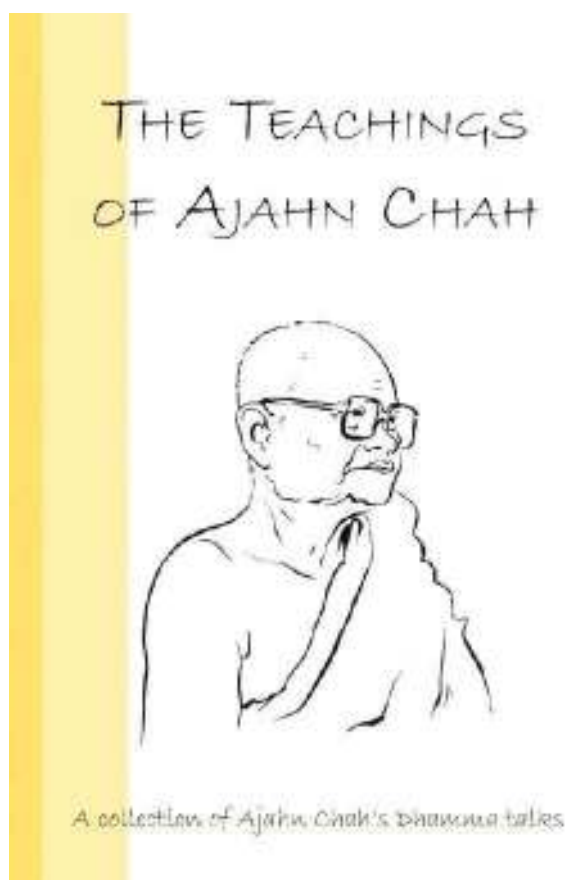
Come to practice for liberation! It isn't easy to live in accordance with true wisdom, but whoever earnestly seeks the path and fruit and aspires to



Ajahn Chah.

Nibbana [nirvana; ed.] will be able to persevere and endure. Endure being contented and satisfied with little: eating little, sleeping little, speaking little and living in moderation. By doing this we can put an end to worldliness.”

**Ajahn Chah**



You can download the book as PDF at:  
[www.ajahnchah.org](http://www.ajahnchah.org)





# THE 11TH EUROPEAN LOSAR WEEKEND

We are pleased to invite you to participate in our practice weekend from **March 3 – 5, 2017**. This weekend offers the opportunity to either deepen your practice or being introduced to practices as taught by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and to connect with the European *Sangha*. It is Rinpoche's wish to have this gathering with the resident lamas in Europe. We are happy that Geshe Khorden Lhundup Gyaltsen has accepted our invitation again to join us.

The upcoming gathering takes place since 2012 around *Losar*, and offers:

**Setting up the Gompa, Practicing together, Sang Chö and a Skype Welcome with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche (planned).**

**Location:** Buchenau, Germany

**Costs:** no registration fee, only cost for accommodation and meals for the whole stay per person: € 149 for single room with bath, € 119 for multiple bedroom with bath, or € 107 for multiple bedroom without bath.

[Book the 11th European Losar weekend online](#)



**Free Live Webcast**

**Celebrating the Tibetan New Year!**

Losar Greetings from Ligmincha Resident Lamas



**March 4, 2017 — 16.30 h (C.E.T.)**

Register for the webcast at [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)







# FOURTH BON'S 24 HOUR GLOBAL PRAYER



## 4th Annual Global Prayer: March 3, 2017

This year's Fourth Annual Yeru Bon Center 24 hour Global Prayer for World Peace and Harmony will be held on Friday, March 3, 2017. As always, the event will begin with prayers by His Holiness the 33rd Menri Trizin and the monks of Menri Monastery praying for one hour.

From there, the prayers continue to each time zone, where we ask people to pray for one hour. The prayers circle the globe until returning to Menri Monastery.

We ask that you join us for this wonderful event. Pray by yourself, with friends, a larger group or your spiritual community. Everyone is welcome. You don't need to be Bonpo or pray in Tibetan. Any prayer for world peace in any language or faith is welcome.

Latri Khenpo Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche will advise us as to the prayers he suggests for this year. On the

website [www.yeruboncenter.org](http://www.yeruboncenter.org) you can find further information. There is no fee for this event. We do request you register, so that we can share information about the Global Prayer. The list of registrants is sent to Menri Monastery for special blessing.

Last year's Global Prayer for World Peace was a great success, with a total of 858 formal registrations, and more than 1.000 estimated participants.

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 one hour (or more) any time between 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. in their local time zones. Gather as a *sangha* or by yourself, in a private place or in public.

**REGISTER**





# THREE BON STUPAS IN MEXICO

To introduce the Mexican *sangha* we interviewed Guillermo Vera – with the help of Lourdes Hinojosa, who translated from English to Spanish and the other way around. The *sangha* has built three *Stupas* and a *Gompa*, and has two resident lamas.

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

**Guillermo:** I used to work in Mexico City for the National Railroad Company, and in 1995 I was moved to Chihuahua. The second day I was in Chihuahua City, I saw a big poster on a wall announcing the visit of a great lama. I had not expected to find Buddhism in a town like Chihuahua, and was very surprised to see this poster. Because of my workload I was not going to be able to see Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche that time. That day I took the notice for granted and after the event I wanted to contact the people who organized it. But to my surprise when I checked a few days later, the poster was no longer there. So I said “Ok...,” and felt the certainty I would get a chance to meet him. Three years later – in 1998 – my wife said, “I saw a poster in a shop of something you are interested in.” It was the announcement of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, visiting Chihuahua, teaching *Heart Drops of Dharmakaya*. This time I was lucky, and together with my wife I went to the teachings, and ever since I have been Rinpoche's student.

**Ton:** Where you interested in Buddhism before you met Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche?

**Guillermo:** Yes, I had attended some lectures and teachings in Tibet House in Mexico. It was just for a short period because due to my workload I was not able to continue. Formally I got involved with Chihuahua *sangha* in September 1999, and I have been practicing ever since.

**Ton:** When did Rinpoche teach in Mexico the first time?

**Guillermo:** His first visit to Mexico was in 1995. Ever since he has visited Mexico twice a year.

**Ton:** What is your function in the Mexican *sangha*?



Guillermo Vera with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

**Guillermo:** Currently I am the Executive Director of Ligmincha Mexico. My function is as follows: I mainly organize and take care of all the details of the visits of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, as well as Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche and other Bon lamas that visit Mexico. I also take care of the administrative part of the organization.

**Ton:** Can you tell about the structure of Ligmincha Mexico?

**Guillermo:** The Executive Director has a team working, which is like an Executive Board. We have Directors for each area. We have a Study and Practice Director, in the person of Wojtek Plucinski. Ester Latorre is the Documentations Director; she documents all the teachings and recordings, she tracks it, sorts and saves it. Florencia Fernandez is Director of Social Media and Marketing Promotion. Martha Rodriguez is Director of the Shop, selling books and *dharma* items. Lily Vazquez is Director of Events; she is in charge of setting everything in place when a lama visits to teach. Balbina Rey is Director of Fundraising to support the Bon children and monks, as well as scholarships; when a lama comes to teach some students are in need of financial aid, like work-study or discounts. Eliana Perches works also in the event area, taking care of the financial part of the event and is responsible for the budget. Sharo Maldonado has two different functions: she is general *sangha* coordinator, every local *sangha* has a coordinator, and she is in contact with them all, and keeps the overview when a lama visits a group; the other function is coordina-







Lama Kalsang Nyima, teaching *Soul Retrieval* in the Great Bon Stupa in Chamma Ling Valle de Bravo, Mexico.

tor of a new project that we call “Mala of Prosperity.” In this fundraising project we request from all the practitioners who are willing to participate to donate monthly \$15 in order to be able to pay the regular expenses the Great Bon Stupa for World Peace of Chamma Ling Valle de Bravo. This project was developed in order to support Chamma Ling Valle de Bravo retreat centre.

**Ton: Can you tell how the practice groups in Mexico are organized?**

**Guillermo:** Nationwide in Mexico there are fifteen places where practice groups meet, and we call them *sanghas*. The *sanghas* with the most attendants are in Torreon and Monterrey – both cities are in the north of Mexico. In every *sangha* there are several practice events: one day we practice

*Ngondro* for people who have received the transmission and teaching, other days are for beginners, certain *tantric* practices, or practices like *The Five Warrior Syllables* and *Tsa Lung*. So in every city we have several practice groups with a different focus.

**Ton: How big is the *sangha* in Mexico?**

**Guillermo:** It is hard to say an exact number; but we are for sure more than three hundred. In Chihuahua, where I live, about thirty-five people attend the practice group. In Torreón, more than fifty. In Monterrey, about thirty-five. To Rinpoche's teachings more than one-hundred-fifty people come. To Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche about ninety people come.



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche teaching in Chamma Ling Torreón, Mexico.







Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche teaching in The Great Bon *Stupa* in Chamma Ling Valle de Bravo.



Third *Stupa*, in Nirvana Farm, Lerdo, Durango, Mexico.



Consecration of the Third *Stupa* in Nirvana Farm, Lerdo, Durango, Mexico.







Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche teaching in The Great Bon *Stupa* in Chamma Ling Valle de Bravo, Mexico.



Great Bon *Stupa* in Chamma Ling Valle de de Bravo, Mexico.



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche during the consecration of the Third *Stupa* in Nirvana Farm, Lerdo, Durango, Mexico.







*Stupa in Chamma Ling Torreón, Mexico.*

**Ton: Can you tell about the resident lamas?**

**Guillermo:** We have two resident lamas. The main resident lama is Lama Kalsang Nyima, and currently he is teaching *Soul Retrieval* to a group of about thirty-five people, and there are two retreats a year for this teaching. Besides that he travels extensively to all the fifteen *sanghas*, and some of the *sanghas* invite him several times a year to teach, talk to them, give blessings, etc. He also comes together with Lama Yungdrung Lodoe every Sunday at noon in the Great Bon *Stupa* of Chamma Ling Valle de Bravo and they guide a practice, and all the town is invited to attend. Also on Mondays both resident lamas guide practice downtown in a *Gompa*, because the Great Bon *Stupa* is upon a hill, and it is forty-five minutes away from the town. Both lamas are excellent artists and Yungdrung Lodoe lately has been doing all the sacred art work in the third *Stupa* in Lerdo, Durango.

**Ton: How did you manage to collect enough money to build three *Stupas* in Mexico?**

**Guillermo:** His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche had a dream to build a *Stupa* and the Mexican *sangha* said, "Yes, we go for it." We

didn't have any money, so we started to do some auctions, and the money came in so slowly that after a few years we started a special project, where *sangha* members could donate money on a monthly basis. In the beginning fifty people donated different amounts of money, and it was steady. That way we were able to finish this wonderful project in time for Yongdzin Rinpoche to bless and consecrate it in 2010. [You can read about the consecration in [Ligmincha Europe Magazine, No. 01 – Spring 2011](#), page 18-20.] The small Bon *Stupa* is eighteen meters high, and the big one is thirty-six meters high. After that, a third Bon *Stupa* was built also in Torreón area, about one hour drive from the first one. So we are very happy.

**Ton: How is it possible that you have three *Stupas*, when we have no Ligmincha *Stupa* in Europe?**

**Guillermo:** We have good karma, but we also had benefactors to build these three sacred symbols that help us connect to the Buddhas, the Teachings and become better human beings. The first and the third *Stupa* were a private project open to the public, and for the second great *Stupa* we also had benefactors from all around the world.

**Ton: Why is Bon so popular in Mexico?**

**Guillermo:** I think because the teachings connect to the heart. Many teachings are not conceptual teachings, they go beyond words, and that reaches our hearts.

**Ton: Do you read the Ligmincha Europe Magazine?**

**Guillermo:** When I receive the link to the Magazine, I share it with the *sangha* members. Many of them speak English, so they are able to get to know what is going on and share it.

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

**Guillermo:** First of all, thank you Ton, so much for your wonderful work with Ligmincha Europe Magazine, and please give my kind regards to all the European *Sangha* on behalf of the Mexican *Sangha*. We warmly invite you all to visit Chamma Ling Valle de Bravo and to receive the blessings of being inside the Great Bon *Stupa* for World Peace!

**Interview by Ton Bisscheroux**





# WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN EUROPE

Here is our report from what's been happening in the European sangha. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche visited Europe and gave internet teachings; sanghas invited Menri Lopen and other Geshe. From Poland we did not get information about their activities, but we share two of their announcements we saw on Facebook.



**November 19 – 21, 2016:**  
Khenpo Geshe Geleg Jinpa taught Dzogchen meditation basics. This was a third part of his *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* teachings. We had forty meditation sticks made by our Sangha member Kari to hold the A.



**October 28 – 30, 2016:**  
Geshe Choekhortshang Rinpoche taught *Ngondro* Part 2, in Berlin, Germany.  
>>>



**December 31, 2016:**  
The sangha of Ligmincha Berlin spent New Year's Eve at Ligmincha Berlin Center, practicing *Tsa Lung*, *Warrior Syllables* and *Guru Yoga*.



**September 30 – October 2, 2016:**  
Geshe Lhundup taught *Trul khor* in Berlin.







**January 6 – 8, 2017:**

Geshe Nyima Woser Choekhortshang Rinpoche gave *Tummo* teaching in Budapest, Hungary. At the teaching he introduced participants to the preliminary chakra and channel

purifying practices of *Tummo*. More than four hundred thirty people attended the retreat. We have planned to continue early next year.

Choekhortshang Rinpoche's next teaching in Hungary *Medicine Buddha* is scheduled in June. For more information please contact Ligmincha Hungary at [ligmincha.mo@gmail.com](mailto:ligmincha.mo@gmail.com).



**January 14 – 15, 2017:**

Geshe Lhundup taught on transience in Sittard and on *A-tri* in Utrecht, The Netherlands.







**H.E. MENRI LOPON TRINLEY NYIMA RINPOCHE**

**Frankfurt**  
18.11.2016, Public Talk  
19.-20.11.2016, Seminar: Six Lokas

**Paris**  
25.11.2016, Public Talk

**Berlin**  
27.11.2016, Seminar: Three Heart Mantras

**Warsaw**  
02.12.2016, Public Talk  
03.-04.12.2016, Seminar: Three Heart Mantras

*please find more detailed information  
on the specific websites*

**Europe Tour 2016**

**Frankfurt – Paris – Berlin – Warsaw**  
**November/Dezember 2016**

[www.ligmincha.de](http://www.ligmincha.de) – [www.ligmincha.fr](http://www.ligmincha.fr) – [www.ligmincha.pl](http://www.ligmincha.pl)



November 18 – 20, 2016: Frankfurt / Hofheim (Germany)





November 25, 2016: Paris (France)



November 27, 2016: Berlin (Germany)





December 2 – 4, 2016: Warsaw (Poland)



December 5, 2016: Cracow (Poland)







You can watch the recordings here:

[Living with Joy, Dying in Peace, Part 3: Asleep but Not Unconscious: Discovering Awareness in the Sleep State](#)







**Free Live Webcast**  
**Sleep and Death as Doorways to Wisdom**  
 with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche  
**December 10, 2016, 21.00–22.10 h (C.E.T.)**

Register for the webcast at [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)  
 Part 4 of a FREE six-month course on living and dying.  
 Learn more at [www.ligminchalearning.com](http://www.ligminchalearning.com)



You can watch the recordings here:

[Living with Joy, Dying in Peace, Part 4: Sleep and Death as Doorways to Wisdom](#)



**Free Live Webcast**  
**Finding Peace with Death**  
 with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche  
**January 14, 2017 21.00–22.10 h (C.E.T.)**

Register for the webcast at [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)  
 This is Part 5 of a FREE six-month course on living & dying.  
 Learn more at [www.ligminchalearning.com](http://www.ligminchalearning.com)



You can watch the recordings here:

[Living with Joy, Dying in Peace, Part 5: Finding Peace With Death](#)



**Free Live Webcast**  
**Helping Loved Ones Through Sickness and Death**  
 with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche  
**February 11, 2017, 21.00–22.10 (C.E.T.)**

Register for the webcast at [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)  
 Part 6 of a FREE six-month course on living and dying.  
 Learn more at [www.ligminchalearning.com](http://www.ligminchalearning.com)



You can watch the recordings here:

[Living with Joy, Dying in Peace, Part 6: Helping Loved Ones Through Sickness and Death](#)





# TUMMO: THE BODY AS A MALA

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 third retreat year. You can read his other contributions in [Ligmincha Europe Magazine # 15](#) on page 33-34 and in [Ligmincha Europe Magazine # 19](#) on page 30-31.

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.



Shenten Dargye Ling, a Bon monastery in Blou, France, established a meditation school in 2008 offering practitioners an opportunity for in-depth study and practice of Bon Dzogchen texts. Under the guidance of Bon lamas, these retreats, called *gomdras*, meet seventy days for four consecutive years. The third year of the current *Gomdra* cycle, held September 8 – November 15, 2016, focused on the Bon *Tummo* teachings. There were twenty-seven participants. This is a diary of my experiences at this *gomdra*.

All the *gomdra* teachings were supposed to be from the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* cycle. *Tummo* practices are increasing in popularity in the West.

My first experience of *Tummo* was in 2008 when I received the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud Tummo* teachings from Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. The *Tummo* teachings at this years *gomdra* were not from that *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* cycle, rather from *Mother Tantra* teachings of *Ma Gyüd*. Why the change was unclear, however, *Ma Gyüd* is the *yidam* deity of Yongdzin Rinpoche.

The retreat was not silent. One participant from the previous year did not return. One participant left for the birth of his first child. One free day a week was available for rest and reflection. Wi-fi was available during the daytime hours, otherwise we had no contact with the outside world.



Shenten Dargye Ling. The name means 'Sanctuary where the Teaching of Tonpa Shenrab Flourishes.'





The daily schedule reflected the time demands of the practices. Morning chants began at 7:00 am and evening chants finished the day at 9:30 pm. There were five hours of *Tummo* practice and accumulation chants, an hour dharma lecture and two hours of community work. Lights were out at 10:30 pm. The weather was unusually cold for this time of year. Temperatures in the temple averaged around 4° C (40° F). Some practitioners practiced in their rooms, others only outdoors, but most practiced in the temple.



Khenpo Gelek Jinpa Rinpoche.

Khenpo Gelek Jinpa Rinpoche, a *Tummo* master, was again our teacher. Never late for a single practice session, and still recovering from surgery, he led us diligently with great enthusiasm and vigor. On Wednesday mornings, Yongdzin Rinpoche gave the text teachings with his commentary and practice instructions. Always with sparkling clarity and humor, he revealed the subtle essence of the *Mother Tantra Tummo* teachings. He was always an inspiration. On his brief daily outings, his knees were giving him some issues, he was always willing to answer our various questions and offer guidance.

This *gomdra* focused on the *Mother Tantra Tummo* teachings based on Rinpoche's thirty page commentary of the *Ma Gyüd* text. The nature of mind was its foundation practice, the base upon which we practiced the daily *Trul khor* body movements and *Tsa Lung* breath practices.

This *Tummo* was a seventy day retreat, modified from the normal one-hundred day session. The

practice sessions were held four times each day except on the free day. Each session followed a cycle of the five *Tsa Lung* and *Trul khor* practices. A new practice cycle was added every five days with additional accumulations. Before each practice session there was a twenty minute mantra recitation from the *Ma Gyüd* text to integrate the essence of the lama, *yidam* and *khandro* into the forthcoming practice.

The *Tsa Lung* breath practices and their physical movements are familiar to many Bon practitioners; the upward-moving wind, life-maintaining wind, fire-equalizing wind, all-pervasive wind and downward-clearing wind. They were only slightly modified for the *Ma Gyüd Tummo* practices.

The *Tsa Lung* practices were coordinated with visualizations of the various root wind energies within the three main channels moving through the five body chakras; crown, throat, heart, navel and lower door, and their corresponding lotus petals. The final two weeks concluded with two *tigle* practices. In the end there was no final exam of drying a wet towel on your back.

All breathing was done through the nostrils, not the mouth. A meditation belt was used to stabilize the posture and channels. A diet of meat was recommended to balance the wind energies as well as regular massage applications of olive oil, walnut oil, sesame oil or milk. Daily showers and bathing were seen as reducing the body heat. At the end of the *gomdra*, I had lost eight pounds.

This *Tummo* practice, being a *Tantra* practice, adds the visualization and integration of a fire mandala and the *Khandro Degjye Drölma* at the junction of the three channels to generate the inner heat. The *Khandro's* essence is the wisdom fire. The clearer and more stable the visualization of the *Khandro*, the faster the heat would rise. The goal of the *Tummo* practice was not just the inner heat but also to maintain a clear focus of the mind and the subtle winds entering and leaving the various channels and chakras. Holding the inhaled air in coordination with the abdominal muscles at the channel junction with the *Khandro* visualization was also required. It was only successful when there was complete integration of your body posture, the breath, the deity and chakra visualization, and awareness of the channels and winds.





As with other Bon practices, each practice session began with generating compassion in order to free all sentient beings from pain and suffering. It was from that place that the visualization of the *Khandro* began. The three main channels and five chakras were all purified by the inhalation of the wisdom wind into the central channel. The mind focuses on the *Khandro* at the channel junction and the wind energy fans the fire mandala and heat energy appears. Exhalation happens when you can no longer hold the breath and it exits the central channel at the crown of your head. All thoughts, whether about the cold, emotions, pain or food dissolved during the practice.

As to the physical discomforts from the practice, I suffered very little pain. There were pains but they would come and go each day. It was the opening of the wind channels. Mostly I suffered from headaches, however, they also would come and go in places I've never had headaches before. Everyone's experience was different.

The practice was always slow and gentle yet very precise. The wind channels, always moved in coordination with my mind as I remained mindful of the physical exercises and aware of the opening of the channels. The outside environment around me remained outside and rarely distracting.

The *Tummo* practices opened my heart chakra and crown chakra. I really had no expectations. Whether inner heat appeared or not, I continued practicing the breath cycle with *Tsa Lung* one session at a time. Within the seventy days, I had accumulated over eighteen thousand *Trul khor* body practices. It seemed a lot less.

There were few conceptual thoughts during the movements or counting or physical interruptions. No extra breath between the cycles was required. No need to hold on to anything. No fear or doubt. Disturbances dissolved immediately. All was an opening of the mind into clear awareness. We were crossing the ocean of *samsara* powered by the wisdom winds.

The experience of seeing and awareness had no need for technology or politics or any thoughts. The body channels opened slowly and our view, conduct, and meditation deepened. Our bodies and minds were transformed.

It opened the door to a stable experience of the nature of mind, with great depth and visions. The experience of compassion and awareness is powerful. Should prove useful in the *bardo* journey. It is the essence of reality. The *Tummo* creates the wind energy that allows the energy of awareness to be experienced. This precious wind energy balances the elements, opens the channels and generates blessings, joy and happiness.

It is important to note these experiences arise from a regular practice of *Tummo* with discipline and devotion. There are no short cuts in *Tummo*. When we experience the emptiness of awareness and vast open space, with nothing to hold on to, it is the discipline of the practice that provides the power and energy to remain there and experience its innate joy. The journey is different for each of us.



H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche.

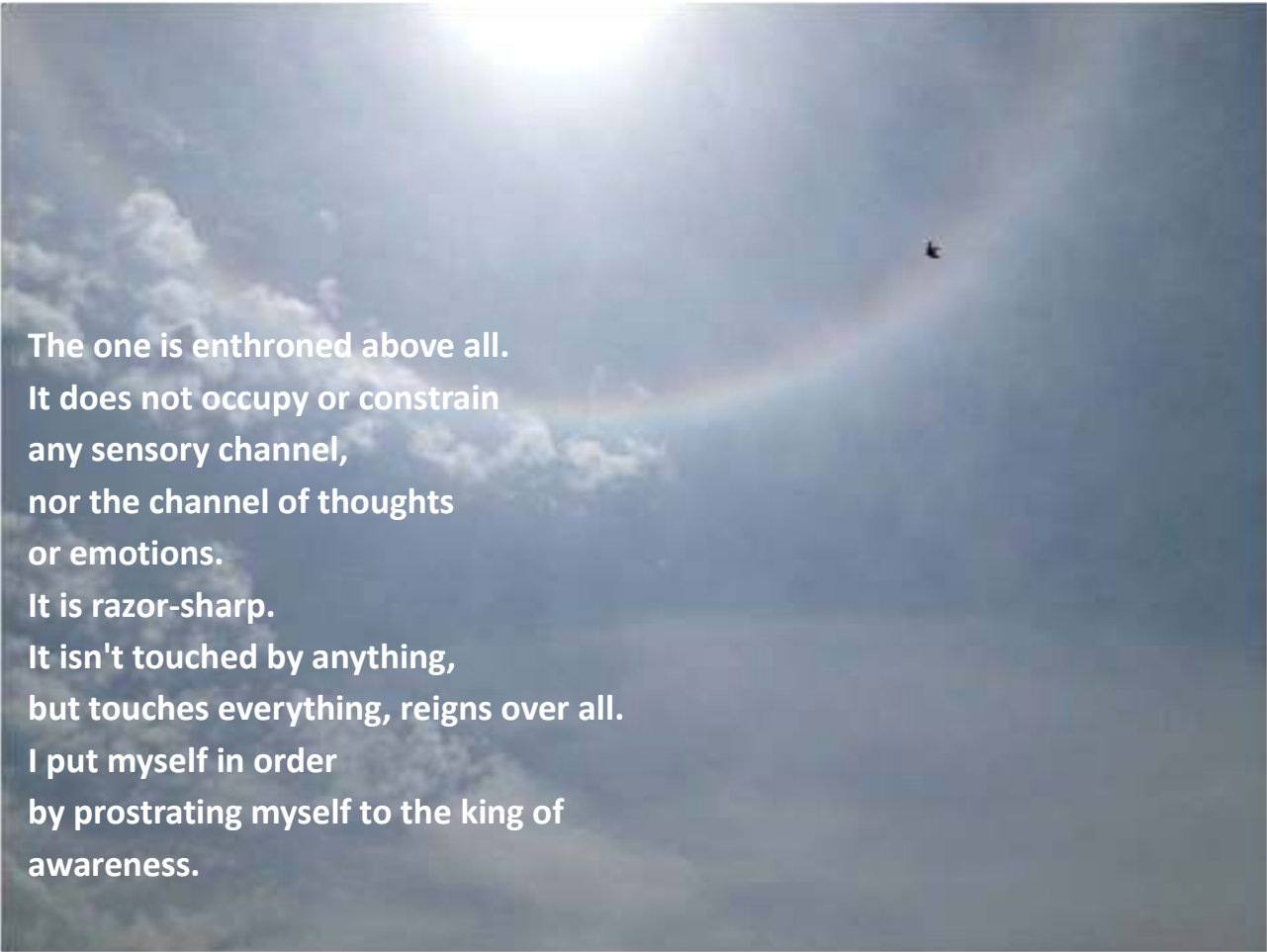
So it is with deep gratitude to H.E. Yongdzin Rinpoche for opening this treasure box of teachings to us and to Khenpo Gelek Rinpoche for carefully guiding us along the path. It was painful, exciting, boring and blissful; feelings never lasting more than a passing thought. The empty forms always allowed us to move on. The element energies provided the energy for the body that supported the daily practice. In the end, everything arises from within us.

**Text by Lowell Britson**





# KING



The one is enthroned above all.  
It does not occupy or constrain  
any sensory channel,  
nor the channel of thoughts  
or emotions.  
It is razor-sharp.  
It isn't touched by anything,  
but touches everything, reigns over all.  
I put myself in order  
by prostrating myself to the king of  
awareness.

**Text by Angelika Krone**

Photo by Victoria Poberejnyay: shot on first day of the  
Long-Life Ceremony for His Holiness in April 2016  
above Menri Monastery.





# RAINBOW BODY AND RESURRECTION

In this article Frits de Vries discusses a book by a catholic priest who did comparative study on the Rainbow Body and the Resurrection of Christ.

If you are a serious Dzogchen practitioner with a Christian background, there is a provocative new book on the market with the simple title: *Rainbow body and Resurrection* [1].

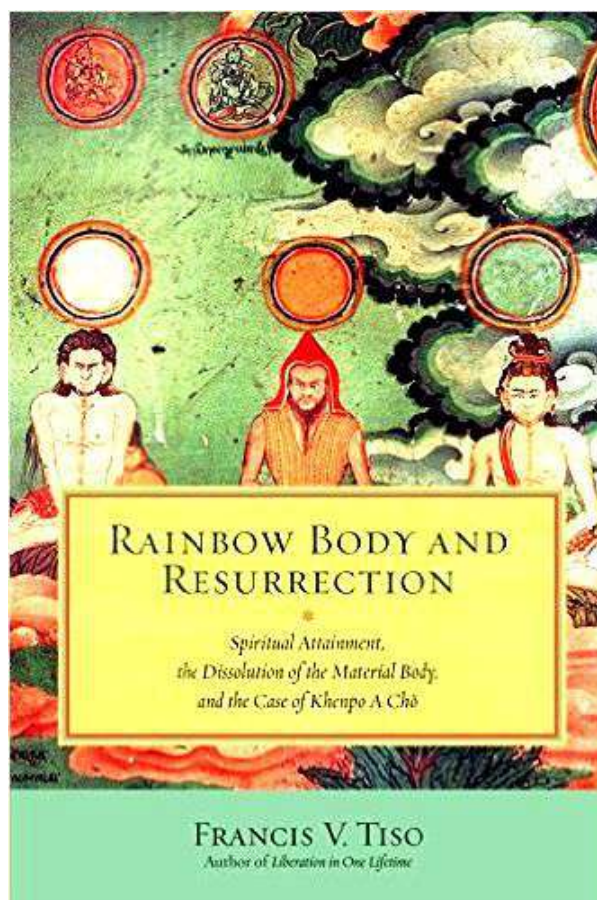
Undertaken by Catholic Priest, Father Francis V. Tiso who, among other titles, holds a Ph.D. in Tibetan Buddhism, *Rainbow body and Resurrection* is a most comprehensive study of the possible connection between the phenomenon of the Tibetan Buddhist rainbow body and the Christian phenomenon of Jesus rising from the dead. The full title of the book is *Rainbow Body and Resurrection: Spiritual Attainment, the Dissolution of the Material Body, and the Case of Khenpo A Chö*.

Far more than a case study of an actual rainbow body, Michael Sheehy's recent book review in *Buddhadharma* Winter 2016, expresses it this way:

*"The strength of Fathers Tiso's book is its tremendous and ambitious breadth. He brings to the reader's attention a broad spectrum of doctrinal and historical information not only about what he refers to as the 'Church of the East' and possible doctrinal influences of Christian light mysticism on Tibetan religion but also about early Dzogchen practice."* [2, p. 77]

In the *Introduction* Francis Tiso reveals what led him to this grand undertaking of bringing together all the evidence related to resurrection and rainbow body:

*"The rainbow body is a seductive topic, and even more seductive is the temptation to compare the rainbow body with the resurrection. In a sense, both claims amount to being the ultimate non-bad ending. They are both the ultimate confirmation of a person's having been on the right track all along: a confirmation that's better than a promotion, better than a canonization, better than being recognized as the reincarnation of the previous abbot. Both claims can also be considered mira-*



*cles."* [1, p. 9 – 10]

## Amazing Working Hypothesis

The research into these miracles is restricted to historical evidence of the origin of the rainbow body phenomenon and leads Francis Tiso to the first diffusion of Buddhism in Tibet. What follows is a cautiously-formulated, very daring working-hypothesis concerning the source and development of the rainbow body:

*"I am inclined to favour – at least as a working hypothesis – that the Christian doctrine of the resurrection merits consideration as a primary source for the notion of the rainbow body as it develops in the dzogchen milieu of imperial Tibet. This is not to say it is the only source, but it does seem to be crucial for the entire development, which is by no means complete in the period before, the so-called second diffusion of Buddhism in Tibet (taken to be after 1000, and concluding perhaps with the final contacts between Tibetans and Indian Buddhist panditas in the 1500s). Not only is the bodily resurrection a distinct and*





*emphatically Christian doctrine, it is sustained by claims made Christian mystics of the Syriac tradition about light mysticism and its effects on the human body-mind complex.*

*These claims are not found in other Central Asian mystical traditions, but are attested to by an extensive body of literature datable to the period of the first diffusion of Buddhism in Tibet.” [1, p. 19]*

Carefully formulated, the hypothesis demonstrates Father Tiso has no problem to compare the rainbow body with the resurrection phenomenon. At first sight ‘resurrection’ of a dead body is the opposite of the ‘dissolution’ of a living body. Buddhist Dzogchen practitioners will not be surprised, because the Buddhist *trikāya* doctrine gives us ample space to join different bodies with each other under different circumstances in time and space:

*“The Three Buddha-bodies comprise the Buddha-body of Reality, the Buddha-body of Perfect Resource, and the Buddha-body of Emanation. Jointly, they form the secret object of refuge.” [3, Glossary p. 517]*

This book is certainly not easy reading. For me it is the book I was a long time waiting for. The doctrines of my Christian background have now finally found a solid grounding in Tibetan Buddhism and Dzogchen. To my friends and relatives I recently expressed, to their disbelief, that my growing understanding of Dzogchen renewed my understanding of Christianity completely. To my Christian friends and relatives I show now with confidence the cover of the book of Father Francis Tiso, as a lively conversation-starter.

### **The Mission of Francis Tiso**

*“We are at a point in the history of humanity in which all religions, all systems of contemplative training and practice, are under extremely critical scrutiny. Not only are some marginal lineages in danger of extinction but also some of the more historically significant contemplative systems are on the verge of near collapse.*

(....)

*It has been my personal task to restore and reinforce some small instances of the institutional*



Francis V. Tiso.

*presence of Catholic Christianity in Europe and America, with special attention given to ecumenical and interreligious dialog. Whenever it seems necessary to struggle for the basic survival of a religious tradition, I have discovered, there is less compelling impetus for the cultivating of the more mystical or contemplative approach within that tradition. For this reason, in spirit of those teachers of the past who managed to hand on their wisdom in spite of unfavorable times and hostile circumstances, it is necessary to write a book of this kind.” [1, p. 21]*

### **The Role of Bon in the book**

The author of the book interviewed H.E. Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche in 2001 and on more occasions. See: *Interview with a Bonpo Master* [1, p. 76 – 81]. Here are some quotes:

*“There were twenty-five masters of Bon in Tibet before the arrival of the Buddhist teachings from India, and each of these in succession attained the rainbow body. In the eighth century, the master was Tapihritsa, who transmitted the written text, Zhang Zhung sNyan rgyud. Recent manifestations*



H.E. Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche.





of the rainbow body include Sha dzar Rinpoche in 1934 and Ra dza Dawa Tragpa, his disciple.”

From this paragraph is also the following remarkable story:

“While we were interviewing Rinpoche, word came from Tibet that a Bonpo yogi named Rakshi Togden had died and was manifesting paranormal phenomena similar to those associated with the rainbow body.

(...)

*This ninety-two-year-old Bonpo monk of the Lophug Gompa passed away in Bachen, Nagchu, in eastern Tibet on January 3, 2001, about forty-five days before our interview with Loppon Tenzin Namdak in Kathmandu. This monk had already predicted the date of his own death. He had been doing spiritual practices from childhood. The body manifested signs of the rainbow body including special sounds, a particular kind of snowfall, birds sitting quietly while facing towards his room, circular and straight rainbows in the sky, and white light in the sky. In fact, these phenomena were continuing on the day of our interview, February 17, 2001.”*

Throughout the book Tiso has a positive attitude towards the Bon tradition, for example:

*“Moreover, there is the mediating role of the Bonpo tradition, which leaves the dzogchen lineage open to further syncretistic tendencies. Loppon Tendzin Namdak for example, is convinced of Persian (Zoroastrian?) and Central Asian influences on early Bon.” [1, p. 249]*

### More

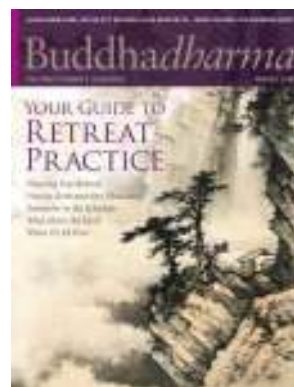
If you are interested in this subject, but you're not a great reader, you can watch two videos on YouTube:

- In April 2016 Francis Tiso gave an exceptional introduction to his book at the California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS) in San Francisco: [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com).
- Talk at ION – Institute Of Noetic Sciences on July 5<sup>th</sup> 2015: [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com).

### References

[1] Francis V. Tiso. *Rainbow Body and Resurrection, Spiritual Attainment, the Dissolution of the*

*Material Body, and the Case of Khenpo A Chö.* North Atlantic Books, Berkeley, CA, 2016.



[2] Buddhadharma, The Practitioners Quarterly, Winter 2016. Reviews: Investigating the Rainbow body, Review by Michael Sheehy, p.73-78.

[3] 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 Padmasambhava; revealed by Karma Lingpa; translated by Gyurme Dorje, 2005, London, Penguin Books.

### Links

Francis Tiso on the internet:

- [wikipedia.org](http://wikipedia.org)
- [www.therainbowbody.blogspot.nl](http://www.therainbowbody.blogspot.nl)

**Selection, composition and text by Frits de Vries**



**Andrea di Bartolo, Way to Calvary, c. 1400.** The cluster of halos at the left are the [Virgin Mary](#) in front, with the [Three Marys](#).





# WRATHFUL ACTION WITH GOOD MOTIVATION

Since January 2016, Geshe Denma Gyaltsen has been the resident lama at Ligmincha Texas, US. In this interview he shares some of his biography and answers questions on organ donation.

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

**Geshe Denma:** I grew up in a small village in Nepal. My father and grandfather were Bonpos, my mother was not. When I was a very small boy, Yongdzin Rinpoche came to the Tashi Ge Gyal Thaten Ling Monastery in Nepal to perform a big ceremony called *Mendhup*, where they played instruments and chanted. At that time, I had a strong experience and my heart was touched. Then I talked with my parents about going to a monastery and they thought that was wonderful. They spoke to Yongdzin Rinpoche and the Abbot of the monastery who accepted me at the monastery and gave me robes to wear. I did not know anything about the prayers or the rituals but I began to wear these robes and join in the retreat that was occurring at the monastery there and I enjoyed it very much. In 1981 my father and my childhood teacher brought me to Menri Monastery in Dolanji, India, with three other boys. At that time I left my family and my childhood home. I didn't know anything about life in a monastery, but I joined at Menri, the Mother Monastery of Bon, and began my life as a monk. On Nyame Sherab Gyaltsen's birthday, I took monks' vows with eight other boys from His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche and His Eminence Lopon Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche.

**Ton: Can you tell about your time at Menri Monastery?**

**Geshe Denma:** In 1981, I took monks vows and began my studies. Then I joined the Dialectic School at Menri Monastery, where I studied Bon philosophy, Sutra, Tantra, Dzogchen, Tibetan Grammar, poetry, astrology, astronomy and how to build *Stupas* and mandalas. I completed all my classroom studies and continued working toward my Geshe degree.

In 1990, His Holiness sent me as a teacher to a small Bonpo monastery in the south of Sikkim, India, called Zhu Rishing Yungdrung Kundak-Ling



Geshe Denma Gyaltsen.

Monastery. In 1992, I invited His Holiness the Dalai Lama to bless the monastery. While at the monastery, I taught young boys reading, writing, praying, and performing rituals. In 1995 I went back to Menri Monastery to study, and I finished my Geshe degree in 1996. After my graduation His Holiness appointed me in 1998 as the first abbot of the Zhu Rishing Yungdrung Kundak-Ling Monastery, in Sikkim. I was one of three recognized Bon Abbots by the Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in exile. It was the first Bonpo monastery in Sikkim. I served two terms as abbot and teacher until 2003.

**Jantien: Why did you come to the West?**

**Geshe Denma:** In 1988, His Holiness the 33<sup>rd</sup> Menri Trizen founded the Bon Children's Home in Dolanji, India. It provided a place to stay for boys and girls who needed an education. I came to the West in 1996 with Geshe Nyima Dakpa, who became the Director of the Bon Children's Home. He requested that I help him with the administration and fund raising to gain sponsors for orphans and other children at the home, which by then was providing them with food, healthcare and free education. I had travelled many times to the US, Austria, Poland, Canada, Russia, Belarus, Germany, France, Switzerland and The Netherlands to teach, raise funds and learn. During this time, one of my accomplishments was to find sponsorship from the Save Our Soul (SOS) organization in Aus-





tria, a generous charity foundation, to build a boys' dormitory that would house one-hundred boys in three buildings that were two stories each. Two of the buildings housed forty boys each and the third building housed twenty boys on the second story and the first story housed the dispensary. A second accomplishment during this time was to find almost two-hundred sponsors for small boys and girls from all over the world where I travelled. The third accomplishment was to obtain permission from the Indian government to receive foreign funds to support these children. This permission, called an FCRA, (Foreign Contribution Regulation Act) is very difficult to secure. Getting it allowed western money to come through a non-profit organization to the home in India. Without that, we cannot receive the money needed to keep the Home running.

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

**Geshe Denma:** I have known him since 1981, when I started my studies at Menri Monastery. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught me as a senior student in the Dialectic School, where we both learned from Yongdzin Rinpoche. Between 1996 and 2008, I met Rinpoche many times as we travelled the world. In 2008 I wanted to study more and decided to go to the US to study English.

Since 2009, I have been in Texas a lot and I met Rinpoche at his annual teaching there in 2010. I

was travelling to Houston regularly and I had contact with Rinpoche during this time. The sangha in Houston, Texas, lacked a spiritual leader so Rinpoche asked me to help and I accepted. The Houston sangha started procedures to get a religious visa for me. In December 2015 I officially got a religious visa, and came to Houston on January 3, 2016. When I arrived we began searching for a new location for Ligmincha Texas. In the new center I have an office, and office hours (Monday thru Friday 10 a.m. till 3 p.m.). People come here to talk to me, either with appointments or without, about how to practice, their questions about meditation, and to request rituals. I also give teachings and lead regular practices. Every first Wednesday of the month I teach 'how to meditate for beginners.' Every second Wednesday of the month I teach *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud Lineage Masters*. We hold monthly meditation practice on *Sherab Chamma* and *Red Garuda* and weekly meditation practice including *The Nine Breathings*, three prayers, meditation, *Tsa Lung*, *Yeshe Walmo*, *Long Life prayers*, and *Precious Garland prayers*.

**Jantien: Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche has adapted his language so people in the West can understand the Bon teachings more easily. Do you also teach that way, or do you teach from the texts?**

**Geshe Denma:** I teach both ways. Sometimes I express the essence of the teachings in a condensed way, but other times people – especially senior students – want to go line by line through



Sangha in Texas, Houston.





the original Bon texts and I give an explanation. I have learned a lot from Rinpoche and the way he teaches.

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

**Geshe Denma:** Nowadays the Bon-Buddhist teachings are doing very well in the West. The first time Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche came to Texas nobody knew about Bon. Then it was a great challenge for him to teach. These days many people know and are interested in the Bon. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche has done a great job, creating more than thirty-five centers in the West. Some centers have a lot of land. They organize several retreats, in the four seasons, where at least one-hundred people come. And many people practice (daily) at home. I visited Chamma Ling Poland, one of the large centers with land, with a great sangha. Also in Colorado and Mexico there are centers with big sanghas. Colorado has a large amount of land with a retreat center and retreat cabins. It sits on very beautiful land. In France, Yongdzin Rinpoche and Khenpo Tenpai Yungdrung have established a big center, Shenten Dargye Ling, and other lamas have established centers in the America, Europe and Russia. So, Bon-Buddhism is growing very well, and our sangha is

growing every year. Technology helps us, because wherever we are, we can connect through the internet to Bon teachings.

**Ton: Are you also invited by other sanghas to teach?**

**Geshe Denma:** Yes. I have plans to teach a three year course on *Soul Retrieval* in Chamma Ling Colorado.

**Jantien: We would like to ask you some questions on organ donation. What is the view of Bon on this topic? In the West somebody whose organ, a kidney for example, that does not function any more can receive a healthy organ from somebody with the same DNA (usually a relative), or from somebody who is brain-dead.**

**Geshe Denma:** In Tibet we didn't have a system for that. It is a recent technological development in the West. Death happens and in Tibetan medicine it is not possible to transplant an organ before somebody is dead.

**Jantien: People in the West who study Bon have doubts and questions about this theme.**

**Geshe Denma:** In my opinion, all sentient beings are connected in some way or another. Not only in this life but there can also be connections from



On behalf of the Ligmincha Texas Center *sangha*, Alejandro Chaoul and Geshe Denma give a Bodhi tree to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche as an offering of their gratitude for the 25th anniversary of bringing Bon teachings to the West.





past lives. In Tibet we believe that all sentient beings have once been our mother. So we have a connection in a past life, or a very far away past life, so in that way we may have the same DNA to help somebody.

An organ donation is a very big help for somebody. For the donor, this is a very good deed. For the person who is dying the organ is no longer useful after death but for another person the organ is very useful. I personally will donate my eyes after death.

**Jantien:** There is also tissue donation, like skin, cornea, bones, heart valves. Tissues are taken within twenty-four hours after the death of the donor. That person is a non-heart-beating tissue donor. The heart-beating organ donor is brain-dead, and his circulation and breathing are kept going on artificially. They stop it after the donation and then the donor will immediately die. Is there in your opinion a difference between a heart-beating organ donation and a donation of tissues after death?

**Geshe Denma:** When somebody is one-hundred percent sure that he is going to die and with permission of the donor and/or family, than it is ok.

Without permission it is not good.

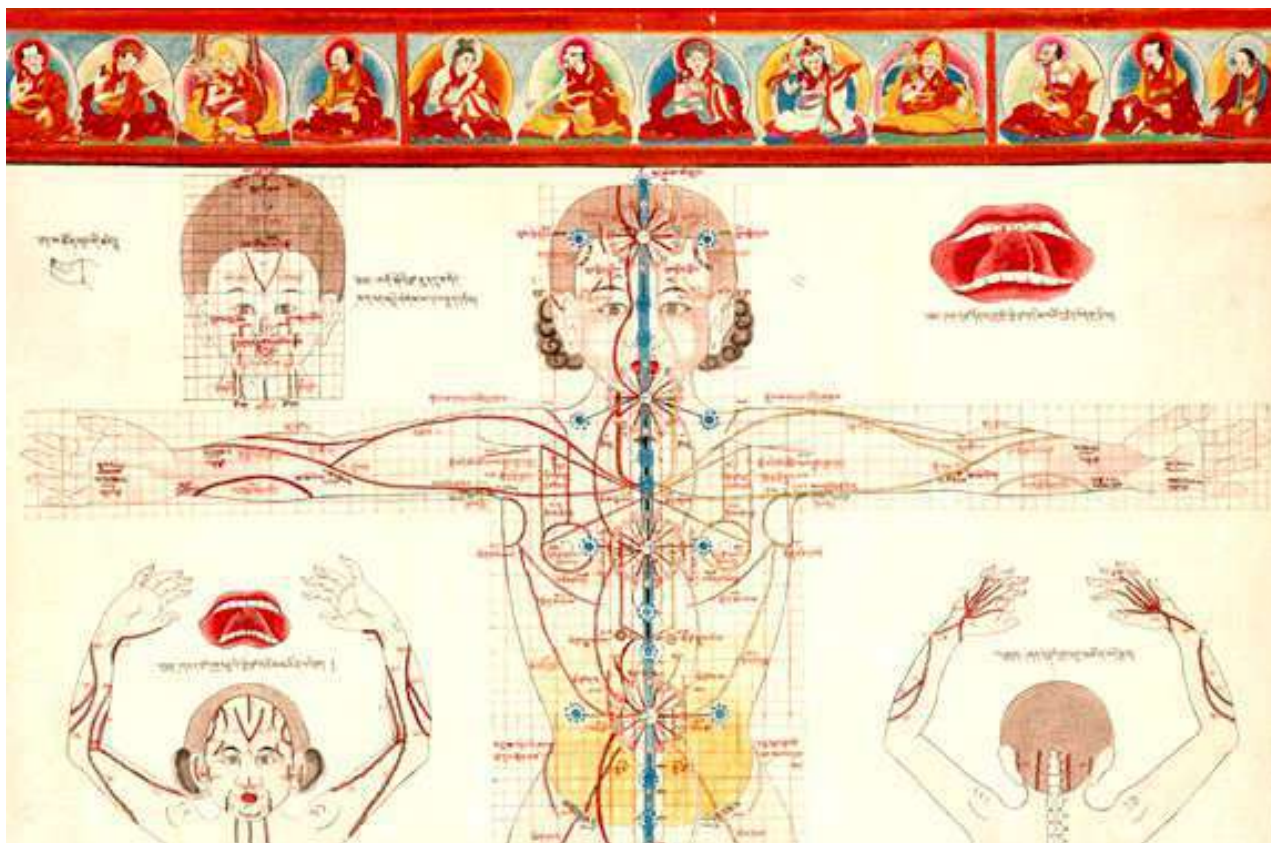
**Jantien:** In the West there are many discussions about how to make legislation on this topic so there are quite some questions.

**Geshe Denma:** When you take somebody's heart out one hour before he dies it looks like killing to me. But with permission, if the person knows he is going to die anyway, and wants to help somebody else, then it is a generous gesture.

**Ton:** When a surgeon takes an organ out of the body just before or after somebody dies, doesn't that disturb the *bardo* process? Because in the Tibetan tradition they leave the body resting for three days.

**Geshe Denma:** In Tibet we call this gently dying. Gentle dying is when the outer breath has stopped and the inner breath is still there for three days. During these three days, the five elements are dissolving slowly one after another. In my opinion, it does not disturb the *bardo* process.

**Jantien:** Another aspect around dying is euthanasia. People who are terminally ill get medicine to die, so they don't have to go through the difficult last phase. The other possibility is that people



Channels in Tibetan medicine.





have so much pain in their last phase that they need a lot of medicine to kill their pain. Those quantities of medicine are the cause of their death. How do you think about that?

**Geshe Denma:** Normally we say that motivation is more important than action. Sometimes a bad action can have a good motivation. For example when a father or mother speaks very negatively to his child so he will study hard, the action may not be good, but the motivation is good. That is what we call a wrathful action with a good motivation. In the Bon world, the best is to have good motivation and good action. We seek to avoid bad motivation and bad action. This is the area between. If there is a chance of a peaceful death, then that is the best possibility because the process of dissolving the elements one by one is not disturbed. If there is no chance of continued life, then you can act with good motivation in every way possible to help people within their wishes to have a peaceful death.

**Jantien:** So, if there is a good motivation to help the patient who is in very ugly pain, then the action resulting in his death is no problem?

**Geshe Denma:** Yes, that is a good motivation with a bad action. But if the pain of the patient is disturbing to me, because I want to go to sleep, then it is bad action and bad motivation. Actually, both the care takers and the decision makers need to reflect on their own motivations to be certain they are clear when taking action in this middle area.

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

**Geshe Denma:** I would like to share an experience I had with my hostess in Houston. Her dog, Patches, was very ill and she was thinking it was time to put the dog to sleep. I told her not to do that. In Bon, we believe in caring for all sentient beings. I went to see Patches at home, and placed the dog in front of the altar. I said the *Precious Garland* and other prayers. Slowly, Patches died peacefully. Patches was cremated and I took her ashes and made them into a *tsa tsa*, a small *Stupa* that now rests on the altar. This is the kind of care at death that Bon believes in.

Interview by Jantien Spindler and Ton Bisscheroux



Wealth vases (*yang bum*) during the Wealth Treasure Vase Retreat at Ligmincha Texas.





# APPRECIATING WHERE WE ARE

This is an edited excerpt from oral teachings given by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in 2005. Reprint from *The Voice of Clear Light*, January 2006.

Every time we are together on retreat is a unique time, a special opportunity. It is important to recognize it as such, and to look at how you can make the best of this present moment with this present teaching. For example, there is more time to reflect in new ways and at greater depth. There is more time for practice. By practicing more and reflecting deeply, there is no question that the results will be very different than when you are practicing at home.

In my generation, growing up with parents who were refugees from Tibet, we heard much about their hardships. Our parents went through a lot of difficulties in losing their country. All of our teachers also went through a lot of difficulties during that time. When they first arrived in India, many of our teachers had to work on road construction crews. That's what they did! They not only had to deal with the heat, the hunger, the poverty, and a new language and a new culture, but more, they had to deal with their fear of losing all the vast knowledge of the spiritual lineage and with the need to protect and preserve it.

In their experiences in Tibet and their escape to India, they did not find any clear direction or solution. It just came down to a question of survival.

Personally, having grown up in India with those parents and teachers and then coming to the West, I try to never lose my perspective and to remember all the many diverse situations I've encountered in life.

If you are to gain a larger perspective of life, you either must be forced to go through challenging situations as my parents and teachers did, or

you may choose to go through those situations in an effort to help people. Based on your particular circumstances and your willingness, you may feel that you are able to actively go to those difficult places and live through hardships in order to help people.

After a certain amount of time you become exhausted. Then, when you return home, all that you used to complain about seems rather silly.

And when you hear others complain about similar things in their lives you see how much time we really waste doing that. You can see that life really has given you so much, probably even more than you need. In many cases that's true.

There is a line I repeat that I think one should always remember: "If you do not appreciate what you have now, then you don't deserve more, nor should you look for more."

Remembering that, just begin now to appreciate what exists in your life. Sometime later, after you have confronted the challenges of life and find yourself in a new and different place, you will be able to see today's difficulties from a more open perspective.

Text selected by Jantien Spindler



Serenity Ridge Retreat Center.





# TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE'S 2017 EUROPEAN SEMINARS AND ONLINE TEACHINGS

| When                   | Where                      | What                                                                                         | More information                                                 |
|------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| February 25 – March 19 | Your computer              | Interactive online course: Healing from the Source: Meditation as Medicine for Body and Mind | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>         |
| March 3 – April 14     | Your computer              | Online course: The Five Elements: Healing with Form, Energy, and Light                       | <a href="http://ligminchalearning.com">ligminchalearning.com</a> |
| March 4                | Your computer              | Free Live Webcast: Celebrating the Tibetan New Year                                          | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a>         |
| April 28 – 30          | Paris, France              | Weekend seminar: The Five Elements: Connecting with the Living Universe                      | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.fr">www.ligmincha.fr</a>           |
| April 29 – May 21      | Your computer              | Interactive online course: Tibetan Meditation: Achieving Great Bliss Through Pure Awareness  | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>         |
| May 5 – 7              | Vienna, Austria            | Weekend seminar: Sleep Yoga from the Bon Mother Tantra                                       | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.at">www.ligmincha.at</a>           |
| May 12 – 14            | Amsterdam, The Netherlands | Weekend seminar: A-tri, Part 5 (of 5)                                                        | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.nl">www.ligmincha.nl</a>           |
| May 19 – 21            | Berlin, Germany            | Weekend seminar: The Seven Mirrors of Dzogchen Part 1 (of 2)                                 | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.de">www.ligmincha.de</a>           |
| May 26 – 28            | Bulle, Switzerland         | Weekend seminar: Bringing More Light Into Our Lives                                          | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.fr">www.ligmincha.fr</a>           |
| June 10 – July 2       | Your computer              | Interactive online course: Tibetan Sound Healing                                             | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>         |
| July 22 – August 20    | Your computer              | Interactive online course: Tibetan Dream Yoga                                                | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>         |
| August 7 – 13          | Buchenau, Germany          | European Summer Retreat: Twenty-One Nails, Part 3 (of 3)                                     | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.de">www.ligmincha.de</a>           |
| August 15 – 20         | Wilga, Poland              | Retreat: Dream Yoga                                                                          | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.pl">www.ligmincha.pl</a>           |

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# Ligmincha Europe Magazine

*# 24 – Spring 2017*



Meet the Peruvian sangha

Long Life Ceremonies

Lhari-la: 'Painter of God'

The Path of Self-Liberation





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## THE LIGMINCHA EUROPE MAGAZINE

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# GREETINGS AND NEWS FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Readers, Dear Practitioners of Bon,

In this edition, we bring you an article about ceremonies for His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche and His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche; text from a book by Chögyal Namkai Norbu, who gives a very easy-to-read description of the Dzogchen teachings; and an introduction to the Peruvian *sangha*. For another article we spoke to Lama Kalsang Nyima and asked him about connecting to the Guru. We report on activities from Europe, and share a poem from a *sangha* member and one on the transitoriness of life.

Last but not least, we update you on the wonderful TWR LIVE teachings. I want to share my own experience with one of these teachings. One night before going to sleep I listened to a recording of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's instructions and guided meditation on Sleep Yoga. The next morning I awoke feeling stressed about an impending project deadline. I had

difficult decisions to make, depended on the input of others who had not yet responded, and wanted to be content with the result.

I immediately had a chance to practice what I'd learned. Rinpoche had taught two specific exercises. The first involved a visualization in which one dissolves every external object of ego, pain or conflict into light; and then allows these lights to

dissolve into one's physical body — transforming every organ, cell, and sensation into light. Then, one experiences all of this light coming together as a small sphere of light in the forehead. Finally, one allows that sphere, which constitutes the last vestige of external and internal experience — to dissolve into the vast expanse of space.

I did the meditation while lying in bed, and was surprised by how smooth and easy it was to follow these instructions. My stress dissolved into the clear space. When I started work I found it easy to make choices and accomplished more in less time than expected. It no longer bothered me that no

one had answered my questions. I had given people several chances to respond, and the meditation helped me let go of feeling entirely responsible for the outcome. It opened me to the present moment.

That evening I noticed a vase of flowers in our living room. I told my wife how beautiful they were, and she reminded me that they had been there

for several days. I also noticed physical tension, so I went for a walk and gazed at the sky. That was when I remembered the words Lama Kalsang Nyima had told me in the interview a few days earlier: Trust the enlightened teachings, trust each other.

In Bon,

**Ton Bisscheroux, chief editor**





# CEREMONIES FOR TWO LIVING PILLARS OF THE YUNGDRUNG BON TRADITION

**In 2016 Long Life ceremonies were held at Menri Monastery for His Holiness Menri Trizin Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche and at Triten Norbutse Monastery for His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche. Sangmo Yangri was there and she reports about these ceremonies.**

After almost two years preparing the offerings of “Gratitude *Tenshug* Ceremonies” for H.H. Menri Trizin Rinpoche and H.E. Yongzin Rinpoche, they took place last year. On November 1<sup>st</sup> 2016, the *Tenshug* for His Holiness Menri Trizin Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche took place in Menri Monastery in Dolanji, India, and on April 24<sup>th</sup> 2016, the *Tenshug* for His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche was held in Triten Norbutse Monastery in Kathmandu, Nepal. For both ceremonies Bonpos from Tibet, India, Nepal, Bhutan and other countries travelled to India and Nepal to attend these exceptional events. Beyond the tremendous blessings received during the

*Tenshug* ceremonies, everyone felt a deep gratitude towards both H.H. Menri Trizin and H.E. Yongdzin Rinpoche, the two living pillars of the Yungdrung Bon tradition. *Tenshug* is a very elaborated ceremony, with ritual preparations that last several days before the actual ceremony. Thus, the neophyte can get lost in the complex rituals. Just reading the translation of the name itself, announced as Long Life ceremony or Mandala Offering raises the question about what exactly is the *Tenshug* ceremony?

The word *Tenshug* means ‘living a long life steadily.’ *Ten* means steadily, *shug* means to live. Generally, it is called *Mandala Tenshug*. The Mandala offering has three kinds: outer, inner and secret. *Chi tsenma ze kyi mandala* is an offering of a mandala that is made of gems, *long chod rGyen gyi mandala* is a mandala offering where devotees do an auspicious offering according to ones capability, *Nang rGyu lus mDangs gyi mandala* is a mandala offering of five aggregates, six senses spheres of form, *rJig rTen gtos kyi mandala* is a



His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and His Holiness Menri Trizin Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche.





mandala offering of entire cosmos, *gSangwa bon gNyid don gyi mandala* is a mandala offering of abiding in the natural state of the mind.

The *Mandala Tenshug* ritual is a ceremony where disciples and followers of a great Lama request him to live a long life for the sake of all sentient beings. Moreover, they pray for the long life of the enlightened body, speech and mind of a great master in the world for the benefit of sentient beings. The *Mandala Tenshug* can be organized and sponsored by anyone, and disciples and followers can offer the Master the *Tenshug* anytime to benefit innumerable sentient beings. Devotees and followers realize the mandala offering to pray for the enlightened body, speech and mind of a great master to steadily live in the world for the sake of all sentient beings. Traditionally, there is no specific time to conduct the *Mandala Tenshug*, however, nowadays it is generally offered when a great master becomes older or when the health of a great master becomes weak. Disciples and followers do a mandala offering *Tenshug* to receive the blessing of enlightened body, speech and mind of the Master to benefit countless sentient beings.

Traditionally, a fully ordained senior monk initiates and performs the *Tenshug* ceremony. The elaborate ritual is composed of a preliminary phase and the actual ritual phase.

The *Tenshug* ritual ceremonies that were done in Menri Monastery and Tritten Norbutse Monastery in 2016 were done according to the *Ma Seng Tse dup* tradition (*Long Life Accomplished Prayers* according to Ma Seng tradition, the Wisdom Deity Ma We Senghe) and belong to the inner *tantric* teachings. This *Tenshug* text was compiled by Yongzin Rinpoche in 1997 at Menri Monastery. The *Long Life Mandala Offering* ceremony can be done according to other traditional texts as well.

The preliminary phase rituals are performed by at least seven monks. They perform the Long Life ritual of the *Ma Seng* tradition for seven days. Furthermore, *Geg Sel*, the expelling obstacles ritual and *Chu Tor* ritual (water ritual) are conducted, devotees (monks, nuns and lay people) clean and repair the roads and bridges around the Monastery, captive animals are released, *Tsa Tsa* are made, Long Life Prayer flags, *Bar Ched Lam Sel* (expelling obstacles' prayer) and



### Sangmo Yangri

She received her master degree in Bon philosophy in 2007 at the Central University of Tibetan Studies in Varanasi in India, she then completed a M.Phil degree in Buddhism philosophy. At the university (CUTS) where the five Tibetan schools were represented (Bon, Nyingma, Sakya, Kagyu and Gelug) the other four schools had Ph.D. students, whereas nobody did such in depth studies in the Bon tradition. She felt, this was missing and felt it would serve the preservation of the Bon tradition and inspire other students, especially female students, to do a Ph.D. in Bon tradition.

She has been invited several times as a speaker at the Yungdrung Bon Camping in Menri Monastery, and has participated to several international Bon and Buddhism conferences.

Before starting teaching at Lishu Institute in 2015, she taught on voluntary basis at the Ratna Menling nunnery in Dolanji for one year, gave guidance to all the Bon philosophy nuns students and prepared new study materials for them. In 2015, she was appointed teacher at the Lishu Institute by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and has given lectures on the Nine Ways of Bon, the hagiography of Buddha Tonpa Sherab Miwo and Tibetan language.

*Jamma* prayer flags are printed and raised.

During the actual phase of the *Tenshug*, monks and nuns recite the *Du Tri Su* Prayer and perform different rituals such as: a Ransom ritual, Cleansing Water ritual and Fumigation to purify ritual





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

ལྷོ་མ་ཆོས་ཀྱི་ལྷ་མོ་ལྷོ་མ་ཆོས་ཀྱི་ལྷ་མོ་  
མཐོན་པོ་ལྷོ་མ་ཆོས་ཀྱི་ལྷ་མོ་  
ཐུགས་ཀྱི་ལྷོ་མ་ཆོས་ཀྱི་ལྷ་མོ་  
ལྷོ་མ་ཆོས་ཀྱི་ལྷ་མོ་

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

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

objects, Outer and Inner Securing boundaries ritual, Refuge Prayer, Supplication Prayer, *Boddhichitta* Prayer, Confession Prayer, Invoking the Wisdom Deity, Prostration, Confession Prayer, Mandala Offering Prayer. The Mandala is offered according to the Prayer of Tsewang Bod Yul ma. All the auspicious gifts are offered at this phase of Mandala Offering Prayer, offering *torma* (ritual cake) and *rakta* to deities, *sMen zab* (Medicinal Nectar Offering prayer), Long Life Prayer, *Tsok* Offering Prayer, Appeasing Prayer to all the Lineage Root Masters, Invoking the deity Mi Dud of Menri Monastery, *Tsok* Offering Prayer, receiving blessing of *tsok*, Fire Offering ritual, Praising Prayer to Ma Seng deities, offering and distribution of *tsok* for all including leftovers of *tsok* that are given to lower guests (beings of lower realms). Completion Prayer of Rituals, Auspicious Prayer, Prayer of Root Lama are recited by devotees, Prosperity Prayer of Yungdrung Bon, Dedication Prayer, etc.



OCEAN OF WISDOM  
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Teachers Teachings Mantras Volunteers About



by Lama Kalsang Nyima

Long Life Prayer for H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche



During the actual Mandala Offering phase of the ceremony, a fully ordained senior monk adorned with a whole set of monk robes (except lotus crown) stands up and recites a Mandala Offering Prayer melodiously, eloquently and lucidly. The

## Long Life Mantra

ཐུགས་ཀྱི་ལྷོ་མ་ཆོས་ཀྱི་ལྷ་མོ་ལྷོ་མ་ཆོས་ཀྱི་ལྷ་མོ་

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

SO empty space

DRUM Long Life Deity castle

A KAR unborn wisdom

MU LA seed syllable of yogi

TING NAM nectar

Ō DU receiving long life force

MU YE syllable for prosperity

TSE long life

NI seed syllable for human realm

DZA hooks of light

When you want to listen to the Prayers or the Mantra, click on the pictures.







Impressions of the Long Life ceremonies.





Mandala is offered; then all the *sanghas* resume the Offering Prayers to the Master and do the offerings of auspicious gifts.

#### The main auspicious gifts are:

- Statue of Buddha representing the enlightened body,
  - Scriptures which represent the enlightened speech,
  - Stupa which represent the enlightened mind.
- These are offered to the master for the longevity of his enlightened body, speech and mind like Buddha Tonpa Shenrab Miwo.

- Offering of six auspicious robes:

Buddha Tonpa Shenrab Miwo became a monk at the age of thirty one. He was offered six auspicious robes by the wisdom deities. Since then all the monks and nuns wear these clothes as an auspicious sign of renunciation from Samsara.

#### The six robes are:

- Waist coat without sleeves (*stod 'gos*).
- Under cloth of monk and nun (*sMed sham*).
- Red shawl (*rMed vog*).
- Yellow shawl with plaits or folds, usually for fully ordained monks and nuns (*rMed gos*).
- Lotus crown, usually for fully ordained monks and nuns (*Ped zhu*).
- A symbolic form of Yungdrung Bon tradition which has the double headed Yungdrung with a middle handle held in the right hand of Tonpa Shenrab represents the eternal nature of Yungdrung Bon and the attainment of enlightenment (*Yungdrung Chag shing*).

Special blue cushion (it was offered to Buddha Tonpa Shenrab Miwo by Earth goddess rTenma (*Ding wa*).

Moreover, eight auspicious signs are offered to the Master as they were offered to Buddha Tonpa Shenrab Miwo by the goddess of auspiciousness. The eight auspicious signs are: Lotus, Vase, Golden Fish, Victory Banner, Conch, Glorious knot, Wheel and Parasol. All these eight auspicious signs are made of gems, beautifully drawn or sewn in the garments which are offered. These auspicious symbolic objects are offered with their *mudras* according to *byams m'i rgyen mchod utpal* (*utpala* is ornamental offering of Jamma, the Compassionate Mother) which was composed by Khen Chen Nyima Tenzin 23<sup>rd</sup> enthronement holder of Menri Monastery. Then seven emblems of state are offered according to the seven emblems offerings

in the *Magyud Mother Tantra* tradition. The Seven emblems of state are Queen, Minister, Commander in Chief, Elephant, Horse, Wheel and



Jewel.

#### Five kinds of offerings (*rNam nga chod pa*):

- Numerous butter lamps made of gold, silver and brass are offered.
- Pure Water is offered in offering bowls made of precious gems. Offering bowls filled with grains, flowers, medicinal herbs and salts are also offered.
- Food offerings of milk, yogurt, butter, molasses, honey, sugar soaked in butter and various kinds of fruits and sweets are offered.
- Fresh and artificial flowers in decorated vases are offered. Bunches and fragments of flowers are offered. Dry flowers and fresh flowers are poured in a container for offering.
- Incense: a bunch of incense sticks, powder of incense, natural ingredients of incense like *Chandan*, *Na gi*, *La tsi* (musk), *Ga pur* (camphor), *Gur gum* (saffron), *A gar* (cedar), *Po kar* (white incense), *Si la* (boswellia thurifera), etc. are offered.

The qualities and quantities of the materials for all of these offerings are offered as per the capability of the generous sponsors. All these offerings are first carried by monks ahead of the lay people. The lay people who are dressed up and adorned beautifully, line up after the monks and nuns carrying the offering objects.

The ceremony usually ends with sharing joyfully the blessed *Tsok* offerings.

I was most fortunate and blessed to be able to attend both long life ceremonies in 2016 with the Lishu students at Triten Norbutse Monastery for H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and then





at Menri Monastery for H.H. Menri Trizin Lungtok Tenpai Nyima. Bonpos from many other countries wanted to come, but were not able to make it. In particular, several Bonpos from Tibet encountered obstacles to travel to India and Nepal.

We have nowadays the great opportunity to receive teachings from the Yungdrung Bon tradition, in Menri Monastery, in Triten Norbutse Monastery and in different places in the West and Europe. All this is possible, thanks to H.H. Menri Trizin Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche and H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche. What they have accomplished for Yungdrung Bon is inexpressible. Therefore, what was most palpable during these two ceremonies was the great devotion of all followers. The *Tenshug* (Long Life) ceremonies were even more special due to the health of His Holiness at that time. Yet, with great compassion, love and kindness towards us, he came to the ceremony.

I was born in Solan, the Tibetan village near Menri Monastery, and have spent my life close to those great beings, as my father was a close friend and disciple of His Holiness Menri Trizin Lungtok Tenpa Nyima Rinpoche and His Eminence

Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche. Throughout my life I have been grateful to His Holiness and Yongdzin Rinpoche because of their outstanding work and dedication to the Yungdrung Bon. The more I get involved in this tradition, the more I feel gratitude to His Holiness and Yongdzin Rinpoche. They are the inspiration for me to dedicate my life to the Yungdrung Bon tradition.

*THA TSEN MU TSUG MARRO*

(I wish you all an auspicious life and well being)

**Text by: Sangmo Yangri**

Photos from the Ceremony by Anna-kaisa Hirvanen



His Holiness Menri Trizin Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche and His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche.





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# IN THE GARDEN



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche teaching *Soul Retrieval* in Peru in 2011.

**To introduce the Peruvian *sangha* we interviewed Frank Jeri. In Peru, he says, they organize Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's teachings in gardens, and they bring meditation within organizations at all layers, including the University.**

**Ton: Can you tell how you met Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche the first time?**

**Frank:** I met Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche during a retreat in Mexico in 2010. At that time, I was finishing a program in Colombia to become a coach. One of my friends in the team came from Mexico, and we talked about meditation. One day she called me, and asked if I wanted to come to a meditation retreat in Valle de Bravo, Mexico, in three weeks time. That was short notice, so I told her that I would see if it was possible. When I checked the flight there was a special offer of \$ 300 – normally a ticket costs up to \$ 1.200. I needed a visa to go to Mexico, and at the embassy they gave it me urgently. After two days I had my visa, a cheap ticket and a beautiful place to stay in Mexico.

It was the first time I went to a retreat, with a lot of thoughts and questions. I remember it was strange for me with all these ornaments and rituals. I said to myself, “I like this, but maybe I will spend the next few days exploring Mexico.” But when Rinpoche came into the *Gompa* and started teaching I felt immediately a deep connection with him.

During the second day of the retreat I approached Rinpoche, and we had a beautiful conversation about God and Christianity. I asked him if he wanted to come to Peru and he answered that he might come someday. At the end of the retreat

the organization asked if the ‘guy from Peru’ would approach Rinpoche. He gave me books, teachings and a *khatta*, and said that if the seeds flourish he would come.

**Ton: Can you tell more about why you went to the retreat in Mexico?**

**Frank:** I was searching for something. When I was 28 years old I started to study a Master in Business Administration. There I learned about leadership and some soft skills; and that was OK for some time. But then I realized that was not what I wanted, and continued my search and found coaching. I prepared myself as a coach, and kept looking for new developments. When I found Rinpoche I finally felt my heart, and realized that I found what I was looking for. When I received Rinpoche's teachings the first time I was completely cheerful. Since then I have been following Rinpoche, and feel very fortunate that I found him.

**Ton: Can you tell about The 3 Doors project at the Peruvian University, where Rinpoche talked about in the TWR LIVE conversation with Kallon Basquin on [Facebook](#)?**

**Frank:** I participated in the first Latin American 3 Doors Academy, and based on that experience we have been bringing the teachings inside the University where I work (Peruvian University of Applied Sciences). As part of this project, we asked the support of The 3 Doors Senior Teachers to develop content oriented to business people. We call it ‘Conscious Leadership Program.’ It is a short program to introduce meditation among people inside organizations. We did the first pilot inside the University inviting academics and managers. Last year Laura Shekerjian came to Peru and we did a two-days retreat, and the feedback was very positive. People said that they had a bet-





ter feeling and more energy. This year we will do a program with leaders of different organizations. We also have adapted our program based on the experiences we had last year. We will run a one-day program that can be applied in any organization around the world.

We have also introduced fifteen minutes meditation practices before starting classes among our students as a pilot in some classes at the University. During the pilot we have discovered that the students are more close to a teacher when they meditate. Their satisfaction about studying has improved twenty percent. They said it is because the University is not looking just for their knowledge as a professional, but also for them as a human being. That has been a very useful finding. Last year when Rinpoche came to Peru we had a one-day retreat with more than two-hundred teachers inside the University.

**Ton: Did the Bon teachings change your way of coaching people?**

**Frank:** I talked about that issue with Rinpoche, and I think that coaching and meditation work very well together. I would say that coaching is a way to see what is going on with you, and if you want to go to a deeper level you need different tools, knowledge and meditation. Together they go very well, and my experience is that meditation makes transformations in life possible. The coach can help you, but in the end you will find it in your meditation practices.

**Ton: Do your clients want meditation, or do they say “Tell me how to do my job more efficient.”**

**Frank:** In my work as a coach I use meditation a lot. During coaching often people break and come in contact with their feelings, and then I guide them to their inner refuge and that helps them to hold the feelings that come up. They appreciate it a lot when I give them tools to sustain themselves. Sometimes they tell me they wake up in the middle of the night, and there is nobody to help them but themselves. And then they are happy with these meditation tools. I think more and more coaches are looking how to use meditation. During a congress of the International Coach Federation I visited in Miami, US, they talked a lot about meditation and coaching. For the coach himself it has also advantages to use meditation, because he is more in his center when he supports others.



Peruvian shamans welcoming Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

**Frits: When did Rinpoche visit Peru?**

**Frank:** Rinpoche visited Peru in 2011, and since that time he has been coming almost every year once. The first time he came we went to the countryside and visited a city called Huancaayo. There we did a *Soul Retrieval* ceremony with local people and shamans. It was like going to the heart of the country, where the descendants of an old culture live. Then we went to Lima, where Rinpoche taught two days for about eighty people. After these first teachings we started to build the *sangha*.

When Rinpoche visits Peru we organize a public teaching in the auditorium at the University, and the retreats we organize are usually in the homes of *sangha* members. Outside of Lima are houses with big gardens, and in some of them we put a tent.

**Ton: Can you tell about the structure of the organization of Ligmincha Peru?**

**Frank:** We have a Board, but it is not formal. These are people who have been connected to Rinpoche for some time. It is an informal structure, where ten people support and share with each other. Every time we invite Rinpoche to Peru the number of participants has been growing, and we are getting more organized. We are very happy with the Rinpoche's Facebook live





teachings. We share the announcements with our friends, and there are many people connected with Rinpoche through TWR LIVE on Facebook, and I think it will help the *sangha* to grow. Now people are asking us when Rinpoche will visit Peru again.

**Ton:** In the Netherlands we have always thought that we did not need to translate the teachings because most people speak English. But when a practice leader guided during the ten days TWR LIVE meditation course in March 2017, more than six hundred people watched the videos with the Dutch instructions, and less than one-hundred connected on the Dutch Facebook page to the guided meditation by Marcy and Rob.

**Frank:** In Latin America most of the people don't speak English, so without translation many people would not be able to follow the teachings. The mother language in Peru is Spanish, and all the broadcasts are translated by Lourdes Hinojosa. She does a great job for all the Spanish speaking countries. Many people know her, because when Rinpoche comes to Peru she translates. People feel comfortable when they hear her voice during the webcast and TWR LIVE translations. When you listen to the voice of somebody who is connected to the teacher, it is as if you hear the teacher speaking.



Board of Ligmincha Peru with Rinpoche in 2016.

**Frits:** Can you tell more about the people who are involved in the organization of the retreats and practice group?

**Frank:** Most of them are women and they are very committed. They fetch Rinpoche from the airport, take care of his food, make sure that he gets everything he needs during the retreat, and that



Frank Jeri.

he has a nice place to rest. When he comes we organize interviews with newspapers and Radio. The *sangha* has helped him to connect with many people in Peru. Currently in the organization Charo Arenas, Liz Solis, Jenny Ramirez, Pilar Peterson, Jackie Loayza, Elizabeth Arroyo, José Antonio Cussianovich, Enmanuel Pérez, Juan Tinoco, and myself are involved.

**Ton:** Can you tell more about the practice group?

**Frank:** Every Wednesday evening we have a practice group in Lima, and mostly about ten to fifteen people come. Some are new, some come one time only, others remain and keep coming. We are trying to bring the teachings to other cities in Peru too. Often people bring friends with them to the practice group, it is open. Every evening we do the *Nine Breathings of Purification*, the *3 Precious Pills* meditation leading to the inner refuge, and *Tsa Lung*.

**Ton:** Do you have plans for the future?

**Frank:** As Ligmincha Peru we want to support the effort Rinpoche puts in Facebook Live. We will put more effort in ways that people can connect locally with Rinpoche's teachings and make it known for them to see if they can meet locally. Our challenge is to build on the *Cyber Sangha*.

**Frits:** Are people in Peru open for the Bon-Buddhist tradition?

**Frank:** About ninety percent of the people here are catholic, and also in the *sangha* there are many Catholics who practice meditation and follow Rinpoche's teachings. People feel that





Rinpoche is very open that people stay with their original religion. People feel welcome, and therefore they keep coming. In Latin America there are many people looking for ways to relate to sacred things. Bon Buddhism is a very open way to relate with that.

**Ton: Do you work together with other *sanghas* in Latin America?**

**Frank:** Ligmincha Mexico has helped the Latin American *sanghas* a lot, because we all use the materials they have translated. When we organize a retreat, the information is already available in Spanish. I see the Mexican *sangha* as the mother of the other Latin American *sanghas*.

**Ton: Did you invite other Bon lamas to Peru?**

We have invited Geshe Nyima to visit Peru; he came here this year in January and did *Soul Retrieval* rituals for the practitioners.

**Frits: Is there something you want to share to conclude this interview?**

**Frank:** I am very happy to see how the Bon teachings are flourishing, and I can see how the endless effort of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche has touched many people. During the last twenty-five years Rinpoche has been teaching around the world and now you can see large groups of practitioners, which are well organized. These

teachings have changed many lives, so I can say that I feel myself very grateful with Rinpoche and all the teachers around him. I feel gratitude deep from my heart for all what Rinpoche is doing.

When Rinpoche teaches in Lima, he usually stays at my home, and we have the opportunity to talk, and he is always thinking about how to bring the teachings in a way that people understand it better, and how he can reach more people. I feel we are blessed with a Master that is always supporting us from his heart. I see the same with H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and all the Lamas, and the teachers from Ligmincha and The 3 Doors Academy. I feel happiness and gratitude to being part of this. It is the best that happened in my life. To my opinion Rinpoche is becoming every time I see him a better teacher. He understands us better than any teacher I have met. Because he understands us, he teaches in a very direct way. I had a chance to work with the senior teachers of The 3 Doors Academy. They have worked very close with Rinpoche, and so I saw and felt how these teachings have permeated through them. The teachers have received great blessings from Rinpoche and now they are sharing these teachings that come from a collective wisdom with us.

**Interview by Frits de Vries and Ton Bisscheroux**



Ligmincha Peru welcomes Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in 2011.





# WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN EUROPE

Here is our report from what's been happening in the European *sangha*. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche visited Europe and gave internet teachings; *sanghas* invited Geshes and other teachers. From Poland we share again some of their announcements we saw on Facebook.



**December 3 – 4, 2016:**

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught in Bourg-en-Bresse (Péronnas), France, *Discovering Inner Joy through the Tibetan Sacred Sounds*.



Ryszard Adamiak, one of the umdzés of Ligmincha Poland, lead workshops for people who want to have a taste of the practice and / or meditation. The workshops took place in:

- Poznań on January 28,
- Bielsko February from 11 – 12,
- Jelenia Góra from February 18 –19,
- Białystok from March 24 – 26.



**March 25 – 26:**

Geshe Lhundup taught on transience in Sittard and on *A-tri* in Utrecht, The Netherlands.







**March 18 – 19:**

A beautiful weekend seminar with Geshe Lhundup in Vienna, Austria, on *zhiné*.



**April 21 – 26:**

Marcy Vaughn guided in the Pauenhof (Germany) the practices of Sherap Chamma and Sipé Gyalmo.







#### April 22 – 25:

The Practice of *Tsa Lung*, in Wilga, Poland with John Jackson.

Ultimately, the goal of meditation is to learn to abide with stability in clear, open awareness. You can enhance your ability to connect with and rest in this naturally joyful state by alleviating any physical distractions, emotional blocks, energetic or mental disturbances, or other obstacles to your practice. The five *Tsa Lung* exercises are a step-by-step means for identifying and clearing these obstacles. These easy-to-perform yet powerful exercises can be used not just as a preliminary to other meditation practice, but also as a primary practice for enhancing the experience of open awareness in day-to-day life.

#### April 29 – 30

Umdzê Retreat, Wilga, Poland, with John Jackson.

This retreat was for meditation practice leaders and instructors in Ligmincha organizations throughout Europe. The retreat included:

- In depth instruction and clarification on the core meditation practices shared through Ligmincha.
- How to most effectively teach and lead these practices with different audiences, from beginners to experienced practitioners.
- Discussion of the internal challenges of being a practice leader or instructor.
- How to be a better leader and work effectively with your group.
- How to support the development of your spiritual community.









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# CELEBRATING THE 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF LIGMINCHA INTERNATIONAL

During the retreats in Europe there will be celebrations of Ligmincha International 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

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*Ligmincha International*

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with Tibetan Bön Buddhist teacher  
*Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche*

|                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                             |
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| <b>MAY 12-14, 2017</b><br>AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS<br>A-HI, Part 5<br><a href="http://www.ligmincha.nl">www.ligmincha.nl</a>                                     | <b>AUGUST 15-19, 2017</b><br>CELEBRATING THE 25 <sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY<br>OF LIGMINCHA INTERNATIONAL<br>WILGA, POLAND<br>Dream Yoga<br><a href="http://www.ligmincha.pl">www.ligmincha.pl</a>                                                                                            | <b>SEPTEMBER 9-10, 2017</b><br>BUDAPEST, HUNGARY<br>To be announced<br><a href="http://www.ligmincha.hu">www.ligmincha.hu</a>                                               |
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*Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, founder and spiritual director of Ligmincha International, is renowned for conveying the ancient wisdom of Tibetan Bön Buddhism in a way that is highly relevant to Western students. With centers and students around the world, he is the author of numerous books, including his latest, *The True Source of Healing*.*

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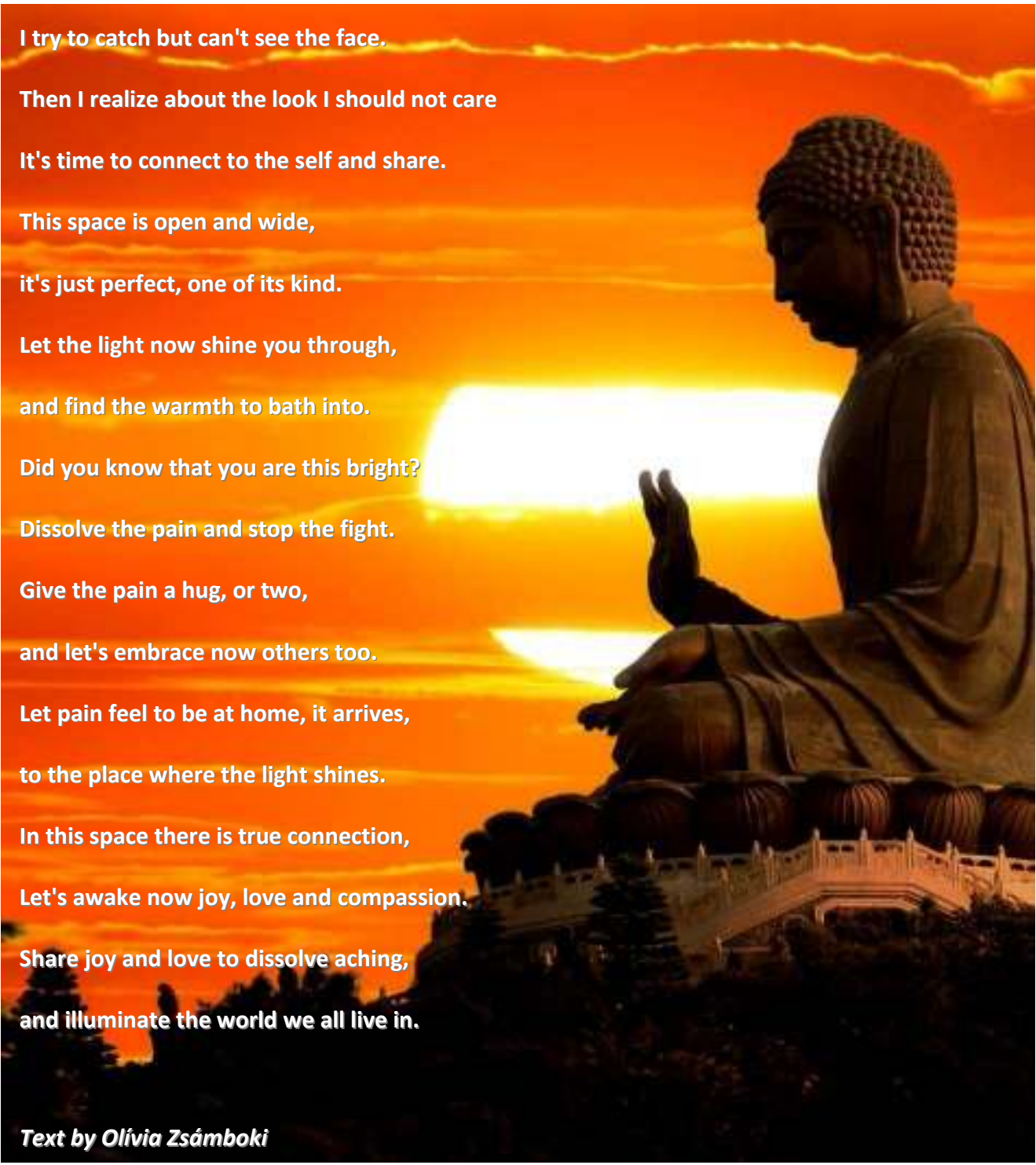


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# WHO IS LOOKING THROUGH THIS SPACE?



I try to catch but can't see the face.  
Then I realize about the look I should not care  
It's time to connect to the self and share.  
This space is open and wide,  
it's just perfect, one of its kind.  
Let the light now shine you through,  
and find the warmth to bath into.  
Did you know that you are this bright?  
Dissolve the pain and stop the fight.  
Give the pain a hug, or two,  
and let's embrace now others too.  
Let pain feel to be at home, it arrives,  
to the place where the light shines.  
In this space there is true connection,  
Let's awake now joy, love and compassion.  
Share joy and love to dissolve aching,  
and illuminate the world we all live in.

*Text by Olívia Zsámboki*





# WHEN TOMORROW STARTS WITHOUT ME

When tomorrow starts without me,  
And I'm not there to see,  
If the sun should rise and find your eyes  
All filled with tears for me;  
I wish so much you wouldn't cry  
The way you did today,  
While thinking of the many things,  
We didn't get to say.

I know how much you love me,  
As much as I love you,  
And each time you think of me,  
I know you'll miss me too;  
But when tomorrow starts without me,  
Please try to understand,  
That an angel came and called my name,  
And took me by the hand,  
And said my place was ready,  
In heaven far above  
And that I'd have to leave behind  
All those I dearly love.

But as I turned to walk away,  
A tear fell from my eye  
For all my life, I'd always thought,  
I didn't want to die.  
I had so much to live for,  
So much left yet to do,  
It seemed almost impossible,  
That I was leaving you.

I thought of all the yesterdays,  
The good ones and the bad,  
The thought of all the love we shared,  
And all the fun we had.

If I could relive yesterday  
Just even for a while,  
I'd say good-bye and kiss you  
And maybe see you smile.

But then I fully realized  
That this could never be,  
For emptiness and memories,  
Would take the place of me.

And when I thought of worldly things  
I might miss come tomorrow,  
I thought of you, and when I did  
My heart was filled with sorrow.

But when I walked through heaven's gates  
I felt so much at home  
When God looked down and smiled at me,  
From His great golden throne,  
He said, "This is eternity,  
And all I've promised you.  
Today your life on earth is past  
But here it starts anew.  
I promise no tomorrow,  
But today will always last,  
And since each day's the same way,  
There's no longing for the past.  
You have been so faithful,  
So trusting and so true.  
Though there were times  
You did some things  
You knew you shouldn't do.  
But you have been forgiven  
And now at last you're free.  
So won't you come and take my hand  
And share my life with me?"

So when tomorrow starts without me,  
Don't think we're far apart,  
For every time you think of me,  
I'm right here, in your heart.

*written by  
David M. Romano*





# TRUST THE ENLIGHTENED TEACHINGS

**Lama Kalsang Nyima is the resident teacher for Ligmincha Mexico. In this interview he shares some of his biography and answers questions on connecting to the teacher and *Guru Yoga*.**

**Can you tell us where were you born and about your family ?**

I was born in 1970 in a village called Tad in the Dolpo area in Nepal, near the Tibetan border. Culturally this area is Tibetan, and home to fourteen Bonpo monasteries and many great Bonpo masters. My family includes many great practitioners, among them my grandfather Lama Lhakyab Rinpoche. Renowned as a dzogchenpa, Lama Lhakyap took his vows in Tibet from the previous incarnation of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, the revered master Khyung Tul Rinpoche.

I grew up close to the Samling Monastery, the oldest and most important monastery in Dolpo. The main temple was founded over nine hundred

years ago by Yangton Gyalshen Rinchen in a remote and mountainous area. The monastery has preserved many copies of ancient texts, while many texts were destroyed in Tibet during the Chinese Cultural Revolution. Samling Monastery is well known as the home of nine masters of the very famous *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud*. And today, the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* transmission is still given without interruption.

My mother is from the old Bon Nyel lineage, and many generations before were also Bon. My father, who died when I was three years old, became a Bonpo practitioner. His father was from the Nyingma lineage. When he knew he was dying, he asked my uncle to take care of my education as a monk. My uncle also taught me writing and reading, and how to make paper and ink, because we had to do that ourselves.

**Can you tell about your education as a monk?**

At age nine I became a monk at Samling Monastery, where my grandfather was head teacher.



Lama Kalsang Nyima, H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.





Under the guidance of my uncle I trained intensively for twelve years at Samling in the many methods of *Sutra* and *Tantra*. I did a three-year retreat with him, and completed the *Ngondro* (foundational practices) there, as well as many personal retreats including *Powa* (liberation at time of death), the forty-nine-day *A Kar A Me* retreat, the forty-nine-day *Shenlha Odkar* retreat, the thirty-day *Phurba* retreat, the fourteen-day *Red Garuda* retreat, and the sixty-day *Takla Membar* retreat. I also completed these and other teaching cycles during a traditional three-year closed retreat. In addition, I learned the *methods of divination of Yeshe Walmo* and received the transmission and initiation (*lung* and *wang*) for many other *Sutric* and *Tantric* texts.

After finishing the complete cycle of the Samling Monastery at the age of twenty-one, I became a lineage lama, a *Drub Dra*. Then I was allowed to give transmissions, heal people, give empowerments, and teach *Sutra*, *Tantra* and *Dzogchen*.

#### **Can you explain the difference between *Drub Dra* and *Geshe*?**

The Bon has two ways: you can go to the Dialectic School, which is quite intellectual or you go the *Drub Dra*, the Meditation School. I choose the path of education through meditation. Monasteries offer both ways, and the group that finishes the Dialectic School will become *Geshe*, and the ones who choose *Drub Dra* do four years of meditation practice. At Triten Norbutse Monastery you can choose between both paths. At *Drub Dra* you learn to train your mind, do many purifying practices, learn about rituals and ceremonies. After

finishing this path you are given the title Yogi Lama or Practice Master, in Tibetan called *Drub Dra*.

Let me discuss sugar as an example of the difference in approach. The intellectuals talk about sugar in this way: where does it grow; what substance is it made of; why is this white and that brown; what is the best time to plant and harvest it? In the *Dzogchen* view sugar is sugar, and it makes no difference if the sugar is white or brown, it tastes sweet. For meditators questions like *when*, *where*, *why* are not interesting — the direct experience is that sugar tastes sweet. We learn to focus in a single-pointed manner, and not make things too complicated.

#### **What did you do after you got the *Drub Dra* degree?**

At age twenty-one I walked for more than one month from Dolpo to Kathmandu and studied four years at Triten Norbutse Monastery under the guidance of H.E. Lopon Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, the most senior teacher of the Bon lineage. We studied in a group of nine with Yongdzin Rinpoche, so we were very close to him, and he was like a father for me. Yongdzin Rinpoche gave me the introduction to the nature of the mind, and that was the most important experience in my life. My training was deepened and broadened to include all aspects of the traditional teachings from astrology and *Stupa* building to ritual preparations and musicianship.

I also received a complete cycle of *Dzogchen* teachings and innumerable initiations and trans-



Dolpo Samling Monastery.





missions, as well as initiations and training from His Holiness Lungtog Tenpai Nyima, the spiritual head of the Bon tradition.

I loved to paint since I was a child. While training with Yongdzin Rinpoche, I learned techniques of traditional *thangka* painting from him, for he was renowned for his painting skills and had written a textbook on the subject. I further deepened these skills at Ugyun Tulku's monastery in nearby Bhouda, during a five-year training under the master Chokyong Gonpo. After completing this course I returned to Triten Norbutse Monastery where Yongdzin Rinpoche asked me to help paint the entire cycle of Bonpo *tantric* mandalas and these images were later published in the book *Mandalas of the Bon Religion*.

In 2000 Yungdrung Lama, the abbot of the Bonpo monastery in Sikkim, invited me to teach in a school for Bonpo children at his monastery. There I taught not only basic education, but also the Bonpo forms of music, chanting, rituals, painting, and *torma* making. The school grew from nine to thirty children, and I became responsible for running the monastery.

Because of my expertise as a *thangka* painter I was invited to teach an advanced course for painters sponsored by a large museum in central

India. The next year the museum invited me back to paint three entire rooms with Bonpo images, including the life history of Tonpa Shenrab, a task that took six months to complete.

### **Why do people call you sometimes Lhari-la?**

Lhari-la means 'Painter of God.'

### **When did you meet Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche?**

During 2006 Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche paid many visits to the monastery in Sikkim and we came to know each other well. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche invited me to the West to assist in many projects, and I gladly accepted. In 2007 my first visit to the West was to Mexico. My task was to paint the entire series of images for the first Bonpo *Stupa* in the West, in Torreon, Mexico, including a mandala of Shenlha Odkar measuring more than ten meters, which took more than seven months to complete. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche then asked me to go to Chihuahua, Mexico, to tutor the young *tulku* Jorge Rene, a joyful task that I continue to pursue as time permits. In 2007 I began collaborating with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche to create a series of paintings that illustrate the detailed methods of the *Tummo* meditation practice. After the consecration of the *Great Stupa for World Peace* in Mexico by Yongdzin Rinpoche, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche asked me to become the resident lama of Chamma Ling Mexico.



Lhari-la with members of the Mexican *sangha* in





**I also have some questions about connecting to the teacher. In the Tibetan culture it is normal to have respect for your teacher. In the West some people have problems with that kind of 'adoration.' Can you tell about the relationship to the teacher?**

Most human beings are not yet a Buddha, they are not fully enlightened. If you have a karmic connection to your teacher, then it is easy to connect and it is a strong connection. If you don't have a karmic connection there are six schools in Tibetan Buddhism where you can look for a teacher, and find out if you feel a spiritual connection with one of them.

**Is there a difference when you are personally present with a teacher, or does it make no difference when you connect with a teacher through the internet?**

If the teachings are enlightened, the message is enlightened, and then it makes no difference if you are close, in the same room, or that you are far, behind your computer. It is the same as when people are sick and they ask me to do prayers or a ceremony. They don't have to come to me, I can do that from a distance. Even when people are thousands of miles away they will heal. It depends on the enlightened message and the faith of the person receiving the blessings. The enlightened quality does not depend on distance, human body or mind, it goes beyond all that; it has infinite power and wisdom. It has the same power when you are present, use internet or the phone. The enlightened quality is very powerful.

**That is interesting to hear, because in the West many people think when they sit on the first row, listening to a teacher, that they will get more blessing than the people sitting at the back. You say that's not true?**

Yes, it's just mind. Blessings do not depend on distance, they depend on trust. If you don't have confidence nothing will happen. I think that Yongdzin Rinpoche is one of the highest spiritual teachers in the world. But if you have no trust in him, and you do not connect to him, nothing will happen. While we are doing this interview, Yongdzin Rinpoche is probably sleeping, and I know – because of our deep connection – that he is aware that we are talking now.

**In the Bon tradition it is often said that *Guru Yoga* is the most important practice you can do,**

**by connecting to the teacher. Can you explain why?**

*Guru Yoga* is very powerful. Through *Guru Yoga* you connect with your root teacher. Actually, you connect with a Buddha without a name, without a face, who does not exist. Buddha Tonpa Shenrap came to this planet eighteen thousand years ago, gave teachings and is no longer here. Your root teacher is still here in a physical body, who is part of a lineage of eighteen thousand years of teachings and transmissions. Your teacher is more than a Buddha, because you can see him, and he can teach you what Buddha Tonpa Shenrap taught, he can explain what these teachings mean. The most important part of *Guru Yoga* is the teacher. You do not take refuge in the human quality of your teacher, but in the enlightened quality of your teacher. We cannot see the Buddha, so therefore our teacher plays an important role. Every meditation we begin with the *Guru Yoga Prayer*, to make connection with the enlightened teachings, not with the personality of the teacher. Any teacher has those enlightened qualities, that go beyond emotions, personality, human being. And that is why it is so powerful.

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

The most important is, that if you want to find peace in this life and the next, that you trust the enlightened teachings, trust each other, and respect your sisters and brothers in the *sangha*. I feel gratitude to Yongdzin Rinpoche and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, who have spent all their lives devoted to the Bon teachings for the benefit of all sentient beings. I want to thank my teachers for sharing their enlightened qualities for the benefit of all sentient beings. I also want to thank all the *sangha* members for helping me by doing *karma yoga*, contributing to the *sangha*, which is very powerful.

**Interview by Ton Bisscheroux**



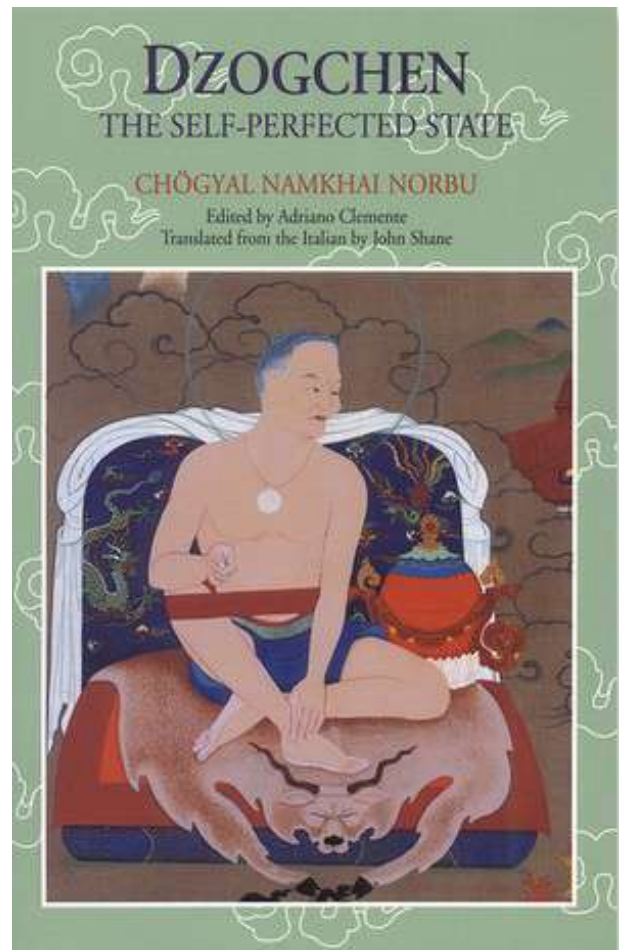


# THE PATH OF SELF-LIBERATION

According to the Nyingma and the Bon tradition, Dzogchen is the highest and most definitive path of the nine vehicles to liberation. Dzogchen is perfect because it is an all inclusive totality that leads to middle way realization, in avoiding the two extremes of nihilism and eternalism. Chögyal Namkai Norbu elaborates on this in his book *Dzogchen - The Self-perfected State*. We reprint page 51-60.

The Dzogchen teachings are also known as Ati-yoga, or “primordial yoga.” The word yoga is used here with the sense that it has in the equivalent Tibetan term *naljor (rnal 'byor)*, which means “possessing the authentic condition,” this condition being the primordial state of each individual. A further name for Dzogchen is “the teaching of the state of mind of Samantabhadra,” or primordial enlightenment. The method practiced in the path of Dzogchen is called “self-liberation” because it is based on knowledge and understanding. But it is not that there is some object that has to be known; rather it is a matter of entering into the experience of a state beyond the reasoning mind, the state of contemplation. There is no way to begin to understand this state however, if one does not take the mind as one's starting point. That is why the path of self-liberation is said to be more linked to the factor of mind than the paths of renunciation and transformation. In Dzogchen, introduction is given directly to the inherent state of the individual, by means of an explanation of the primordial base of existence which is the original condition of all beings.

In both the Sutras and the Tantras one of the fundamental concepts discussed is that of the “nature of the mind,” the true condition of the mind, which is beyond the limits of the intellect and of time. The basic principle here is that of voidness or *shunyata*, the central doctrine of the Mahayana. The meaning of the term *voidness* as it is used in the *Prajñāparamita*, is the absence of substantiality – or of selfnature – of all phenomena, which is the real, inherent condition of all existence. When referring to the individual, this condition is referred to as the “nature of the mind.”



In the Dzogchen teachings many terms are used to denote the nature of the mind, including, the “primordial base” (*ye gzhi*); the “base of everything” (*kun gzhi*); the “essence of primordial bodhichitta” (*ye gzhi snying po byang chub kyi sems*), and so on. This last term is found in many ancient Dzogchen texts, and it will be useful to explain its meaning.

In the Mahayana, bodhichitta is taken as meaning the commitment, based on a feeling of universal compassion, to bringing all beings to enlightenment. Two types of bodhichitta are spoken of in particular: relative and absolute. The relative bodhichitta consists of the training of one's thoughts to develop the intention to benefit others and the actual carrying out of altruistic actions. The absolute bodhichitta is the knowledge of the voidness of all phenomena, and comes close to the concept of “primordial bodhichitta” in Dzogchen.





When translated into Tibetan, *bodhichitta* becomes “chang chub sem” (*byang chub sems*), a term made up of three words: “chang” (*byang*), which means “purified”; “chub,” meaning “perfected;” and “sem” (*sems*), which means “mind.”

“Mind” stands for the “nature of the mind”; “purified” means that all obstacles and negativities have been purified; and “perfected” means that all the attainments and qualities have been realized. So the primordial bodhichitta is the state of the individual, which is from the very beginning without obstacles, perfect, and includes as its potentiality all the various manifestations of energy. It is a condition which is beyond time, beyond dualism, pure and perfect like the nature of the mirror. If one is ignorant of it, however, it is not manifest and it becomes necessary to remove the provisional obstacles that obscure it.

In the Dzogchen teachings the primordial state of the base is not defined only as being void, but is explained as having three aspects or characteristics, called the “three primordial wisdoms:” *essence, nature, and energy*.

The *essence* is the void, the real condition of the individual and of all phenomena. This base is the condition of all individuals, whether they are aware of it or not, whether they are enlightened or in transmigration. It is said to be “pure from the beginning” (*ka dag*), because, like space, it is free of all impediments, and is the basis of all the manifestations in existence.

The manifestation of the primordial state in all its aspects, its “clarity,” on the other hand, is called the *nature*. It is said to be “self-perfected” (*lhun grub*), because it exists spontaneously from the beginning, like the sun which shines in space. *Clarity* is the pure quality of all thought and of all perceived phenomena, uncontaminated by mental judgment. For example, when we see a flower, we first perceive its image without the mind entering into judgment, even if this phase of perception only lasts for a fraction of a second.

Then, in a second phase, mental judgment enters into the situation and one categorizes the perception, thinking, “That’s a flower, it’s red, it has a specific scent, and so on.” Developing from this, attachment and aversion, acceptance and rejection all arise, with the consequent creation of



Chögyal Namkai Norbu.

karma and transmigration. Clarity is the phase in which perception is vivid and present, but the mind has not yet entered into action. It is the spontaneous manifestation of the individual's state. The same is true for thoughts: if we don't follow them, and don't become caught up in mental judgment, they too are part of our natural clarity.

The third of the three primordial wisdoms is *energy*. Its characteristic is that it manifests without interruption. The explanation of energy in Dzogchen is fundamental to understanding the base. All dimensions, whether pure or impure, material or subtle, are manifestations of one aspect or another of energy. To explain how both transmigration and enlightenment originate, three ways in which energy manifests are described. These three modes of energy are called “tsel” (*rtsal*), “rolba” (*rol ba*), and “dang” (*gdangs*), names that cannot be translated into Western languages.

To understand the manifestation of energy as tsel, we can take the example of what happens when a crystal ball is placed near a window. The crystal is pure and transparent, but when rays of light strike it, they refract into coloured lights all around the room. These lights are not inherent to the crystal itself, but manifest when the appropriate secondary cause is present, in this case the sun's rays. The crystal ball symbolizes the primordial state of the individual, which consists of essence, nature, and energy. The coloured rays which spread in the room are an example of the natural manifestation of energy, appearing in relation to the individual as an object. In the moment of the manifestation of the energy of the primordial state, if one recog-





nizes it as a projection of one's own original qualities, one realizes oneself in the dimension of pure vision. If the opposite happens and one perceives the rays and colours as being external to oneself, one manifests impure vision. Thus the cause of both visions, samsara and nirvana, is the same: the manifestation of the light of the primordial state.

As an example of *rolba*, we should imagine that instead of the colours reflecting externally to the crystal, this time they reflect inside it, not appearing outside the crystal but within its own surfaces. In the same way, the energy of the primordial state can manifest within its own dimension “subjectively” in relation to the individual. This happens, for example, in the *bardo*, the intermediate state between death and rebirth, when the hundred peaceful and wrathful divinities appear. They are not external to the individual, but are the manifestations of his or her natural, self-perfected qualities. The appearance of these divinities, however, only arises for those who have, in their lifetime, received transmission from a master, and applied the method of transformation specific to the peaceful and wrathful divinities. For an ordinary being there arises only the manifestation of “sounds, rays, and lights,” which may last only for an instant, and most often are a cause of alarm. For this reason, great importance is given in tantrism to knowledge of the mode of energy of *rolba*, which is the basis of all the various methods of transformation.

To understand *dang* we should think of the crystal itself, and of its pure and transparent form. If we put a crystal ball at the centre of a coloured mandala and walk around it, the crystal will by turns appear to assume the colours of the cardinal points of the mandala at which we successively arrive, while at the same time remaining, in itself, pure and transparent. This is an example of the inherent condition of energy itself as it really is, in any kind of manifestation whatsoever. Sometimes instead of *dang* the term “gyen” (*rgyan*) is used, meaning “ornament,” because in the state of contemplation all manifestations of energy are “perceived” as ornaments of the primordial state. When the introduction has been given by the master, the essence, nature, and energy are called the “three bodies of the base.” They correspond, in the path, to three aspects or characteristic conditions of the nature of the mind: the calm

state (*gnas pa*), movement (*'gyu ba*) and presence (*rig pa*).

The calm state is the condition of the mind in which no thoughts arise. An example of this is the space that exists between the disappearing of one thought and the arising of another, a space that is usually imperceptible. The movement is the manifestation of thoughts, without interruption. An example is given in which the state without thoughts is said to be like a calm lake, and the arising of thoughts to be like the movement of fish in the lake. These two factors are common to all beings. Presence, on the other hand, is as if asleep in us, and it takes a master to awaken it through transmission. Presence is the pure recognition without judgment, of either the calm state or the movement. These three are called the “three bodies of the path.”

In the *fruit*, or realization, they manifest as Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya, and Nirmanakaya, the three “purified dimensions.” The Dharmakaya corresponds to the condition of the essence, the voidness of all phenomena. However, presence is here totally awakened. The state of the Dharmakaya is beyond form or colour, like limitless space. The Sambhogakaya is the self-perfected dimension of the manifestation of energy. It corresponds to the natural clarity of the base, linked to presence. The Nirmanakaya is the dimension of manifestation whether pure or impure, perceived as an object in relation to one's own state, although there no longer remains any trace of dualism. Presence is totally integrated with the external dimension.

No matter how many analyses one does, one should not forget that one is always referring to one's own condition, to the aspects of one's own body, voice, and mind. If one tries to understand a teaching with this attitude, whatever explanation one receives will be meaningful, and will not remain something abstract. I remember when I was a boy in Tibet, I studied in depth a commentary on the *Prajñaparamitasutra*, the *Abhisamayalankara*, and became expert in expounding on its content. But I didn't succeed in understanding its real meaning, because all the descriptions it contained of the different levels of the buddhas and bodhisattvas seemed to me to be totally apart from my own condition. My college teacher probably noticed this, because





one day he said to me, “When you read these descriptions of the buddhas and so on, you should understand that they are descriptions of your own condition.” I tried to put his advice into practice, but I found it extremely difficult. It was only some years later, when I came to have knowledge of Dzogchen, that I understood the meaning of my college master's words. Then, when I reread that text, it was as if I was reading it for the first time, and it had a whole new meaning for me.

The practice of Dzogchen is based on two fundamental aspects of the nature of the individual: the calm state, and the movement of thought through which it is necessary for one to find oneself integrated in the state of presence. In some Buddhist traditions much importance is given to meditation in order to find oneself in a calm state, known as “shinay” (*zhi gnas*), the goal of which is to relax the mind into a condition without thoughts, or not disturbed by their movement. Sometimes, however, there is the danger that one will become sleepy in such states, and thus block the progress of the practice. For this reason it is considered important in the Dzogchen teachings to know how to work with the energy of this movement itself, which is an inherent aspect of the individual.

In tantrism, too, practice is based on working with movement, but in this case, on an imaginary movement, created by the mind. The goal here, however, is not to find a peaceful state without thought. Rather, through working with one's imagination, one creates the pure dimension of the mandala, beginning with the elements of air, water, fire, and so on. This activity is movement. But until one realizes the Mahamudra, one cannot easily succeed in integrating one's own energy with the ordinary movement of the material dimension.

In Dzogchen, too, various methods of using energy are practiced, but these are not based on the activity of the mind. Their principle is direct integration of the manifestations of energy with the state of presence. It makes no difference whether there appears before one's mind the pure vision of a mandala, or there appears before one's eyes the karmic vision of a room: both are regarded as part of one's clarity.

Whether one finds oneself in a calm state, or in a



pure manifestation of movement, these are both experiences and are not the state of contemplation itself. In the state of presence, which remains the same in relation to thousands of different experiences, whatever arises liberates itself automatically. This is what is meant by “self-liberation.”

This self-liberation is exactly what has to be applied in one's conduct in daily life. Taking the example of the passion of anger, we have described the different ways in which a practitioner of the path of renunciation and a practitioner of the path of transformation will react. We have also said that the transformation of the passions into wisdoms, which is the method of the Tantras, requires a higher level of capacity, which is the result of many years of training. In the concept of transformation, however, there still remains a sense of dualism. That is to say, there is on the one hand a passion, and on the other its transformation into wisdom.

But a practitioner of Dzogchen, in the moment of becoming angry, attempts neither to block nor to transform the passion, but observes it without judging it. In this way the anger will dissolve by itself, as if it had been left in its natural condition, allowing it to liberate of itself.

(...)

Knowledge of the state of self-liberation is the foundation of the practice of Dzogchen. It is said that “the practitioner of Dzogchen meditates without meditating,” which seems to be just a play on words, but is really true. The most important thing is never to become distracted, maintaining the state of presence in every moment.

**Text selected by Ton Bisscheroux**





# AGAIN AND AGAIN

Whenever we meditate thoughts arise. The question is what to do with them? In Vienna, Austria, Lopon Tenzin Namdak once talked about Rigpa – the Natural State. This talk was compiled and edited by John Myrdhin Reynolds. We reprint this article Frits de Vries found on the website [www.vajranatha.com](http://www.vajranatha.com).

...We must discover the Natural State of Rigpa within ourselves over and over again, so that we have no doubt about it. For this reason we do practice and look back at our thoughts, observing them arise, stay and then pass away again. We look to find from where they arise, where they stay, and where they go. In this way we discover that thoughts are insubstantial; they just arise and disappear again, leaving no trace behind. If we do not interfere with them or try to modify them, they will liberate and dissolve in themselves. And so we must learn how to keep ourselves in this Nature and how to remain without modifications.

There is nothing to change or modify or correct (*ma bcos-pa*). Thoughts just arise and then they liberate.

At first it is sufficient to remain like that. When we truly experience the Natural State, we do not need to keep checking and waiting for thoughts to disappear. Thoughts arise and dissolve of their own accord. At the moment when a thought dissolves, just leave everything as it is until the next thought arises. We find ourselves in a condition which is very clear and alert. The Tibetan term *Rang-rig* means self-seeing, being self-aware. If we allow ourselves to follow after a thought, it will carry us away on a trip, and it will obscure and cover over our sense of presence, and we will forget to be self-aware. The Natural State is inexpressible in words. We may be all clarity, and yet, in our practice, if we think or say “I am clear!” we lose it. There should be no checking or evaluating at all by the mind or intellect when we are in the Natural State. Such mental activity is not the Natural State. When a thought dissolves, we leave it alone just as it is. But we remain alert and clear.



H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche teaching in Shenten Dargye Ling, France.





Rigpa, the Natural State, is neither the calm state nor the movement of thoughts, but a state of pure immediate awareness which transcends all thought and workings of the mind. It is like a mirror reflecting whatever is set before it, without judgment or thought. When we enter into the Natural State, we are not practicing the cultivation of positive thoughts nor are we trying to repress negative thoughts. That is the method of the Sutras, namely, the application of antidotes to negative thoughts and emotions. But that is not the method of Dzogchen. The practice of Dzogchen means just continuing in the Natural State of Rigpa and allowing whatever thoughts arise, whether positive or negative, to self-liberate.

This Natural State is beyond conception by the intellect and inexpressible in words. Once we have been introduced to the Natural State, we will know what it is and not forget it. Then our task is to enter into it again and again and to continue in it. Contemplation or continuing in Rigpa, the Natural State, is the principal practice of Dzogchen.

Here there are three principal obstacles which can disturb contemplation: *chyingwa* ('bying-ba) or drowsiness, *mugpa* (rmug-pa) or dullness, and *godpa* (rgod-pa) or agitation. We may try to keep in the Natural State continuously but find that it has become mixed with drowsiness, and so a renewal of energy is necessary here. We need to observe our contemplation in order to discover if it has become mixed with any of these three faults. Dullness means our clarity thickens and loses its transparency; the object appears dull. We lack energy. The opposite of dullness is alertness and the clear appearance or visualization of the object. We must check and see what is needed as an antidote. If we add too much energy, we will find ourselves in a state of agitation. With not enough energy we can be dull and drowsy.

So here a relationship exists between contemplation and energy. We must discover this for ourselves because it varies with the capacity and constitution of each individual practitioner. Generally, agitation is easy to recognize.

But there are two kinds of agitation: coarse and subtle, and subtle agitation is very difficult to recognize. Thoughts arise and if we allow ourselves, consciously or unconsciously, to identify ourselves with them, immediately they lead us away from the Natural State. Remaining in the Natural State is the great highway leading directly to our destination, but distraction by thoughts leads us into bye-ways where we become lost and only with difficulty do we find our way back.

So what can we do? With drowsiness there are two principal things to do. First, get some fresh air and, second, shake and move the body and do some deep breathing. If coarse agitation arises, then stop the meditation practice for a while. Take a rest and do something else. Subtle agitation is more difficult to handle because we do not even realize that we have it. But when we do, we also need to stop and take a break. Dullness is handled in much the same way as drowsiness. When practicing Dzogchen we should always remember never to force ourselves, and to give ourselves plenty of space. It is much better to practice in many short sessions with refreshing breaks in between, rather than trying to force ourselves prematurely into long sessions of practice. This will only give rise to obstacles. In any event, what is most important, both at the beginning and later on, is to relax. The Natural State is already fully present from the very beginning, and so there is no need to cajole or coerce it. Just relax and let it all be. It is all there. That is the way of Dzogchen.

**Text selected by Frits de Vries**





# THE GIFT OF FULLY GIVING

This is an edited excerpt from oral teaching given by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in 2005. Reprint from *The Voice of Clear Light*, June 2006.

Often when I hear people in the West talk about giving and generosity, they'll speak of the virtue of giving. But many, many people also speak of feeling this sense that, "I have been giving so much in my life to everybody: I have been giving to my family; I have been giving to my kids; I have been giving to my friends; I have been giving and giving and giving. I am tired of giving. And, oh, people don't appreciate what I am giving them. I give too much. I am totally exhausted by giving and of taking care of others."

I have compassion for those who feel that way. However, I am not sure they are seeing clearly all aspects of their problem. You see, everyone has their own unique story about their exhaustion with giving, but people tend to translate their personal stories into the general idea that "Giving is not always good." The issue is not that there is something generally wrong with giving. Giving is always a good thing! Rather, the problem is that you may have personal experiences with giving that are not always good.

So, you have to be careful about how you engage yourself in giving to others. If what you're doing is truly giving, it will never be a problem, never. One experiences no exhaustion in doing that. The exhaustion comes with one's resistance to giving, and one's resistance to the giving is not the giving itself. Is that clear? How could anyone truly give while at the same time feel resistance to giving? "I don't really feel love for you, but I love you!" Or, "I

really don't want to help you, but I suppose I will help you now, because who else is going to take care of you here in this moment?" Those actions are not ones of real giving; those responses are related to conditioning, to roles, responsibilities, legalities, philosophies, religious morals – whatever it is in your mind that is telling you to respond in that way. You are not genuinely giving – you are doing it "because" of something. Those responses would not be called real gifts.

Clearly you can sense the moments when you have that kind of resistance. I sometimes feel it myself: when one has been giving, giving, giving, giving, and someone asks for more, one just gives, and can only hope they don't ask too much. When you feel that resistance in the giving, that effort of resisting, that's when you begin to feel exhausted.

But in real giving – it is always so joyful to give. So you see, it's never an issue with the giving itself, but rather with the resistance you have toward giving. Making that distinction is very important, so you won't accidentally mistake one of the ten *paramitas* as being "The Perfection of Resistance Giving" or "The Suffering of Giving."

So, when you are feeling this resistance, you should not put yourself in the position of "giver," because with that feeling you cannot truly give. Do you know what I'm saying? If you go somewhere with an intention to help, then completely help. If you are not able to have that intention to help, don't go. That's logical, right? But, to go there and not be able to truly give creates in you an inner conflict. "I'm here to help, but I don't want to help." So, when you do put yourself in the position of being a giver, then give, okay? That's a great practice.

Text selected by Jantien Spindler





# NEW SERIES ON DREAM YOGA BEGINS MAY 30: LIVE ONLINE WITH TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE



Bringing  
Ancient Wisdom  
Teachings to Life

From May 30 through July 18, 2017, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will offer a free, two-month series of TWR LIVE teachings on Dream Yoga. The practice of Dream Yoga is a powerful tool of awakening, used for hundreds of years by great masters of the Tibetan traditions. It aids us in deepening awareness at all moments of life: while dreaming at night, during the dream-like experience of the day, and in the bardo experiences after death. Ultimately, Dream Yoga helps us to recognize the true nature of mind.

Each Tuesday throughout the series, you can [visit Rinpoche's Facebook page](#) at 19.00 h Central European Time to view either a live teaching and guided meditation; or a live conversation between Rinpoche and an invited guest on a topic related to dream yoga. Between these 30- to 40-minute Tuesday sessions, Rinpoche will offer occasional, unscheduled live sessions to elaborate on the previous session and answer viewers' questions. All sessions are recorded for future viewing.

## Teaching and Q&A topics will include, in order:

1. Introduction to Dream Yoga (May 30, 2017, starting 19.00 h Central European Time)
2. Dream Yoga Foundational Practices
3. Basics of Lucid Dreaming
4. Healing Through Lucid Dreaming
5. How to Transform Recurring Dreams
6. Dream Yoga as a Lifetime Practice

For the latest schedule updates, [click here](#).

## About TWR LIVE

TWR LIVE is an innovative way for you to connect with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, the ancient Tibetan teachings and fellow students around the world through regular live broadcasts that can be easily viewed on Rinpoche's Facebook page. All

broadcasts are free and open to all — you don't need a Facebook account to view them.

To access the viewing screen, [visit Rinpoche's Facebook page](#) at the time of the broadcast. If the screen doesn't appear right away, the broadcast may not have begun yet, so try reloading the page. If you have a Facebook account, you'll have an opportunity to submit questions and receive answers from Rinpoche — be sure to “like” his page and click “Follow” to receive a notification each time Rinpoche goes live.

[TWR LIVE schedule updates](#)

[Archive of TWR LIVE recordings](#)

[Learn more about TWR LIVE and access real-time translations](#)

In-depth information about Dream Yoga can be found in Tenzin Rinpoche's book *The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep*. [Snow Lion, 1998](#)



Khandro from the Mother Tantra: Gyuma Chenmo (Dream Yoga)





## TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE'S 2017 EUROPEAN SEMINARS AND ONLINE TEACHINGS

| When                                            | Where              | What                                                                                | More information                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ongoing                                         | Your computer      | Free Online Course:<br>Starting a Meditation Practice,<br>Parts 1 & 2               | <a href="http://ligminchalearning.com">ligminchalearning.com</a> |
| May 19 – 21                                     | Berlin, Germany    | Weekend seminar:<br>The Seven Mirrors of Dzogchen<br>Part 1 (of 2)                  | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.de">www.ligmincha.de</a>           |
| May 24                                          | Your computer      | TWR LIVE :<br>A conversation with theoretical<br>quantum physicist Amit<br>Goswami  | <a href="http://ligminchalearning.com">ligminchalearning.com</a> |
| May 26 – 28                                     | Bulle, Switzerland | Weekend seminar:<br>Bringing More Light Into Our<br>Lives                           | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.fr">www.ligmincha.fr</a>           |
| May 30 – July 18<br>Tuesdays<br>19.00 h (C.E.T) | Your computer      | TWR LIVE teachings:<br>Dream Yoga                                                   | <a href="http://ligminchalearning.com">ligminchalearning.com</a> |
| June 10 – July 2                                | Your computer      | Interactive online course:<br>Tibetan Sound Healing                                 | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>         |
| July 22 – August 20                             | Your computer      | Interactive online course:<br>Tibetan Dream Yoga                                    | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>         |
| August 7 – 13                                   | Buchenau, Germany  | European Summer Retreat:<br>Twenty-One Nails, Part 3 (of 3)                         | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.de">www.ligmincha.de</a>           |
| August 15 – 19                                  | Wilga, Poland      | Retreat:<br>Dream Yoga                                                              | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.pl">www.ligmincha.pl</a>           |
| August 20                                       | Warsaw, Poland     | Seminar:<br>Dream Yoga                                                              | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.pl">www.ligmincha.pl</a>           |
| September 1 – 3                                 | Rome, Italy        | Seminar:<br>Connecting to the Living<br>Universe: Teachings on the Five<br>Elements | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.it">www.ligmincha.it</a>           |
| September 9 – 10                                | Budapest, Hungary  | Seminar:<br>To Be Announced                                                         | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.hu">www.ligmincha.hu</a>           |

You can also view free recorded Internet teachings from your computer or other device, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Access them on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/user/Ligmincha), [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org), [www.ligminchalearning.com/twr-live-video-archive](http://www.ligminchalearning.com/twr-live-video-archive) and [www.oceanofwisdom.org](http://www.oceanofwisdom.org).







# Ligmincha Europe Magazine

# 25 – Summer 2017



Meet the Colombian sangha

3 Doors Meditation in a School

Cyber-Sangha Week

Bridging Two Worlds





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## THE LIGMINCHA EUROPE MAGAZINE

is a joint venture of the community of European students of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. Ideas and contributions are welcome at [magazine@ligmincha.eu](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,**

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

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



Celebrating 25 years of Ligmincha in Buchenau, Germany.

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

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

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

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

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





## 3 DOORS MEDITATION IN A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

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

**Ton Bisscheroux:** Pilar, can you introduce yourself?

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

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

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

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



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





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

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

#### KAREN VANESSA, 4° PRIMARIA

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

**Jantien Spindler: Carlos can you introduce yourself?**

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

invitation and started to collaborate with Pilar in August 2015.

#### MARIANO, 5° PRIMARIA

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

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

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

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

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

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





project in August 2015.

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

#### BRISA MIRANDA, 3° PRIMARIA

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

#### **Ton: How do the parents respond to the meditation?**

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

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

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

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

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

#### **Ton: How do the children respond to the meditation?**

**Pilar:** The practice with the smaller children is



Children meditating in the "the silent room."





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

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

**CLAUDIA FERNANDA, 6<sup>o</sup> PRIMARIA**

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

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

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

**Jantien: What are your objectives for doing these practices?**

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

**Jantien: What you do takes a lot of time and**

**effort. How can you keep that going on?**

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

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

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

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

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

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



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





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

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

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

#### DANIELA, 2° SECUNDARIA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Interview by Jantien Spindler and Ton Bisscheroux**





# CYBER-SANGHA WEEK

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

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

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

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

## The week's observances include:

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



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

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

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





## 3 DOORS COMPASSION PROJECT GROWS

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

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

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

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

— Marcy Vaughn, Compassion Project Co-Founder

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

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

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



Gabriel Rocco and Marcy Vaughn.

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





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

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

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

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



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

#### TESTIMONIALS FROM 9-MONTH PROGRAM, BRYN MAWYR, PA

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

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

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

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



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





## WEEKLY GROUP MEDITATION IN AND FROM MY LIVINGROOM

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

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

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

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

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



Santiago Villaveces.

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

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





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

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

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

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

pened. That was strange eventful retreat.

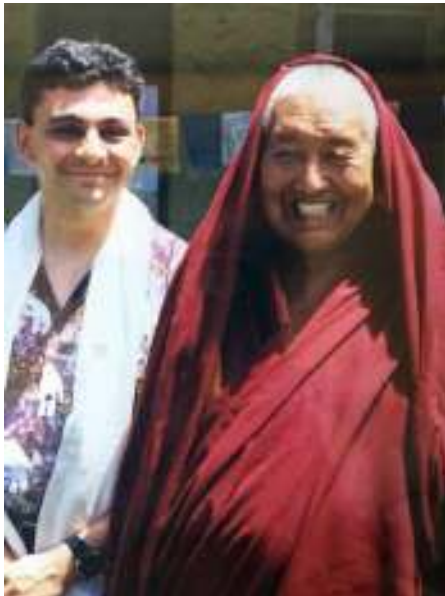
I also recall a couple of retreats in Virginia years before Serenity Ridge. I volunteered to work so I could afford going to the retreats. On one occasion I remember I had to drive a small truck full of food and adornments for the *Gompa*, and then at the end of the retreat make our way back with the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

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





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



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

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

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

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





**Jantien: When did Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche visit Colombia?**

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



Empowerment by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in 1994.

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

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

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

**Ton: When did you start to teach?**

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

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

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





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



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

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

**Jantien: Can you tell more about the retreats?**

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

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

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

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





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

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

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

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

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

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

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





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

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

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



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Santiago in 1995.

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

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

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

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

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





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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



**Interview by Jantien Spindler and Ton Bisscheroux**





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

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

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

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

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

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



Wolfgang Krebs.

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

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

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



Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche.





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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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





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

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

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

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

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



Wolfgang Krebs.

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

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

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

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



The annual Summer Retreat in 2002, Kapellenhof, Germany.





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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

**Interview by Ton Bisscheroux**





# WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN EUROPE

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

## May 19 – 21:

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



## January 27 – 29:

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







### May 5 – 7:

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

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

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



### May 18 – 19:

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







#### April 28 – 30:

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



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#### May 12 – 14:

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







### August 7 – 13:

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

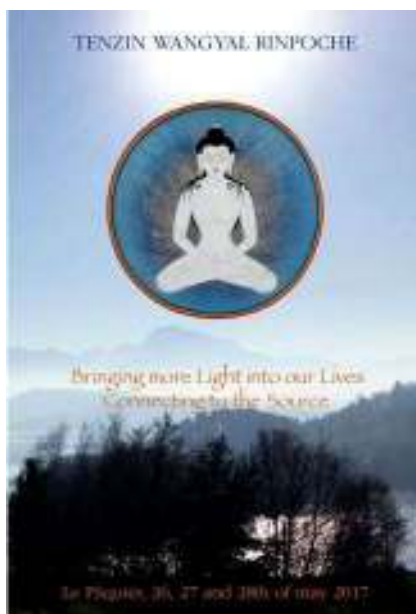






### May 26 – 28:

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



### July 1 – 2:

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

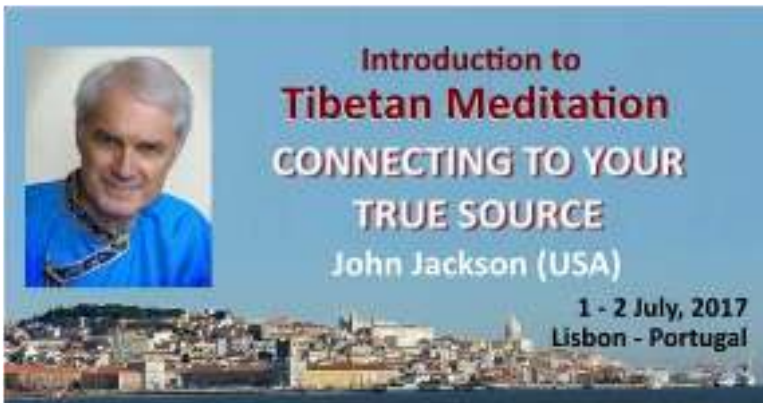






#### June 16 – 18:

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



#### June 30 – July 2:

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



#### June 24 – 25:

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

[www.breathe-zuerich.ch](http://www.breathe-zuerich.ch)







You can watch the recordings here:

Preparing Your Mind for Sacred Sleep  
April 11

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

Meditating on Clear Light While Asleep  
April 18

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

Daytime Practices to Prepare for the Night  
April 25

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

Who Are You as You Fall Asleep?  
May 2

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

Sleeping with Awareness, Dying Without Fear  
May 9

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

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



You can watch the recordings here:

Introduction to Dream Yoga  
June 6

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

Dream Yoga Foundational Practices  
June 20

Dream Yoga: Lucid Dreaming and Lucid Living  
June 22

Healing Through Lucid Dreaming  
June 27

How to Transform Recurring Dreams  
July 4

Healing Through Lucid Dreaming: Q&A  
July 10

Dream Yoga: Overcoming Obstacles  
July 10

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

The Hidden Symbolism of Dreams  
July 25

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

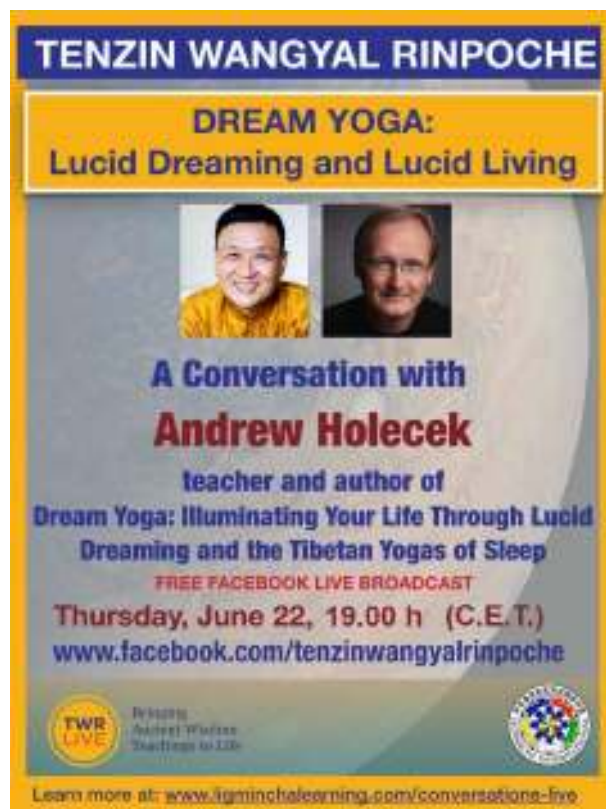
Dream Yoga as a Lifetime Practice  
August 8



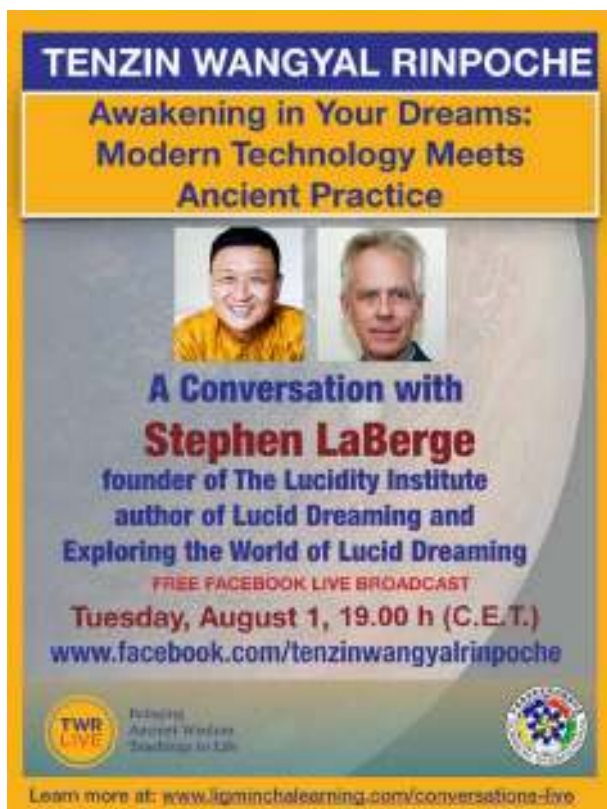




You can watch the recording here:  
[Conversation Live with Dylan Tuccillo, Jared Zeizel, and Thomas Peisel](#)



You can watch the recording here:  
[Dream Yoga: Lucid Dreaming and Lucid Living](#)



You can watch the recording here:  
[Awakening in Your Dreams: Modern Technology Meets Ancient Practice](#)



You can watch the recordings here:  
[Answering the Question: 'Who Am I?'](#)  
['Who Am I?' Part 2](#)



You can watch the recording here:  
[The Mantra of Great Perfection](#)







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

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

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

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

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

Registration and more information:  
**[www.ligmincha.hu](http://www.ligmincha.hu)**





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

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

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

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

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

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

**Information about the teaching:** Ligmincha Italia <https://www.facebook.com/woserpalmo2/>  
Email: [lcast@hotmail.it](mailto:lcast@hotmail.it)



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

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

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

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

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

**Booking and registration uniquely at Libreria Aseq**, Via dei Sediari 10, Roma. Tel. 06 6868400, email: [info@aseq.it](mailto:info@aseq.it)





# INSIDE OUT VIEW: TREES

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

Where are the roots  
Of the leaves I see?

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

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

One shot,  
Wrap the show.

*Guido Freddi*





# SO-CALLED DEATH IS YOUR OWN THINKING

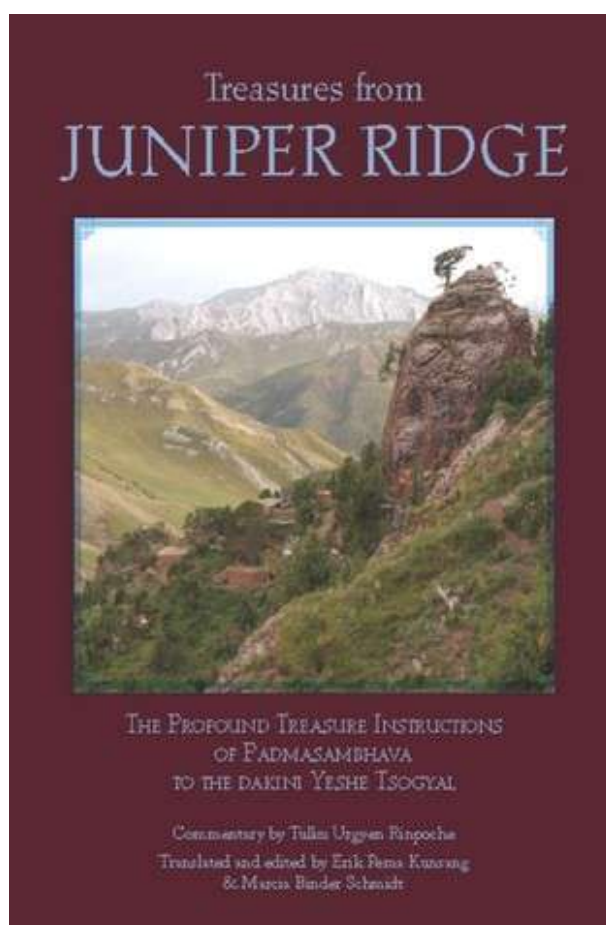
In this article Frits de Vries shares the book *Treasures from Juniper Ridge*. This book is a compilation of discovered teachings and revelations by Padmasambhava for all levels of practitioners. It also explains aspects of practice as non-conceptual meditation, recognizing the mind nature, but in this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

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

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

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

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



*“Homage to the blessed wisdom deity of awareness.*

*Without these signs and levels of progress on the path*

*That surely show when results have been obtained,*

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

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

*This text describing them is of utmost importance.*

*My child, here are the signs of the path*

*For the person who trains in dharmata.”*

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





## The Five Bardos

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

*“How many kinds of bardo states are there?”*

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

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

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

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



Padmasambhava.

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

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

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

#### ***Bardo of dreaming:***

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

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





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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



*Yeshe Tsogyal.*

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

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

*Thus he spoke."*

### **Bardo of birth and death:**

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

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

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

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





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

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

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

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

*Thus he spoke."*

### **Bardo of becoming:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

### **References**

(1) from Wikipedia:

[wikipedia.org/wiki/Padmasambhava](https://wikipedia.org/wiki/Padmasambhava)

(2) from Rigpawiki:

[www.rigpawiki.org/Padmasambhava](http://www.rigpawiki.org/Padmasambhava)

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

**Text and text selection by Frits de Vries**





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

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

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

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

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



John Jackson.

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

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





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



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

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

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

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

separate sessions for new people.

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

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

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

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

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





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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Frits: Are there Ngondro programs planned?**

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

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**Frits: Can you tell about your professional background?**

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

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

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

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

organizing and later teaching on my leave time.

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

**Ton: When did you start teaching in Europe?**

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

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

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

**Frits: How often have you visited Europe?**

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



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







John Jackson at Mt. Kailash in 2011.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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





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

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

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

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



A market in Kathmandu, Nepal.

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

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

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

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

**Interview by Frits de Vries and Ton Bisscheroux**





# BRIDGING TWO WORLDS

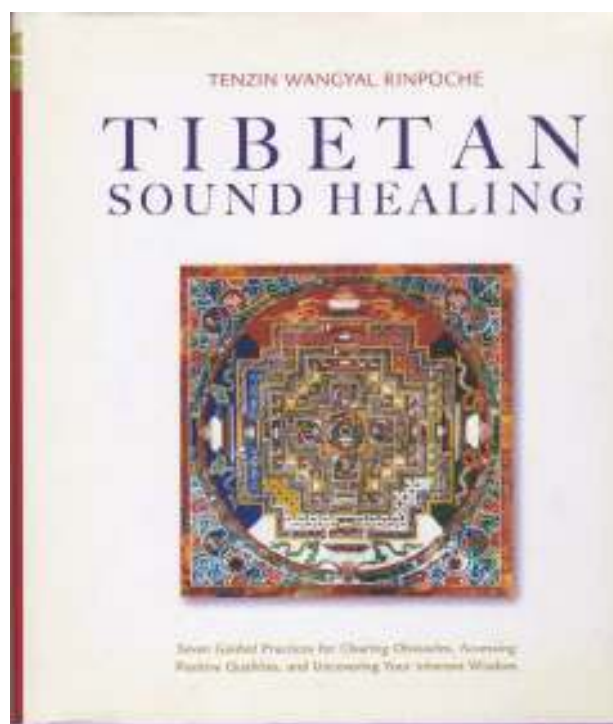
We reprint a conversation with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche about the book *Tibetan Sound Healing*, published in *The Voice of Clear Light*, January 2007.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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





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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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





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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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





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

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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



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





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

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

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

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

**Text selected by Jantien Spindler**

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

—Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

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





# PITH INSTRUCTIONS OF TIBETAN BON BUDDHISM

## New TWR LIVE Series Begins September 6

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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





# THE TRUTH THAT SETS YOU FREE

## New GlideWing Workshop with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche begins September 30

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

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

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

Learn more and register [www.glidewing.com](http://www.glidewing.com).



Salgye du Dolma: *Khandro of Sleep Yoga*.





# TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE'S 2017 EUROPEAN SEMINARS AND ONLINE TEACHINGS

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







# Ligmincha Europe Magazine

**# 26 – Autumn 2017**



Meet the Brazilian sangha

In Memoriam: His Holiness

A Traditional Path or The 3 Doors?

25 Years Ligmincha International





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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 bring the sad news that His Holiness the 33rd Menri Trizin, Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, departed his body at Menri Monastery in India on September 14, 2017. But, there is a bright side. I heard several people say that when they heard the news they saw rainbows, and others felt the presence of His Holiness even more after his passing. In the [October 2017 issue of Voice of Clear Light](#) you can read more on Honoring His Holiness the 33rd Menri Trizin. In this issue we publish an In Memoriam for His Holiness, written by Raven Cypress Wood.

For those interested in The 3 Doors program and the new curriculum of Lishu Institute, both offer several online courses in order to make the program accessible for more people. If you want to deepen your practice, and don't know yet which of these two paths suits you best please read the interview with John Jackson in this issue. He talks about the differences and similarities between the traditional path and the 3 Doors approach, and explains in simple words what Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen is. Although the structure of Lishu Institute and The 3 Doors are very different, the essence of the teachings is the same.

On TWR LIVE in June, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche talked with Andrew Holecek about *Dream Yoga*. We have an article inspired by Andrew Holecek's free online course titled *The Journey of the Mind at Death*, and some books mentioned in this course.

You can read the last part of Lowell Britson's diary of a four-year meditation cycle in Shenten Dargye Ling in France, under the guidance of H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche and Khenpo Gelek Jinpa.

We also introduce the Brazilian sangha, publish art from sangha members, reprint articles published earlier in *The Voice of Clear Light*, and report about the activities in Europe and online – including the Cyber Sangha Week.

Finally we have two announcements.

From February 16 – 18, Losar 2018 will be celebrated during the 12th International Sangha Practice-Weekend of the European Sangha in Buchenau, Germany. More information and registration are available at: [www.ligmincha.de](http://www.ligmincha.de).



We would also like to bring to your attention a beautiful book about the 25 year history of Ligmincha International. It was presented to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche during the Commemoration Honoring the 25th Anniversary of Ligmincha International on October 22, at Serenity Ridge Retreat Center in Virginia, US. In this commemorative book, photos and text tell the story of the origins of the Bon tradition, Rinpoche's life and teachings, and the growth of Ligmincha into an international organization that includes more than 70 centers and sanghas in more than 20 countries, plus a vibrant cyber-sangha of people around the world who come together for online teachings. You can buy it [here](#).

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





## WHEN THE LAMA PASSES BEYOND: A BRIEF EXPLANATION



Ceremony for His Holiness Menri Trizin Rinpoche's entering into the mind of Reality.

**In memoriam to His Holiness the 33rd Menri Trizin, Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, who departed his body on September 14, 2017, at Menri Monastery in India, we print a text from Raven Cypress Wood's website [Nine Ways – Ancient Wisdom from the Yungdrung Bön Tradition](#).**

“sleeping lion” lying upon the right side of the body, knees together and slightly bent with the right hand under the head and the left arm resting upon the body. During this time, great care is taken to not disturb the body or interrupt the state of mediation. Great blessings can be received by connecting with the master during this important time.

On September 14th, 2017, the spiritual leader of all Yungdrung Bon and head of Tashi Menri Monastery in Dolanji, India, His Holiness 33rd Menri Trizen Lungtok Tenpé Nyima Rinpoche entered into a state of *tukdam* at his lama residence at Menri Monastery. In general, *tukdam* refers to a state of meditative stability attained by meditation masters that continues after the external breath of their body has ceased but the internal breath, or winds, remain. Therefore, the subtle channels through which these winds move remain stable. The area of the body containing the heart chakra remains warm to the touch. The skin remains soft, and the face retains a glow of vitality. Often, the master is sitting in meditation posture, but can also be in the yogic posture of the



Butter lamp offerings at Menri Monastery.







His Holiness 33rd Menri Trizen Rinpoche sitting in the state of *tukdam*.

After an indeterminate number of days, the internal winds cease, the channels collapse, the physical body slumps, and the warmth dissipates from the heart center. For His Holiness 33rd Menri Trizen Lungtok Tenpé Nyima Rinpoche, he ended his state of *tukdam* after five days on September 18th, 2017. At that time, chants related to the cleansing of the sacred body are recited while the physical remains are ritually bathed with water mixed with special herbs. Sacred seed syllables are then written on the body and the body is

wrapped in a pure white cloth. Disciples who connect with the lama during this time either by being near the sacred remains or at a distance, can receive great blessings.

Because the master has attained a state of enlightened realization, the prayers and rituals that are offered during this time are different than that for an ordinary being. Rather than offering prayers to support their experience of death, disciples focus upon practices to honor the teachings of the master. These prayers and practices include performing acts of virtue to benefit all beings, reciting aspirational prayers such as the Tséwang Monlam found at this [link](#) and practicing guru yoga in a pure and fervent way. Additionally, the monastic community offers many *tsok*, or sacred feast offerings. At the time of cremation, an elaborate fire ritual called *Kün Rik* is performed during which a wide variety of offerings are presented to the entire cycle of deities.



*Tsok* offerings after the passing of His Holiness 33rd Menri Trizen Rinpoche.

Although the master has attained the ultimate state of realization and therefore does





not experience the 49 days of transiting the bardo, the 49 day period is still observed as a time to continue with prayers, spiritual practice, renewal of vows, and acts of virtue in order to honor the teachings and spiritual guidance of the master.

**Text by Raven Cypress Wood**

Photos: Menri Monastery and Geshe Nyima Kunchap Rinpoche



*Ku dung khang, or house of the holy physical remains, for His Holiness 33rd Menri Trizen Rinpoche.*



Extensive offerings for the fire offering ritual for His Holiness 33rd Menri Trizen Rinpoche.





# 5TH ANNUAL GLOBAL PRAYER EVENT FOR WORLD PEACE



The Harmony of Prayer, The Sound of Meditation, the Peace of Bon

**FEBRUARY 20, 2018**

## Join the 5th Annual Global Prayer event for World Peace

Yeru Bön Center and Latri Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche invite Bon practitioners and friends of Bon to participate in their fifth annual Global Prayer and Meditation event.

Last year's participation was well over 2.700 people from all over the world. Majority were Bonpos, but there were also soldiers and non Bonpos praying throughout the world.

Yeru Bön Center received letters, photos and more from people around the world participating in this incredible event.

This year's global prayer event will be February 20, 2018, 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, all practitioners are asked to pray and meditate for a minimum of one hour anytime between 19.00 h and

21.00 h within their time zones. Gather as a sangha, by yourself, in a private place or public.

More information and registration:

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





# UPDATES FROM THE 3 DOORS: UPCOMING PROGRAMS AND COMMUNITY NEWS

In this update, we share highlights from The 3 Doors, including upcoming programs and community news. With hundreds of practitioners in more than 20 countries, the increasing use of Zoom videoconferencing helps us engage our growing virtual community and bring the benefits of The 3 Doors teachings into more people's lives.



## UPCOMING PROGRAMS

### Deepen Your Practice Through the Doorway of the Body

Start the New Year by refreshing and deepening your meditation practice through the doorway of the body with Senior 3 Doors Teacher Laura Shekerjian. *The Joy of Embodied Presence* is a 4-week interactive online meditation program that explores the body as a powerful doorway into open awareness and the vibrancy of direct experience. Through simple practices of breath and movement, we will connect with the deep stability of the body's stillness and discover the aliveness of the present moment.

The first online class meets on Saturday January 20 (14.00-17.00 h C.E.T.) and the following classes meet on January 27, February 3, and February 10 (14.00-15.30 h C.E.T.), 2018. There are 25 spaces available. A second online class will open for registration soon, with four class meetings on April 21, April 28, May 5, and May 12, 2018.

[Learn more and register.](#)



Laura Shekerjian.

### The Compassion Project Retreat: An Invitation to All Compassion Project Participants

The growing 3 Doors Compassion Project community is gathering this spring to practice and share in the supportive setting of a 5-day residential retreat. Led by Marcy Vaughn and Gabriel Rocco, this retreat is open to all current and past Compassion Project participants and will be held at Pendle Hill retreat center near Philadelphia, PA from April 3-8, 2018.

[Learn more and register.](#)

*The 3 Doors Compassion Project* teaches simple, accessible meditation practices to physicians, teachers, therapists, and others who wish to empower their capacity to serve others and experience the benefits of self-compassion. So far, 9-month and 5-week in-person programs have been completed in Philadelphia PA, and a 9-month online program is currently underway, serving participants from around the world. Stay tuned – more opportunities to participate are coming in 2018.



Gabriel Rocco and Marcy Vaughn.





### **The Next North American 3 Doors Academy Begins in October 2018**

We are pleased to announce that our fifth [North American Academy](#) led by Senior Teachers Marcy Vaughn and Gabriel Rocco will soon be open for application. The Academy is a two and half year personal transformation journey that includes six residential retreats. In North America, these retreats are held at the Serenity Ridge Retreat Center, near Shipman VA. The first 5-day retreat of the new Academy takes place in October 2018.

### **3 DOORS COMMUNITY NEWS**

#### **International Retreat Opportunity for all Academy Participants**

Join us for our first 3PA International Retreat. We'll be gathering in sunny Merida, Mexico, January 4-10, 2018. All Academy graduates and current participants are welcome. [Learn more and register here.](#)



Merida, Mexico.

#### **Research Update: The 3 Doors Academy**

How do The 3 Doors programs and practices transform lives? What are the short-term, cumulative, and lasting benefits of these Tibetan meditation practices? [Read more.](#)

#### **The 3 Doors in Community: 1. Zurich, Switzerland**

At the end of every second work week, a group of therapists and other professionals come together to practice and share at the Shogen-Dojo in Zurich, Switzerland. [Read more.](#)



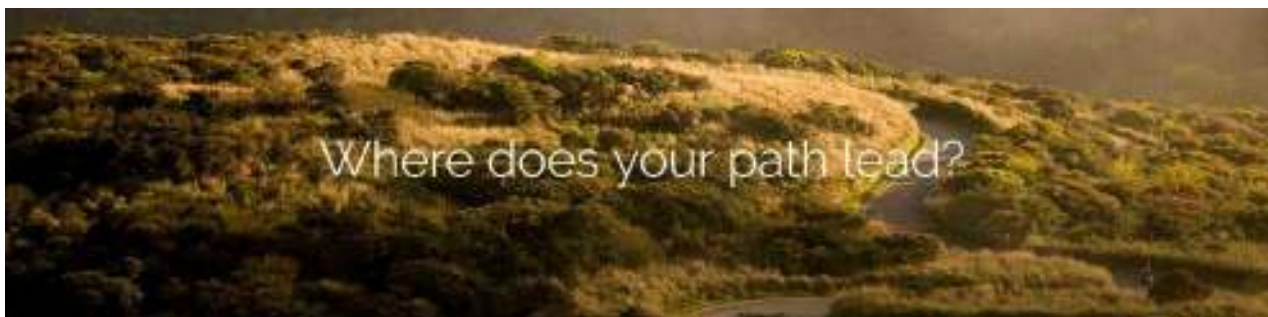
Zurich, Switzerland.

#### **Creative Musings: 2. Inner Landscapes**

I know what I am not! I am not a conceptual artist. My world has always been one of experience and embodying what it is that I feel and have come to know. [Read more.](#)



Cliffs of Newfoundland by Kim Puil.





# LISHU INSTITUTE'S NEW CURRICULUM

The last year of the 3 years program in Lishu Institute started September this year. The study and practice this whole year is dedicated to the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud Dzogchen* teaching and will be completed in June 2018. Beginning September 2018, Lishu Institute will present a new program. Tiana Tefy recently interviewed Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, founder and spiritual director of Lishu Institute, and Sangmo Yangri, who designed the new curriculum for the new program.

**Rinpoche, Lishu Institute will introduce a new curriculum in September 2018, after the completion of the first 3-year program. Does this mean the vision of the institute's mission has changed?**

There will be changes in the curriculum starting next year, but the main purpose of Lishu Institute hasn't changed. The emphasis has always been and will continue to be providing long term, residential and in-depth studies in the Bon tradition: preserving Yungdrung Bon's rich teachings and unique heritage.

Though students only began studying at Lishu Institute in 2015, the vision, preparation and work began many years before. We initially planned a 5-year program of study, but discovered that this would not be feasible for most people. So we turned that into a 3-year program, with the flexibility to come for only 10 weeks at a time to study specific topics.

After reviewing the results of the first 3-year term we are introducing some changes. We are adapting to people's needs. A big change is that, because of the redesign of the courses, students can begin at any time, and commit to as much of the curriculum as they want. Or, students can come to study specific aspects of the Bon teachings according to their interests and background.

There is so much benefit that comes from stepping out of one's daily routines to study and practice *dharma*. We want to support as many people as we can, and we want to recognize that the modern world makes such a commitment quite



Geshe Thupten Gyaltzen Negi, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Sangmo Yangri.

difficult. These changes are meant to help with that.

We are not diluting the teachings, or simplifying them. Sangmo-la has diligently put this program together. And Geshe Sherab Lodoe and Sangmo-la are very skilled, very experienced teachers. They, and visiting teachers, will continue to present the highest quality courses. What we are doing is adding emphasis to the areas that are most relevant to the greatest number of students. So it is a continuous change with the flow of conditions.

**What are the main changes from the first program?**

The main change is that the *Nine Ways of Bon*, which is more study-orientated, will not be carried over. The *Ma Gyud* and *Dzogchen* teachings, which are practice-oriented will remain. Moreover, there will be a new teaching on the Bon *Lam Rim*, a foundational text, together with a *Ngondro* retreat.

Lishu Institute will also offer more short-term (2-week) retreats. For example, we currently have such a course on the practice of *Yeshe Walmo* on the calendar. This will give the opportunity to







Teachers and students at Lishu Institute.

more people to experience the environment of Lishu Institute, and get a taste for in-depth study, without having to start with such a big commitment.

**What future developments are foreseen for Lishu Institute?**

There will continue to be changes and refinements to the curriculum and its presentation as we learn from our experiences. I think that you will see some blending of the residential program

with online supplementation. We have many dedicated students who cannot make the financial commitment to travel to India for an extended period. And so, while I strongly encourage students who can to go to Lishu Institute, it isn't realistic to think that this is possible for everyone.

Online programs are also a good way to extend what is taught at Lishu Institute. We might offer on-site programs with online components that go on before, during or even afterwards. Then, stu-



Lishu Institute is located in a beautiful environment in India.





dents who desire can really go deep into the teachings. This would be a good way to study the Tibetan language, for just one example.

There may also be more special-topic courses, like the *Powa* retreat held last year. There are many wonderful Bon lamas and teachers who we would like to invite to Lishu Institute to share their knowledge. But first we must establish a solid foundation or base. We need to see more students coming to Lishu Institute.

#### **Rinpoche, do you have any words or advice?**

I believe that Lishu Institute is very important. I have been teaching in the west now for over 25 years, and I am overjoyed to see how many students are connecting to Bon, how many geshe and lamas are coming to the west now from the monasteries in India, Nepal and Tibet. A next step is for Western students to really engage deeply with Bon. To learn the texts in their original language, to commit to extended practice and study retreats: to really bring the essence of the teachings into their cultures and experience.

One of the great features of Buddhism and of the Shenrab in general is that it adapts itself to each culture that it encounters. That flexibility is what makes it as alive today as it has ever been. However, the origins of the teachings, their language, symbolism and unique flavor must be preserved. These qualities keep us connected to the lineage of masters, root lamas and enlightened beings. Lishu Institute is here for that purpose: to help motivated students deepen and solidify their connection to the lineage of Yungdrung Bon.



Sangmo Yangri and Menri Geshe Sherab Lodoe.

#### **Sangmo-la, the first 3 years program at Lishu Institute will be completed in June 2018. Tell us about what has happened since September 2015.**

Last June we completed the first two-year teaching, on the *Nine Ways of Bon* and then the *Six Great Methods* (*Tummo*, *Dream Yoga*, *Chöd*, *Phowa*, *Bardo*, and *Sleep Yoga*) from the *Mother Tantra*. This year, the teaching is on *Dzogchen*, the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* cycle. There are three retreat/teaching periods of 10 weeks each per year. Most of the students attended one or two periods. During the first year three students completed the whole cycle and in the second year, two students completed the whole year. It has usually been a small group of students so that those who are determined can do in-depth study and practice.

#### **Please tell us more about the retreat.**

The first year was more study orientated whereas the *Ma Gyud* and *Dzogchen* cycles are more practice orientated. These are intensive practice retreats. The daily schedule starts at 6.30 am and the last practice session ends at 8.30 pm or 9 pm. There are four practice sessions a day and two hours teaching. Moreover, the students perform



Smoke offering.





daily different rituals and prayers (*Smoke offering, Sur offering, Chöd, prayers to the Bon protectors*).

**Does it mean that the students also learn to perform these rituals?**

Yes they do. The main focus of the teaching is of course the given topic, the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* this year. Additionally, the students will learn how to sing and recite the prayers, how to play the sacred musical instruments for different rituals and how to make *Torma* for offerings. The different activities of the day will provide students with various opportunities to practice.

Each student has different interests, some people feel naturally attracted to devotional practices, others to more analytical meditation, and some like both. When the students go back to their home, they will continue practicing what works for them.

**What are the assets of Lishu Institute for retreat?**

First, the environment of Lishu Institute is very conducive for practice and study. The institute is located in the country side, surrounded by beautiful lush green areas and mountains. Yet for India, easy to access, there is an airport in Dehradun, the closest big city. Second, India is definitely a very potent place for spiritual practices. Third, Lishu Institute is close to Menri Monastery, the mother monastery of Yundgrung Bon. Lastly, the retreats are organized in a way that the students do not need to take care of any logistic regarding everyday life. The only thing they have to do is to clean their own room.

**Do you have many exchanges with Menri Monastery?**

The students usually go to receive blessings from the great Masters in Menri Monastery at the end of each cycle. For instance, at the end of the last *Ma Gyud* retreat in June, they met and received blessings from His Holiness. At the end of the *Phowa* retreat, Menri Lupon Rinpoche performed the *Kusha* grass ceremony.

Moreover, we have received at Lishu Institute several Masters from Menri Monastery to give teachings, we hosted nuns from Redna

Menling Nunnery to perform *Tsok* offering and Menri Lupon Rinpoche bestowed very important initiations before we started the *Ma Gyud* and *Dzogchen* cycles.

**Please tell us about the new curriculum.**

We will maintain the *Ma Gyud* and the *Dzogchen* teachings. Instead of the *Nine Ways of Bon*, we'll introduce the *Lam Rim* (path to enlightenment), which will be done with a *Ngondro* retreat practice. This is a very important teaching in Bon. Last June, when the students met with His Holiness, he insisted that this foundational teaching should be given to and practiced diligently by the students. Especially, those who study the higher vehicles of *Tantra* and *Dzogchen*, he said several times how crucial this is.

Furthermore, the curriculum won't be a 3 years program any longer, but several modules. There will be three modules per year, each of them can be attended independently. Of course, for all the modules on *Tantra* and *Dzogchen*, we recommend that people attend the foundational teaching if they have not received and practiced those previously.

**Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche also talked about short term retreats in the new curriculum. Sangmo-la, can you say more about that?**

Actually we have already organized 2-week retreats for specific groups. With the new curriculum, we plan to have two short retreats per year. The focus of Lishu Institute will still be the longer



The students received blessings from His Holiness after the successful completion of the second year program on *Mother Tantra: The Six Great Methods*.







Menri Lopon Rinpoche, Sangmo Yangri, Geshe Thupten Gyaltsen Negi and the students of Lishu Institute after the completion of the second year program.

retreats, yet we would like to provide the opportunity to more people to benefit from the Lishu Institute environment. These short retreats will also enable people to visit the great *Stupa* in Dehradun, to discover the nearby Bon Za Mongyal Monastery and of course Menri Monastery.

#### What will a year at Lishu look like?

As I said, there are three teaching periods per year; the first period from September to November will be on the *Lam Rim*. The two other periods, from January to March and then from April to June will be on one of the *Six Yogas of the Mother Tantra* or on *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud*. Between these long retreats, in December and in March, we'll organize 2-week retreats, for example, on *Sipay Gyalmo healing ritual*.

#### Who will be the teachers for the new curriculum?

Menri Geshe Sherab Lodoe, who is the current resident teacher at Lishu Institute, will continue to teach. I will

translate Geshe-la's teaching from Tibetan to English and teach some topics as well. You can find detailed biography of the Lishu Institute's teacher on the website [www.lishu.org](http://www.lishu.org). Geshe Thupten Gyaltsen Negi who has visited sanghas in Europe several times, will carry on his tasks as administrative and logistic manager.

#### Do people need to apply to attend one of the retreats?

For the 2-week retreats, people can register by contacting us directly. For the 10-week retreats, we'll still request

people to fill in an application form. There are two reasons for this; first, filling in the form helps the person to clarify their motivation to commit for a long period. The second reason is, it is important for us, when working with a group to have an idea of people's background. For further information please contact me at [yangrisangmo@gmail.com](mailto:yangrisangmo@gmail.com).

#### Interviews by Tiana Tefy



Sangmo Yangri and Menri Geshe Sherab Lodoe.





# MOST OF OUR PRACTICES ARE LIVE STREAMS

To introduce the Brazilian sangha Rodrigo Esteves and Andréa Meng answered our questions by e-mail.

## How long has Rinpoche been coming to Brazil?

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche came to Brazil for the first time in 2010, invited by some students who were fascinated by his teachings in Mexico. At that opportunity – his book *The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep* was launched in Portuguese – he was invited for the book release, and he taught a workshop on the topic. Also during that same visit, he gave a second weekend teachings about the Elements, based on his book *Healing through Form, Energy and Light*, which was first released in Brazil in 2005. Rinpoche has been visiting Brazil every year since 2010. He has given workshops on different topics, attracting students from all Brazilian regions.

Four books by Rinpoche, *Wonders of the Natural Mind*, *Awakening the Sacred Body*, *Awakening the Luminous Mind* and *The True Source of Healing* were released by Devir Publisher. During Rinpoche's visit in November 2017, the same Publisher also released *Tibetan Sound Healing*,



and another Publisher, Lúcida Letra released a new edition of *Healing through Form, Energy and Light*.

## Can you tell something about the structure of Ligmincha Brasil?

The largest Bon sanghas with Tenzin Wangyal as their main teacher are in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, yet there are also students in other areas of Brazil, who intend to create sanghas of their own. Regarding structure, we could say that the Brazil sangha is mainly functioning in cyber space! Nowadays, our practices are on the Zoom live stream site which enables us to unite sanghas from different cities in Brazil, and even from other



The bookshop with Rinpoche's books during a workshop in São Paulo, March 2016.







Meeting of the sangha in Rio de Janeiro.

countries. Only the sangha in Rio periodically meets as a group.

**Can you give us an idea about how Ligmincha Brazil is organized?**

We work with different volunteer groups which take turns translating the teachings transmitted by FACEBOOK LIVE, YouTube videos, and texts. Another volunteer group takes care of editing videos and audios of translations stored on [Ligmincha Brasil YouTube's channel](#), [Facebook](#), our [website](#), and [SoundCloud](#). Our channel on YouTube now has 240 videos translated to Portuguese, including meditations, short

teachings and complete courses which were given by internet, as *Dream Yoga*, *Living with Joy*, *Dying in Peace*, and *Soul Retrieval*.

A third group of volunteers is working on transcripts and reviews of courses, i.e. *Dream Yoga*, which has been recently taught by Rinpoche on FACEBOOK LIVE. Besides that, we take care of our [Ligmincha Brasil website](#), where Rinpoche's books and sacred pictures are sold. Another group takes care of social media. We also type up *sadhanas* in Tibetan and in Portuguese, and organize the teachings in worksheets according to topic, duration, date and *umdze* (practice



Workshop with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in São Paulo, March 2016.





facilitator).

**Do you collaborate with other Latin American sanghas?**

Riponche asked a senior student, Santiago Villaveces, to give teachings and lead virtual practices. Santiago lives in Colombia, but speaks fluent Portuguese. He leads practices weekly on Zoom. It has been a wonderful experience to sit with practitioners from Colombia and from all over Brazil. Santiago is very attentive to the Brazilian sangha, always willing to help and share his knowledge. We deeply appreciate his efforts.



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Lama Padma Samten from Centro de Estudos Budistas Bodisatva, during the workshop in Rio de Janeiro, November 2016.

**Anything else you would like to share with the readers of *Ligmincha Europe Magazine*?**

Some people are surprised when we say we do online practices. We believe everybody should try it. To participate, you simply connect via your computer, using a specific link sent to you by email. It is possible to interact with the teacher and with other students by video, audio and chat. The experience is similar to a presential group practice in a center. Cyber practices enable us to connect with people from different cities that don't have a local sangha. People otherwise isolated and in difficult situations can connect via

Zoom, even from a hospital bed!

**Any plans for the future of Ligmincha Brasil?**

We want to invite Rinpoche for a retreat in nature! We plan to translate other books, translate and transcribe more teachings, and bring other teachers recommended by Rinpoche, like Alejandro Chaoul or Santiago Villaveces to Brazil. We also hope that we will have the means to create a formally established center of Ligmincha Brasil, to grow in the future and help more people. Finally, we are committed to the effort of spreading the Bon Teachings here in Brazil.



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, coordinators and some volunteers in Rio de Janeiro, November 2016.





# WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN EUROPE

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



**September 8 – 10:**

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught in Budapest, Hungary, *Tibetan Sound Healing* & *The Long Life Practice of Tsewang Rigdzin*.







**August 15 – 19:**  
Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche  
taught in Wilga, Poland on  
*Dream Yoga*.



Andrea Heckman and her team followed Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche while they are working on a documentary on Bon in the West.



Video Mantra SA LE Ö - A A KAR SA LE Ö A YANG OM DU







**September 1 – 3:**

In Rome, Italy, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught on *Connecting to the Living Universe: Teachings on the Five Elements*.



**June 16 – 18:**

Geshe Choekhortshang Rinpoche taught on the *Medicine Buddha* in Budapest, Hungary. There were 165 participants.







**November 17 – 19:**  
 Marcy Vaughn taught *Sherap Chamma* in Berlin, Germany.



**October 27 – 29:**  
 Geshe Nyima Choekhortshang Rinpoche taught *Ngondro, Part 3*, in Berlin.



**October 27 – 29:**  
 John Jackson taught *Healing the Earth, Healing yourself* in Höfen, Germany.







On October 22, Serenity Ridge Retreat Center, headquarters of Ligmincha International in central Virginia, honored the 25th year of Ligmincha International, founded by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, with a special day of commemoration. For those who couldn't be at Serenity Ridge that day, could participate in the opening activities from their computer or other device, and be part of a full week of special online observances, by visiting the [Ligmincha International Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/ligminchainternational). Click on the photos and you will be directed to the videos or websites.

The Cyber-Sangha Week is Ligmincha's way of honoring its teachers, teachings and traditions, as well as its many worldwide centers and spiritual communities (sanghas). On the photos you can see the opening activities and some of these events in



**Serenity Ridge Retreat Center, US:** During the opening activities a mandala and other presents were offered to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.



**France:** Sacred dance of Yeshe Walmo, executed by Geshe Tenzin Gelek.



**Germany:** Meditation with monthly local practice group in Frankfurt area.







**Denmark:** Practice group in Copenhagen.



**Hungary:** Practice group in Budapest.



**Poland:** Video with slideshow commemorating the 20th anniversary of Ligmincha Poland, which they celebrated in 2016.



**Italy:** Video of photos taken during the seminar in Rome, September 2017.



**Austria:** Video introduction of Ligmincha Austria.



**The Netherlands:** Live broadcast of guided practice.



**Spain:** Video with testimonies from sangha members.



**Ireland:** An account of the beginnings of the sangha.



**Slovakia:** Photographs from past events in Bratislava.







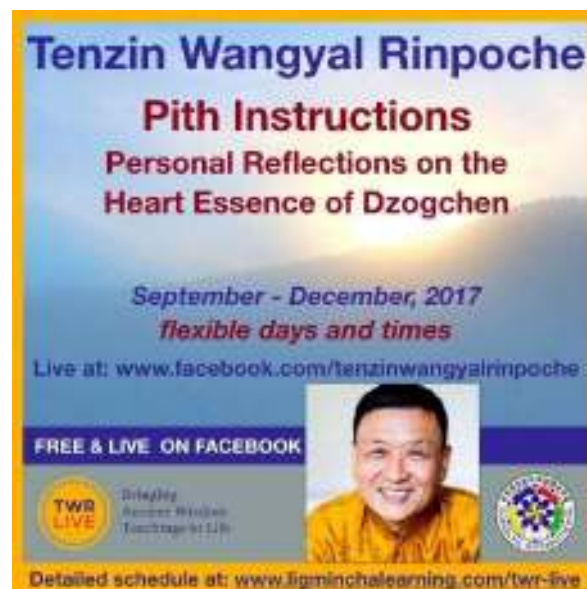
You can watch the recording here:

A Conversation with Michael Gawrysiak, Ph.D., assistant professor, Department of Psychology, West Chester University of Pennsylvania; and 3 Doors senior teachers Marcy Vaughn and Gabriel Rocco



You can watch the recording here:

A Conversation with Dr. Yangdron Kalzang, Dr. Kunga Wangdue, Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo, and Geshe Lobsang Tsering



You can watch the recording here:

Introduction to the series

September 6

Finding Your Spiritual Path

September 13

Overcoming Obstacles on the Spiritual Path

September 20

Realizing Your Potential by Connecting to the Source

September 28

Reflections on a Teaching from the 21 Nails

October 8

All Is Good: Every moment, no matter how painful, can be our teacher

November 7

Being the Mirror, Not the Reflection

November 15

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TWR LIVE — Video Archive 2016-2017





# THÖGEL: VISIONS FROM THE HEART

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 fourth and last retreat year. You can read his other contributions in [Ligmincha Europe Magazine # 15](#) on page 33-34, in [Ligmincha Europe Magazine # 19](#) on page 30-31, and in [Ligmincha Europe Magazine # 23](#) on page 27-29.

Shenten Dargye Ling, a Bon monastery in Blou, France, established a meditation school in 2008 offering practitioners the opportunity for in-depth study and practice of Bon Dzogchen texts. Under the guidance of Bon lamas, these retreats, called *Gomdras*, meet 70 days for four consecutive years.

The fourth year of the *Gomdra* cycle, held September 6 – November 14, 2017, focused on the Bon *Thögel* teachings. There were 24 participants. This is a diary of my experiences at the *Gomdra*.

*Thögel* vision practice, or clear light practice, are teachings from the *Gyalwa Chagri*, a Dzogchen text, also the text of previous *Gomdras*. Last years *Tummo* practices and the *Ma Gyüd* recitation, were also part of the daily *Thögel* practices.

The passing of His Holiness, the 33<sup>rd</sup> Gyalwa Menri Tridzin, on September 14<sup>th</sup>, the following 49 days of *bardo* rituals created a busy practice schedule and many visitors to Shenten Dargye Ling. One weekend there were 75 Tibetans practicing with us. It was a time of great joy and sadness as we remembered his life of great compassion.

The daily schedule was similar to the past years. Morning chants began at 7:00 am and evening chants finished the day at 9:30 pm. There were four hours of *Thögel* practice and accumulation chants, an hour dharma lecture and two hours of community work. The weather was sunny and unusually warm.

Khenpo Gelek Jinpa was again the principle



Participants of the *Gomdra* in Shenten Dargye Ling.

teacher, leading us with great enthusiasm and vigor. On Wednesday mornings, H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche gave the text teachings with commentary and practice instructions. Always with his sparkling clarity and humor, he revealed the subtle essence of nature of mind. He was always an inspiration and willing to answer our questions and offer his guidance.

*Thögel* practice is meditation in open space; sky gazing, sun gazing, and practice in darkness or a dark retreat. Pure visions of sound, light, and rays arise during the meditation and integrated as experiences of our nature of mind. It requires of the practitioner to have a stable experience of nature of mind without distractions or disturbances, also called *Trekchö*. The various *Thögel* eye gazes, body postures and purification breathings, along with the *Tummo* practice, opens the mind and body channels to experience and recognize the pure visions. Most sessions were held outdoors, under the guidance of Khenpo Gelek.

Stable meditation practice is important for *Thögel* practice. It calms the mind and inner winds of the body and helps to stabilize and integrate mind and body for visions to appear. Visions spontaneously arise from the nature of mind without any expectation by the practitioner. They have nothing to do with *karmic* cause. They arise from nature of mind, appear in the natural state and are themselves the natural state. It all depends upon your practice.

*Thögel* visions are pure; never integrated with conceptual thinking, emotions, our consciousness or perceptions. Just like a rainbow, a play of light





in space, not possible to control or hold together, they slowly dissolve our impurities and obstructions as we practice in open awareness. Non-dual in their nature, without subject or object, the visions do not disturb our meditation or realization.

Everything is within you. Nothing is external. Mind is not outside of you. Neither is the nature of mind's state of awareness. Not to be deluded by distractions of ignorance or impure visions. Nature of mind exists throughout your body, from head to toe, during this lifetime. It is with you whatever you may do; sleep, work, drive, walk, clean, exercise; hence all the activities of body, speech, and mind. It abides in the center of your heart and through the *kati* channel it appears through the eyes as self-awareness and pure visions.

So what does this mean?

For me, it means I take absolutely everything in my life, the good, the bad, and everything in between, into my practice of nature of mind. Nothing is left out; including any subtle thoughts and feelings. Whenever I begin to feel attached, I quickly stop and remember the instructions to leave things as they are. They always dissolve. They are all empty forms; just reflections in a mirror. It's their essential nature.

If some thoughts or emotions are difficult to liberate, I take a deep breath, exhale and say, *Peth!* Cut it. Instantly I'm back in the clear space of awareness. Remember everything is self-originated, self-arising and will self-liberate. It's a quick return to the spacious awareness of the nature of mind without any thinking, emotions, or *karmic* traces.

We can always liberate ourselves from the negative influences in our lives. We just leave them as they are, stop grasping onto them and they will disappear. Everything in the world will dissolve; what we hate, what we love and everything else that we may not even know about. Again, they are all empty forms. They are the reflection of the moon in the water.

The power of self-awareness is our true nature. It manifests as pure energy that opens us to the experience of joy and happiness. That experience

is our realization and liberation. It requires meditation practice, trust, and devotion to the path. Practice in avoiding negative actions of the three doors; not reacting to emotions or following after conceptual thinking. They are another form of attachment. We observe and avoid them with clear awareness.

We must take good care of ourselves. The Dzogchen teachings offer many methods to do so. It is all in our hands. Practice is still the key. We balance the wind energies, the elements, which in turn will open our awareness of the world. Integration is the key. Avoid negative actions and increase positive actions. This is still our path. The self-awareness of the nature of mind opens to great joy and freedom.

And the *Thögel* visions? With the clear nature of mind as the source of our awareness, we gaze, eyes open, channels clear, into boundless space without fear or doubt. Whether the visions manifest as black and white, bright colors, deities, mandalas, or seed syllables; all are without substance. The five stages in *Thögel* visions are based upon our practice and the experience of self-awareness. They develop and stabilize with the realization of nature of mind. At the final stage, the visions are exhausted, everything is purified and liberated and it all returns to nature as clear light. It is our rainbow body returning to the nature from hence it came.

This being the last *Gomdra* of this cycle, I offer my sincere thanks and gratitude to my teachers, my fellow practitioners, and the staff at Shenten Dargye Ling.

A new *Gomdra* cycle begins in 2019.

**Text by Lowell Britson**



Shenten Dargye Ling.





# CALENDAR FOR 2018



## September 2018

| 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     |

You can download this calendar from: [www.scribd.com](http://www.scribd.com)





# TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE



Painted by Andréa Sechini





# FOR OUR BELOVED TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE

With gratitude of my teachers light,  
I pray, I rest, I changed my sight.

So thank you well dear Buddha of time,  
For generating this mind sublime.

Possessing gumption on behalf of others,  
You are acting like hosts of supreme mothers.

Serving the beings in their needs,  
With clear mind and auspicious deeds.

We will change the night into day,  
Dear Lama mine – to you I pray.

*Florian Bruckmann*

(early morning poem written on auspicious Chökhör Düchen Day 2015)





# ENIGMA OF THE MEETING OF MOTHER AND CHILD

Frits de Vries listened to a free audio online course, titled *The Journey of the Mind at Death* by Andrew Holecek. While listening he heard about a book by Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche, titled *Journey of the Mind: Putting the Teachings on the Bardo Into Effective Practice*. In this article he shares some interesting learning points from the online course and quotes from the book.

## Andrew Holecek

In *Ligmincha Europe Magazine # 15* Holecek's book *Preparing to Die* was presented. As a dream specialist Holecek is known by his book on *Dream Yoga* and *Lucid Dreaming* (4). To introduce Holecek again we quote from the biography on his [website](#):

*"Andrew Holecek is an author and spiritual teacher who offers talks, online courses, and workshops in the United States and abroad. As a long-time student of Buddhism, he frequently presents this tradition from a contemporary perspective – blending the ancient wisdom of the East with modern knowledge from the West. Drawing on years of intensive study and practice, he teaches on the opportunities that exist in obstacles, helping people with hardship and pain, death and dying, and problems in meditation. Known as an expert on lucid dreaming and the Tibetan yogas of sleep and dream, he is an experienced guide for students drawn to these powerful nocturnal practices."*

## A Conversation with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

Andrew Holecek was one of the invited speakers by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in the TWR-LIVE teaching series on *Dream Yoga*.

In his introduction Holecek says he has had in his youth fourteen days of spontaneous lucid dreaming with, at a certain point, no difference between night and day. He was going to freak out, made an end to this experience, and went over to reading Buddhism. Tibetan *Dream Yoga* was like coming home for him, at last he understood his strange experiences.

This very interesting conversation between Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Andrew Holecek has as main theme the undervalued state of sleep and dream and over-valued state of waking experiences in our Western civilization. Rinpoche says you have a greater chance on Alzheimer if you get not enough sleep. Research by Holecek reveals in the Middle Ages dreaming was even demonized. He pleads for restoration of the healing dream temples.



Andrew Holecek.

In this conversation Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche says, *"So basically it is important to see in a positive way that sleep is very important, to look forward entering into a sacred journey, spiritual journey, healing journey. (...) Going to sleep, dreaming is a way of the experience of death without dying."* And Holecek agrees by saying *"Exactly."*

## Online course

Andrew Holecek offers a free online course titled *The Journey of the Mind at Death*, containing parts of public talks he has held previously. This course is available through Holecek's [website](#), and you have to subscribe to Holecek's [Online Learning Academy](#). The free online course *The Journey of the Mind at Death* has four parts, in total 1,5 hour of talks.

Titles of the talks:

### Journey of the Mind at Death

- Phowa - Transference of Consciousness
- Releasing and Moving Forward
- Importance of Holding Environments
- Different Types of Phowa







### In the first lecture the central theme is *Phowa*

*Phowa* is defined (2, p. 116) as the ejection of consciousness to a Buddha-field at the moment of death. There are many different types of *Phowa*. Holecek differentiates between esoteric *Phowa* – *tantric* – and exoteric *Phowa* – that is the *sutra Phowa*.

The classic *sutra Phowa* is the application of five powers:

- power of intention: do not let your mind wander from the mind of compassion, have that intention, that is the *Phowa* mind you want to die with;
- power of the white seed: unloading the mind of all form of attachment, write your will;
- power of familiarity: become complete familiar with the mind of compassion;
- power of destruction: clear up everything that has no meaning for this life;
- power of prayer: refers to vow of *bodhi-sattva*.

The second important classification he presents is in *tantra* powers:

- *Dharmakaya Phowa*: Based on formless meditations, like *mahamudra*, *Dzogchen*, *Prajaparamita*. When you are good at it then you don't need help when you die leaving your body: you are set. *Phowa* is straightforward.
- *Sambhogakaya Phowa*: Generation stage

practising lead to this kind of *phowa*: *yidam* exercises, mindscape is landscape. Like with *Dharmakaya Phowa*: you don't have to do anything when you die if you are stable in these practices.

- *Nirmanakaya Phowa*: This is the *Phowa* everyone is talking about, with the hiccup exercises. Holecek strongly advises to look for a reliable teacher.
- *Guru Yoga*: Based on devotion, complete surrender to Jesus or God, or to your teacher. Very powerful.
- *Celestial Phowa*: *Dream Yoga* is Holecek's favorite program. You use lucid dreaming to emanate a dreambody and send this body to a pure land.

*"The fifth type of phowa is called the celestial phowa or the kachari phowa of which there are several different forms. One of the practices under this category entails using the practice of lucid dreaming to train in the approach and transference to pure realms. In such a practice, through the cultivation of lucid dreaming and the training of the dream state, you gain the ability, at will, to send your mind out of your body, actually going to pure realms of the five buddhas of the five Buddha families, such as Amitabha and so on. If you gain that kind of familiarity with a particular realm during your life, then you will be reborn there upon your death."* (3, p. 50)

This remarkable type of *Phowa* shows a very useful application of your skillfulness in lucid dreaming. This alone is a justification for a course in lucid dreaming.

More extensive clarification of these *Phowa* can be found in the book *Journey of the Mind – Putting the Teachings of the Bardo into Effective Practice* by Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche (3, p. 55-60).

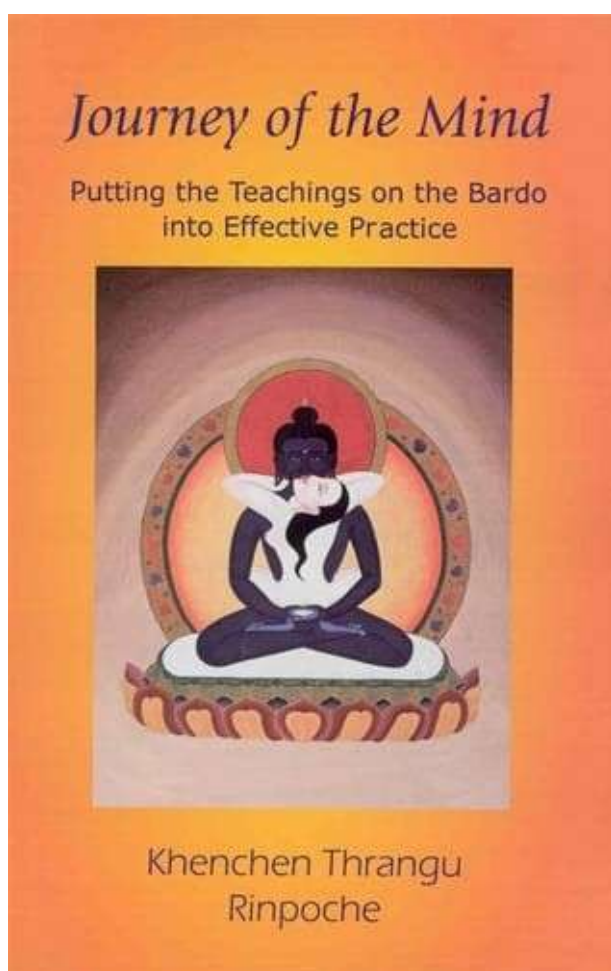
### The Enigma of the Mother and Child meeting

In his explanation on *Dharmakaya Phowa*, Holecek speaks in very admiring terms – *"This book is a diamond, it is pure gold"* – about a book of Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche, called, *Journey of the Mind: Putting the Teachings on the Bardo Into Effective Practice* (3).

I bought the book, and would like to transfer







some of the flavor of the book by sharing a citation about the meeting of mother and child. For me this is a continuation of the presentation of *The Mirror of Mindfulness* from Tsele Natsok Rangdrol in [Ligmincha Europe Magazine # 21](#). It ended there on page 34 with concepts also used by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche frequently: Mother Luminosity and Child Luminosity.

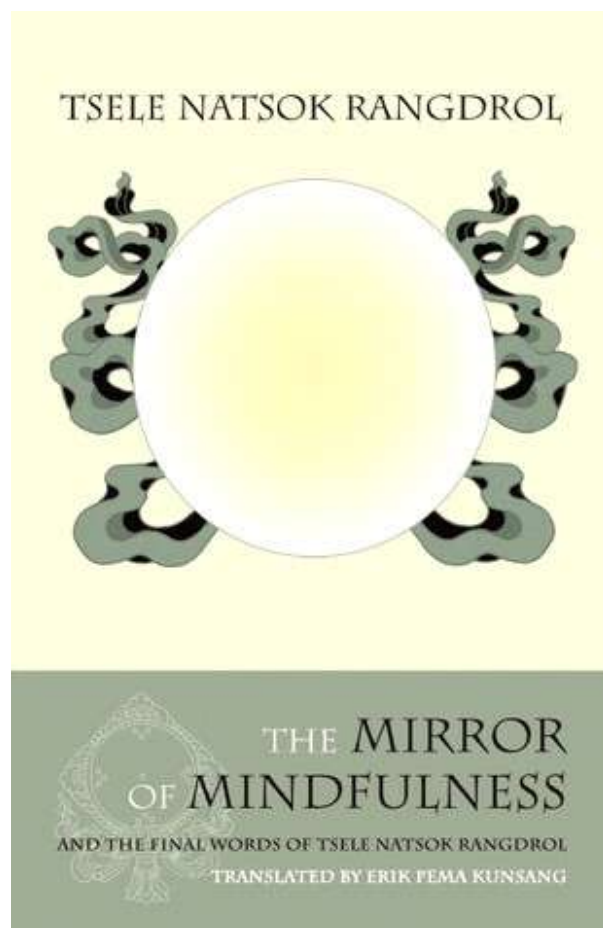
First I want to present descriptions of some key-words from the Glossary of *The Mirror of Mindfulness* (2):

- **Luminosity** (p. 111) (*'od gsal*) Literally, “free from darkness of unknowing and endowed with the ability to cognize.” There are the two aspects of “empty luminosity” like a clear open sky and “apparent luminosity” like five-colored lights, images, and so forth.
- **Mother Luminosity** (p. 113) (*ma 'i 'od gsal*) The ground luminosity of the natural state, inherent as the enlightened essence of all sentient beings.
- **Child Luminosity** (p. 97) (*bu 'i 'od gsal*) The experience of luminosity in one's present

meditation practice, while on the path.

- **Luminous Bardo of Dharmata** (p. 111) (*chos nyid 'od gsal gyi bar do*) The period from the moment after death until one emerges in the mental body of the bardo of becoming.
- **Luminosity of the First Bardo** (p. 111) (*bar do dang po 'l od gsal*) Same as **Mother Luminosity**.

In the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* the Tibetan word '*od gsal*' is not translated as 'Luminosity' but as 'Inner Radiance' (1, p. 478). Sometimes it is also translated as 'clear light.' Buddhahood is achieved when the 'Mother Inner Radiance' and 'Child Inner Radiance' conjoin. It is clear you have to build your own 'Child Luminosity,' for your liberation, because no one else does it for you.

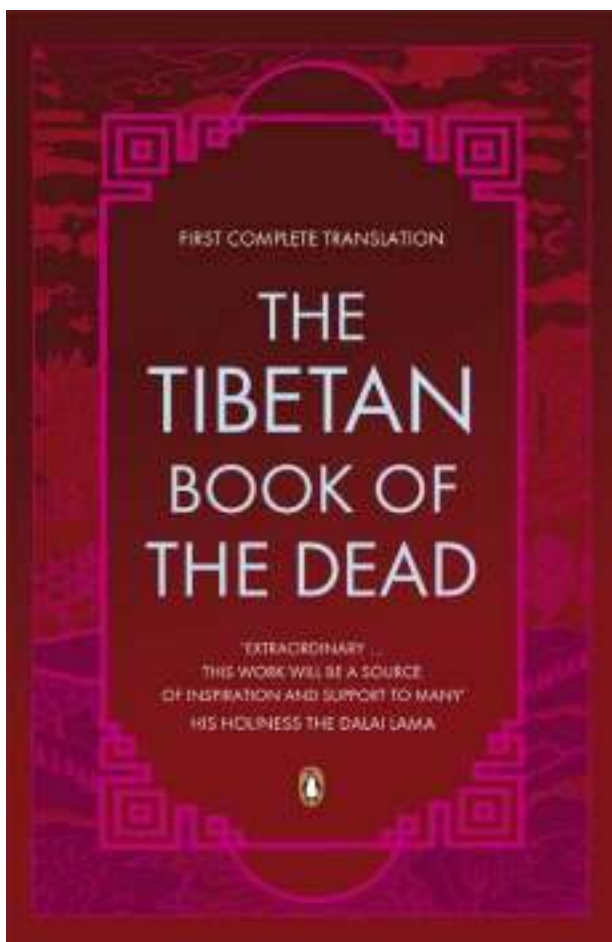


I want now to bring the attention to the following enigma in a citation from the Tibetan Book of the Dead (1, p. 177):

*“For, even though the genuine inner radiance [of the ground] will [always] arise [at the moment of death],*







*In the case of all beings who have not [already] realised the [inner radiance of the path], It will not be recognised. The [past] births that one has assumed and left behind are countless and infinite, And, although the inner radiance has indeed arisen an indescribable [number of times], It has been obscured [again and again] by the dense [fog of] coemergent ignorance, And [thereby], one has come to wander endlessly through cyclic existence. This is why it is important to achieve such a secure level [of realisation in this life]."*

The enigma is: how can a child NOT recognize, at the moment of death, his/her mother it has seen so many (indescribable) times before? Or in terms of the next citation from Thrangu Rinpoche: we live day-by-day with the things of the relative truth, we do see the absolute truth, our mother, in the *Bardo of Dharmata*. Everyone has the direct experience of the absolute truth or dharmata, the nature of things, according to Thrangu Rinpoche. The recognition is called: meeting of mother and

child. But Thrangu Rinpoche also predicts: although you experience the absolute truth, you do not recognize it, unless you have recognized it before, through previous training.

Here follows a quotation from Thrangu Rinpoche (3, p. 98-100):

**"Question:** *Would you be so kind as to further describe, even more specifically describe, the opportunities for liberation that arise in the bardo of dharmata?*

**[Thrangu] Rinpoche:** *Well, I have already been pretty specific but to go on with it, the point of all of this is that there are, as we know, two aspects to truth or reality. There is what is called relative truth or deceptive truth and what is called absolute or ultimate truth. Relative truth is what we normally refer to as things and absolute truth is what is called dharmata or the nature of things.*

*These two are, of course, inseparable but, in the way we experience, normally, what we experience is only relative truth. Experiencing relative truth in that way obscures its nature, therefore, obscures the absolute truth of dharmata. We cling to and fixate on the characteristics of relative truth.*

*What makes the situation of the bardo of dharmata distinct from this is that, after you die, you are in a process of changing appearances. You are changing from the appearances of the previous life to the appearances of the next life and the change is not without a gap or space in between them. That space or gap in between these two sets of confusion is the bardo of dharmata.*

*At that point because the appearances of relative truth connected with one life have vanished and the appearances of relative truth connected with the next life have not yet arisen, there is a direct experience of the absolute truth or dharmata, the nature of things. Everyone experiences this. The problem is that, unless you have previously trained – specifically, unless you have already recognized this absolute truth or dharmata in your life – you will not recognize it at that point, in spite of the fact that you will experience it.*

*For what is called the meeting of mother and child*





– the merging of a previous recognition of dharmata with the direct experience of dharmata in the bardo – there has to have been a previous experience or recognition of it. If, through your previous training, you do recognize the dharmata fully in the bardo of dharmata, then you will be liberated into the dharmakaya during the bardo of dharmata and subsequently as the sambhogakaya. If you do not have sufficient realization to produce this degree of recognition, however, even some degree of familiarization with the dharmata during your life will be beneficial.

*Because even some degree of recognition during that bardo will dispel enough of your confusion that, although you will not necessarily be fully liberated, you will have a good rebirth that will continue to be relatively free of coarse confusion.”*

The dense [fog of] coemergent ignorance can for Christians probably be interpreted as something like the Fall of Adam and Eve from paradise, but for the Buddhist meaning the *Glossary of The Tibetan Book of the Dead* refers to Fundamental Ignorance, which is defined as (1, p. 470):

*“The most fundamental misapprehension of the nature of actual reality, which is the source of all dissonant mental states and the twelve links of dependent origination.”*

Fundamental misapprehension is not easily restored. In the end the results of meditation practice are the only experiences that count. The Dalai Lama gives us a positive point of reference (1, HHDL, p. xxiii):

*“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.”*

A most promising approach is shown in the discussion of the *Phowa* types where the combination of *Phowa* and lucid dreaming training was suggested. Holecek himself was very enthusiastic about this method, because you can visit “pure lands” without dying first. Remember what Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche said in the conversation with

Holecek: “We have the opportunities for training our dream capacities every night, again and again.”

## References

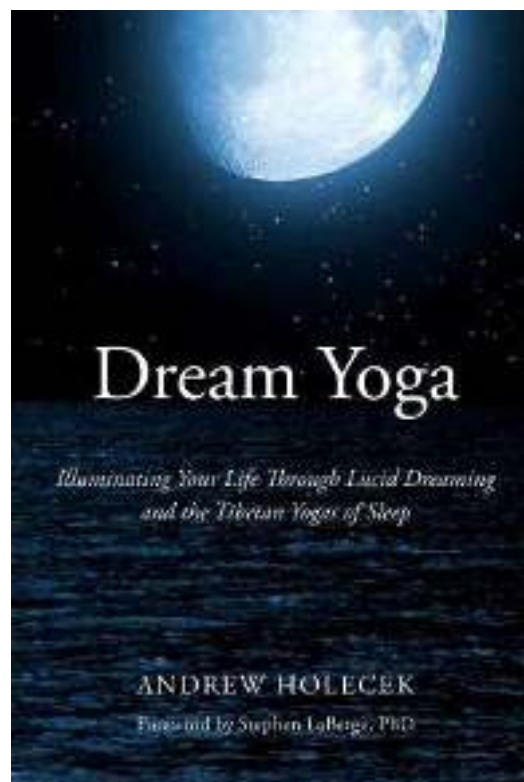
(1) Coleman, Graham, with Thupten Jinpa (eds.), *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* [English title]; *The Great Liberation by Hearing in the Intermediate States* [Tibetan title]; composed by Padma Sambhava: revealed by Karma Lingpa; translated by Gyurme Dorje, 2005, London, Penguin Books.

(2) Tsele Natsok Rangdrol, *The Mirror of Mindfulness: The cycle of the Four Bardos and The Final Words of Tsele Natsok Rangdrol*, Rangjung Yeshe Publications, pbk nov 2010, first edition 1987.

(3) Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche, *Journey of the Mind: Putting the Teachings on the Bardo Into Effective Practice*, Publisher: Karme Thekchen Choling, 1997.

(4) Andrew Holecek, *Dream Yoga: Illuminating Your Life Through Lucid Dreaming and the Tibetan Yogas of Sleep*, published by Snow Lion in 2016.

## Text and text selection by Frits de Vries





## THE PATH: TRADITIONAL BON TEACHINGS OR THE 3 DOORS ACADEMY?

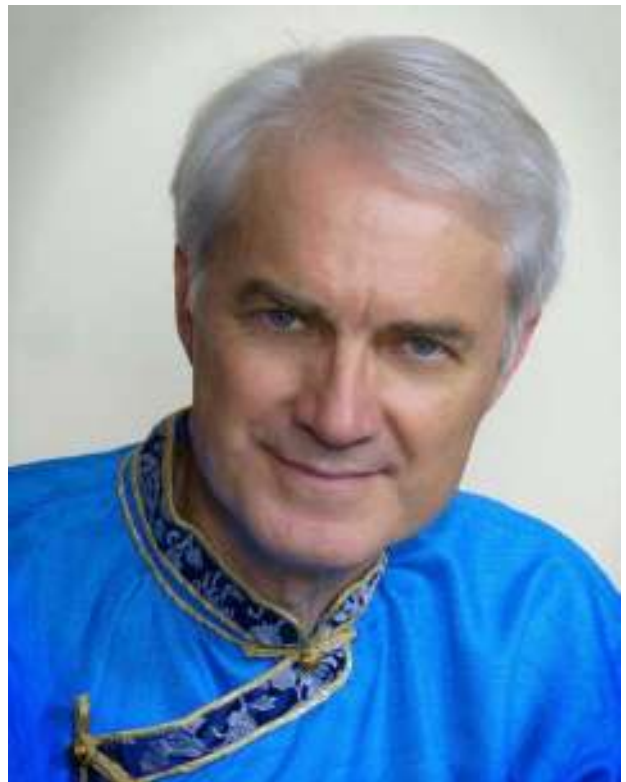
John Jackson has been teaching for Ligmincha for many years, and was also a teacher of the European 3 Doors Academy. In this conversation we talk about differences and similarities between the teachings of traditional Bon teachings and The 3 Doors Academy. Frits de Vries, who followed the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* teachings, and Ton Bisscheroux, now participating in the second European 3 Doors Academy, interviewed John.

**Ton:** You taught in the first European 3 Doors Academy, started in the second European 3 Doors Academy, and left as teacher after the first retreat. For all the participants, including me, it was a shock. Some saw it as a brave and inspiring example of somebody who follows his heart. Can you tell about the reason why you left?

**John:** There were a lot of factors that influenced my decision. The most important is that the longer I have taught, the more I have to come to know myself. Teaching is a path of self-discovery. Whenever you teach, you have to integrate the practices into yourself. You really have to study and do the practices as deeply as you can whenever you are sharing them. The longer I taught I also discovered what my gifts are. What I have become aware of is that I both appreciate the Dzogchen teachings and the Tantric teachings. The way I tend to relate to the world is a mixture of both, but I definitely see the world through the eyes of Tantra, and my root *Yidam* is the *Red Garuda*. I practiced the *Ma Gyud* for many years, and I also feel connection with the causal vehicle



The Red Garuda.



John Jackson.

practices. These practices, and working with the elements and the nature spirits, really resonate within me. Helping people find a very peaceful and sacred connection with the world in which we live is very important for me. I know this is what I need to be teaching. This is my personal path as a teacher, and that I have to be authentic in that what I teach is really who I am.

I have seen that The 3 Doors training is very powerful, because I have done it myself under the guidance of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. And when you teach them you also experience them deeply. When I was teaching the Academy I came to realize that it was not really my “voice.” And I had to honor my own voice, my own calling to the type of teaching that I feel resonates within me most deeply. So it was to recognize, to honor and devote myself as a teacher. And I found that I could not be all things to all people: I could not be someone who teaches a simplified version of Dzogchen, manage a retreat center where we are leading people in dark retreats, and be a Tantric teacher who is doing *Sang Chöd* practices and connecting with all the nature spirits. That didn't feel right for me any longer, because when I do





something I want to do it as well as I can. I certainly honor the system of The 3 Doors; it is very beautiful and it is a very powerful way of sharing the teachings more broadly to a larger audience. But I also recognize that this method of teaching is not as satisfying to me as other forms of teaching and it is not my authentic voice.

**Ton:** There were also people in our group who had difficulties with your decision, because for them you broke the commitment: we started a journey and would go together till the end. Can you comment on that?

**John:** Whenever I had the discussion with Kallon Basquin [Director and Board Vice President] and the other teachers of The 3 Doors Academy, I offered to complete the Academy, and they encouraged me to leave it during the Academy, rather than wait to the end.

Twice a year Kallon and all the teachers of The 3 Doors Academy gather for a retreat and we do a lot of deep processing work among ourselves. Early December 2016 we had group meeting about my leaving the Academy and continuing on my own path, and how the transition would take place.

The Academy participants as a group will have a great benefit from receiving training from all the 3 Doors senior teachers. Having one teacher is not true to life. I have studied with many different lamas over the years. Each one of the teachers brings their own unique gift and perspective.

**Ton:** What you say about the teachers, I have already experienced. We had Marcy Vaughn and Laura Shekerjian teaching in our group. Both approached the teachings in a different way, which was beautiful and enriching.

**Frits:** When I had to choose between doing the five-years cycle of *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* with

Die auf Erfahrung beruhende  
Übertragung von  
The Experiential Transmission of

Zhang  
Zhung  
Nyam  
Gyu



Ngöndro

Teil 1 / Part 1

19. - 24. Oct. 2010

Hintermoos / Maria Alm / Austria

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in Austria, and The 3 Doors Academy, it was a difficult decision. Both are a longtime investment, and it was said the *Ngondro* you do your whole life. Does the 3 Doors stop after three years?

**John:** I hope that people never stop. This would be a good question for the graduates. Graduates







John Jackson teaching *Healing the Earth, Healing Yourself* in Germany.

from all the different Academies still get together and regularly have practice retreats on their own, because they enjoy it. One of the things that you develop in The 3 Doors Academy is a very close group and deep personal friendships. The majority of them continue using these methods, although they may not be as structured after they finish the Academy. And quite a few people have repeated the Academies (in different places), because they missed the structure. When they finished the very intense two and a half years they realized, “I want to do it again.”

It is a little different meaning though with the *Ngondro*. With the *Ngondro* you have the practices like *Guru Yoga*, *Refuge*, *Bodhicitta*, impermanence practice, and the cultivation of devotion. The prayers are integrated in every practice you do. Whether you rest in the nature of mind or you are doing *Sherab Chamma* practices, you always do *Guru Yoga*, *Refuge*, and *Bodhicitta*. This really deepens all your other practices because of your *Ngondro* practice. Components of the *Ngondro* practice are integrated in all the other – especially the Tantric – practices.

**Frits:** I chose to do the *Ngondro* because I had the understanding that The 3 Doors practice does not lead to a *Rigpa* experience.

**John:** Well, it should. They don't use the same lan-

guage in The 3 Doors: all the Tibetan words are eliminated. They don't use the word *Rigpa*; they don't use the word Dzogchen. They don't use nature of mind; but instead ‘inner refuge’ is equivalent to the ‘nature of mind.’ Many people don't understand that in the beginning, and of course there are many levels of resting in nature of mind. I suspect that most of the people who go through the Academy have a very clear experience of *Rigpa*, but they never use that term. The intention is to make the teachings available for a larger group of people, so they have taken away the entire cultural framework, in order to make it more accessible.

**Frits:** Do people who have this experience go to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche for instructions of the nature of mind?

**John:** No, that is not necessary, because all the teachers in The 3 Doors Academy give clear instruction on the nature of mind. To use the equivalent Dzogchen language: in The 3 Doors Academy you get introduction into the nature of mind and instruction on *Trekchö* practice, but there is no *Thögel* practice. In *The Experiential Transmission*, after you have completed the instruction on the *Ngondro*, then come teachings on *Thögel* practice, which according to the traditional view leads to deeper experiences than *Trekchö*.





The three *Thögel* practices are: dark retreat, sun gazing and sky gazing. These are not included in anything that The 3 Doors teaches. The *Thögel* practices lead to different experiences and different realizations, and I think that *Thögel* practices are a faster development process.

I once had a discussion about this with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, to clarify my own practice with him. When I said, "It really feels like when I am in a deep *Thögel* experience, and I experience the vision, that I am going deeper and faster, in terms of development," Rinpoche replied "Yes, definitely." So, when you do for an hour *Thögel* practices and you are completely engaged, or you do an hour *Trekchö* practices, the *Thögel* practices have more result in terms of clearing our vision, clearing our *karmic* traces. That is a significant difference between The 3 Doors path and the traditional path.

There is no *Thögel* in The 3 Doors system. But there has been a lot of psychology introduced to The 3 Doors program. The approach that is used in The 3 Doors in the whole process for hosting and transformations is far more structured than what Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche teaches, and I think it is very powerful. And you don't get that in the traditional *Ngondro of The Experiential Transmission*. Both have their strengths obviously.

**Ton: That was the reason I choose for The 3 Doors Academy, because it supports me when I focus on deeper blockages, and I have already seen blockages come up that I was not aware of.**

**John:** It is certainly possible to do the traditional approach and to avoid that. I know some *Geshes* who have practiced all their lives, and still do not really face all their own personal issues. And Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche says this as well, that there are people who are traditionally trained in the monasteries, but never face their personal issues. You can avoid that in the traditional training program in Buddhism and in Bon. You shouldn't, and if you are really serious about doing the path in the right way, you do face them.

structured – that is the main course – facing your issues you have with your family, with your work, and with yourself. It is not only discovering your blockages and dissolving them; it is also about discovering your strengths and gifts and enhancing them through the practice. In the Academy you cannot avoid this processing work. In the traditional approach you should face and process these issues, but you are not really required to do it in the same way. When you do the *Six Lokas* meditation you should be facing all the same blockages: you're facing your jealousy, your anger, your fears, so all of that is addressed in the traditional teachings.

**Ton: In The 3 Doors Academy there is no chance to avoid that, because we are in a small group, share our process, the stories of other people affect all of us, and people point at you when you try to avoid something.**

**John:** Yes, that is the other big difference between the traditional path and the 3 Doors Academy. The group in the Academy gets much closer to each other, and there is a lot of more openness and sharing, because it is structured like Western psychology group therapy in some ways. There is a lot more sharing than in a traditional retreat. You certainly feel closeness with the people you do *Ngondro* with, but you don't spill all your guts, and you don't cry in front of everybody, like you do in The 3 Doors Academy. Everybody in the Academy opens themselves up, and becomes very vulnerable and shares their fears with the group, and that's a great source of strength for them.



The way The 3 Doors Academy is John Jackson teaching *Healing the Earth, Healing Yourself* in Germany.





That closeness of the group process is a great strength, and that does not typically happen in a traditional approach. Both of them have different strengths and they can serve a different audience, and it is powerful to have them both.

**Ton: Can you explain more deeply about Sutra, Tantra, Dzogchen, Trekchö and Thögel?**

**John:** Actually, the main principle of The 3 Doors is related to Tantra, because it is all about transformations. The general principal behind Tantra is that you reject nothing and accept everything, and you see everything as your path. You see the energy that arises in your negative emotions as energies that can be transformed into positive qualities. So you take your anger and transform it into love. According to the laws of physics no energy is ever destroyed. So, we can take the energy of our anger, and with our awareness and our wisdom we transform that into love. The hallmarks of Tantra are the use of mantra, the use of visualization and *Deity Yoga*. The general concept is that you are transforming your awareness of the everyday world. You are living in the everyday world, and you're not taking yourself out of the everyday world. You see everything as a possibility to practice.



With the Dzogchen approach there are some similarities, first you don't have to retreat from the world. In Sutra the idea is to cut yourself off from the world, and that is why you become a monk or a nun, you shave your head, you don't marry, you don't have sex, and you don't eat food after lunchtime. There are all these don'ts. You cut yourself off from negative habits and cultivate virtue. Dzogchen, just as Tantra, accepts everything as a possibility for realization. Dzogchen is even simpler and more direct: you don't transform anything, you simply let it be, you rest in it, and you see the perfection in everything. In Dzogchen there is nothing to transform, you recognize that everything is perfect, you recognize that and you rest in that.

**Ton: But that is also a pitfall for many people, that they think "I don't have to change anything, everything is OK," and they do nothing and become pathetic.**

**John:** Yes, that's why Dzogchen was always a secret teaching; it is very easy to misinterpret. Traditionally Dzogchen would have never been given to people who had not studied Sutra and Tantra for years, because it is so easy to delude yourself. You can think, "I can have another beer, and it doesn't matter. I rest in *Rigpa* even better with one more." I have seen people drinking heavily at Dzogchen retreats, with that exact logic. Traditionally that was managed by restricting the teachings to a very small group of people, who had already been very well prepared. But whenever you open it more broadly, then you run into this danger. The way Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche addresses this is that his teachings are many times a mixture of the Tantric and Dzogchen views.

The 3 Doors Academy is also a mixture of Tantra and Dzogchen. *Tsa Lung* and the *Nine Breathings* work with the wind [energy] and the channels. An essential characteristic of Tantra is that you are working with the subtle energy

channels and the wind in your body, to bring the awareness into the central channel. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche does not draw these borders. All his life he has tried to dissolve the borders and reformulate the teachings so that people in the West can understand them, and come up with approaches that work well for Westerners. So what he developed was a blending of Tantra and Dzogchen. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche rarely teaches from the Sutric view. I think the Sutric view has great value, but it is not as exciting to some as Tantra and Dzogchen for it takes more time and patience.

**Ton: Can you give an example of Sutric teachings?**

**John:** *The meditation of impermanence* is a classic Sutric meditation. Many forms of Sutric medita-





tion use our analytical mind to gain a deep insight. What we do in the meditation of impermanence is try to find anything that is permanent. Of course you can't, because everything changes, everything is lost eventually. Then you try to reflect on the impermanence of your own body, and visualize your death. You never know when you are going to die. You visualize the death of every person you know, everyone you love. This analytical reflection on impermanence helps us to let go, to become freer of our attachments to ourselves, to others, to our ideas about ourselves, our jobs, and our family. We become free if we really deeply understand impermanence. This approach is also very powerful.



The *Prajñāparamita* is one of the classic texts that are studied in Sutra where you are looking at developing positive qualities in yourself, and the advantage of developing these positive qualities, what it leads to, to be kind and generous to other people, how that is the best path for you as well as for others, because true happiness comes through being generous. Happiness comes through letting go of the concepts of yourself. Those are the teachings of Sakyamuni Buddha. Sakyamuni Buddha never taught Dzogchen. It was clearly a later evolution in the Buddhist lineage. It was first taught by Garab Dorje in the Buddhist lineage, who lived several hundred years after Sakyamuni Buddha.

In the Bon lineage the Dzogchen teachings go straight back to Tonpa Shenrab, who is the founder of the Bon tradition. Much of the Buddhist world does not believe that Sakyamuni Buddha taught Tantra. You have two major groups of Buddhists: the Mahayana and the Theravada. The Mahayana are the Northern Buddhists: the Tibetan, Mongolian, Chinese, Korean, and Japanese, and they accept that Tantra is authentic. The Theravada tradition in Sri Lanka,

Cambodia, Thailand and Myanmar don't accept Tantra as being authentic, and say that somebody else developed that later. The response of the Tantric tradition is that it was a secret teaching that was meant to emerge later, and that Sakyamuni Buddha didn't teach it openly in his lifetime, except for a few people that held it in secret.

So a lot of Buddhists don't accept Tantra and Dzogchen as authentic. It is similar to the divide between the Jewish and Christians: the Jews only accept the Old Testament, and the Christians also accept the New Testament. Sakyamuni Buddha definitely taught the Sutric view, he may not have taught Tantra, and he definitely did not teach Dzogchen. Archeological evidence has shown that the earliest evidence of Tantra is 300 CE, and that is nine hundred years after the Buddha Sakyamuni lived. They found a stone that was carved with symbols that are now associated with Tantra. That is the earliest known reference to Tantric symbolism.

When you look at the story of the official introduction of Buddhism in Tibet, it was at the time of *Padmasambhava* in the seventh century CE. Archeologists have found monasteries in Western Tibet dating from the third century, four hundred years before. Buddhism rose out of India, and was transmitted on the Silk Road and brought to China. The history of Buddhism in Tibet has not been written yet; the scholarship in that field is still very early.

I have lived in Charlottesville since 1990, and worked at the University of Virginia (UVA) school of medicine. The Buddhist studies program at UVA is probably the best in the Western world. They have a great program there for training Buddhist scholars, and many of the best professors operating in the field, like Anne Klein, graduated from there. When I worked there, and even now, I had the benefit of going to many seminars and courses on Tibetan history and Buddhism. They also have the largest collection of Tibetan literature outside of Tibet in their University library. We also have a large Tibetan community in Charlottesville. In 1992 we helped a group of Tibetan refugees to relocate to Charlottesville, Virginia, so there has always been the presence of a large group of Tibetans here, which Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche enjoyed. At the University they train people to





read and speak both classical and colloquial Tibetan. It was an interesting place to work and there was always a parade of lamas from all the different traditions that came to teach at the University. Due to my activities at the University I was exposed to many different lineages of teachings.

**Frits: Can you say something on Treckchod and Thögel?**

**John:** Dzogchen has three stages: *Introduction into the nature of mind*, *Treckchod* and *Thögel*. Introduction into the nature of mind can take quite a while. The goal of this is for the practitioner to clearly know when they are experiencing *Rigpa* and when they are not. That is the first stage. *Treckchod* is whenever you stabilize your practice, so that you can remain in *Rigpa* as long as you like. You can get on the horse and you can ride it. It is no longer a little glimpse. When you are in the stage of *Introduction into the nature of mind* you have glimpses, you have these brief experiences of nature of mind, or *Rigpa*. They vary in how clear they are, and gradually you develop some confidence that you know that was it. With *Treckchod* you are able to stabilize yourself, and stay resting in the nature of mind for longer periods of time. You are very confident of what the nature of mind is and what is not. The third and final stage is *Thögel* practice. *Thögel* practice can only be accomplished after you have accomplished *Trekchö*. *Thögel* practice works with recognizing the visions that we are constantly creating throughout our entire life. Recognizing all our experiences as a vision that we internally create, that we are projecting our past experiences on everybody and everything.

I will give you an example of a vision. I was teaching in Portugal a few days ago, and noticed how comfortable and at home I felt there. I thought that I could really live there, and then I had that insight, an awakening, and I realized that the landscape of Portugal looks a lot like that where my brother lives in Texas, and that the climate is quite similar. The houses with red tile roofs are the

same in parts of Texas. What I was seeing when I was in Portugal was not Portugal; I was seeing my home where I grew up in Texas. I was projecting my previous experiences on that moment and I was seeing it as my home. But it was not, and then as I woke up to this, I began to recognize what is Portugal and how it is unique, beautiful and different from what I have known before.



Sky gazing in Maria Alm, Austria, 2011.

In *Thögel* the three primary practices are *Dark Retreat*, *Sky Gazing* and *Sun Gazing*, and in these practices we use specific techniques to stimulate ourselves to see visions. The reason we do this is whenever we see these visions we recognize they come from within us. We are projecting our visions continuously. As we become deeply aware these visions dissolve, and a recognition arises that we do this continuously. It is a similar message as in *Dream Yoga*: we are always dreaming, we are always projecting our dreams on everything. In the *Thögel* practices we learn to dissolve that projection, and rest in pure undeluded awareness. But first we have to experience the vision as vision, and then in the final stages there are no more visions. Dissolving the visions is said to be the final liberation. That is the path of Dzogchen.

**Ton:** John, thanks very much for these clarifications. I am sure it will benefit many practitioners from both the traditional path and The 3 Doors Academy.

Interview by Frits de Vries and Ton Bisscheroux





# FINDING SUPPORT FOR YOUR PRACTICE

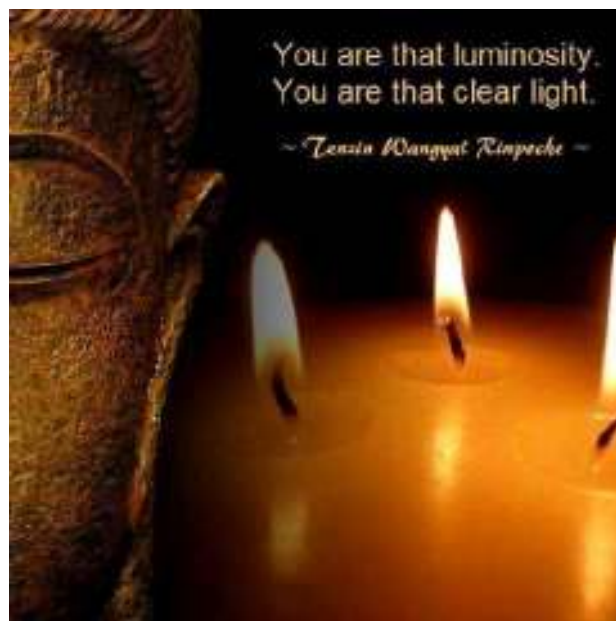
We reprint two edited excerpts from oral teachings given by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, and published in *The Voice of Clear Light*, March 2004. In the first text Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche responds to a student's question during Ligmincha International Winter Retreat in 2002. The second is an excerpt from the edited transcript of oral teachings given by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche during Ligmincha's Eighth Annual Summer Retreat, 2000.

## HEART TO HEART

**Student:** How does one know for sure that one is abiding in the nature of mind when one is practicing?

**Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche:** How do you know anything? How do you know today is December 30th? How do you know anything – the wall, Tapihritsa? It is like anything else. When you know, you know. More practice and more learning might help one come to know. Not thinking about it too much, about what's going to happen might help. Not asking “How will I know? How won't I know?” might help. How do you know you're happy? When you are happy, are you sure you're happy? In that moment, you can ask that question: “I feel happy, but am I really happy?” You can ask that and there might not be a particular answer. If you ask it a second time, you get no answer. If you ask a third time, then maybe your answer is, “Not so happy.” Then if you ask a fifth or even a tenth time, now you have become unhappy! [laughs] So actually asking those questions is a way that you can make yourself unhappy when you are happy.

In the same way, when you realize something, by asking too many questions then it isn't really a realization. When you ask the same question more and more and more, then you will not realize it. In the moment of realization, the question does not exist. After realization, then the intellectual mind can look at it. What is the role of the intellectual mind? What is the role of hearing the teachings? What is the role of reflecting on the teachings? What is the role of trying to make



distinctions between each of these points? Of course, the role of all of these is to put all the circumstances together. That's all they can really do.

It's like the launching of a rocket. All the scientists can do is put all the pieces together to enable the rocket to launch. The rocket does the rest. So in the same way, all this work we do now is preparing for that very moment. When that moment comes, there is no force that can stop it. It launches. Everything that you are doing here is preparing the proper causes and conditions. It's not that your intellectual mind becomes clearer and clearer and clearer and smarter and smarter and better and better. And then it finally realizes the nature of mind. No! That's the greatest disagreement between Dzogchen and Sutra. That mind never realizes. But it can help.

In one's spiritual journey, one can see that there are so many things in one's life that can be very beneficial and helpful: teachings, teacher, friends, practice, parents, place, food, heating, sky, window, light, books, photocopies. Just imagine! So many things can be helpful but none of them is about the nature of mind. In the end, it is just you who realizes. The photocopy or the tapes or the friends who are supporting you or the building you live in - they don't become illuminated - it's you. In the end, *Rigpa* realizes it, not anything else. And *Rigpa* never asks these questions that





you are asking. That's why it's called *Rigpa*. *Rigpa* means aware. It is aware of it. When it's aware of it, the question doesn't exist.

To give a more compassionate way of answering the question, even though it is still only verbalizing it, would be to say that it is like the experiences when you are completely in the presence without the experiencer. Not when one is saying, "Yes, this is the one. This is it. I got it and I will not let it go." Not that way. That mind is not there at all. This is important because sometimes when we are teaching we are using a lot of words and some are less important and others more important and maybe there are skips in between. There's a saying, "Abiding in a space in the absence of observer and observed." Just if you hear that, that is what it is. If that is where you are, that is the *Rigpa*. If that is not where you are, that is not *Rigpa*.



## THE PRACTICE OF FINDING SUPPORT FOR PRACTICE

On different occasions people have very deep experiences. I am not necessarily talking about people who have a connection with the *Dharma* or the teachings. You can go to a wonderful camping situation, a wonderful beach or place in the mountains, you can be dining with good friends, and you can have very deep experiences of the essence. Nevertheless, these experiences don't get supported, and just remain a memory from your life. "Oh, when I was a teenager, that thing happened." But it is not like you have a connection on a consistent basis. It becomes a memory or a story. Why is this so? It is because you don't have a means of supporting it. So if you look at it this way, *Guru Yoga* and the *Ngondro* practices are strong means of support; similarly, a good vessel or container is the right support to hold liquid. Clearly we lack enough support;

therefore we lose these experiences.

Of course one can become extreme in the support and lose the essence, too. That can happen when one becomes attached to the formality. That is not to say that formality is not good, it is, and sometimes it is necessary in society. But it is important not to limit experience with formality. With progressive types of practices, or any form of exercises, it is important not to be too attached to them.

Lopon Rinpoche mentioned a few times this week, that when you're crossing the river, you need the boat until you get to the other side. Once you cross, that's it. So the point is not to be attached to the form, but not to have ignorance and not recognize the support of the form. We all know how much devotion can support the practice.

Let's not talk about the experience of the nature of mind, let's talk about the experience of being well in life. At certain times in your life you feel fine, wonderful, good; you are active enough, resting enough, giving enough, and receiving enough; you feel gratitude; you feel like you have a full life, a good life. When you experience your life in that way, you know that experience can be easily taken away unless what makes you feel it that way is supported. You need support to feel the way you are feeling. Unless the support is there on a consistent basis, that experience can disappear in one conversation, one piece of news, one minute. It will be gone. Gone from your life. One can instantly feel lost. So we need support just to feel well in life.

Far more important is to have the right support for abiding in the nature of mind. It is far more important to have support to experience the state of *Rigpa*. That is really what the practice is all about. First, it is important to recognize what the obstacles are, then it is important to recognize what are the supports.

Finding a solution to support the practice becomes practice. Finding a job can be a job for some people. Trying to find balance in a situation can be a big part of practice – not to be too attached to the form of practice or not to be totally disconnected from it either.

**Text selected by Jantien Spindler**





## TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE'S 2018 EUROPEAN SEMINARS AND ONLINE TEACHINGS

| When                          | Where                                   | What                                                                                                                                | More information                                                         |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| January 2<br>19.00 h (C.E.T.) | Your computer                           | TWR LIVE Conversation:<br>The Healing Power of Dynamic Energy                                                                       | <a href="http://www.ligminchalearning.com">www.ligminchalearning.com</a> |
| January 3<br>17.00 h (C.E.T.) | Your computer                           | TWR LIVE Conversation:<br>Common Ground Among Six Spiritual Traditions of Tibet                                                     | <a href="http://www.ligminchalearning.com">www.ligminchalearning.com</a> |
| January 5 – February 10       | Your computer                           | Interactive online course:<br>The Three Heart Mantras of Bön                                                                        | <a href="http://www.ligminchalearning.com">www.ligminchalearning.com</a> |
| January 6 – 28                | Your computer                           | Interactive online course:<br>Awakening the Sacred Body                                                                             | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>                 |
| February 17 – March 11        | Your computer                           | Interactive online course:<br>The Truth That Sets You Free – Discovering Your Inner Wisdom Through Practices of Waking and Sleeping | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>                 |
| February 23 – 25              | Amsterdam, The Netherlands              | Weekend seminar:<br>A-tri Essentials                                                                                                | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.nl">www.ligmincha.nl</a>                   |
| March 3 – 4                   | Grenoble (Montbonnot St-Martin), France | Weekend seminar:<br>Dream Yoga and The Clear Light                                                                                  | <a href="http://www.cebgrenoble.fr">www.cebgrenoble.fr</a>               |
| March 17 – April 1            | Your computer                           | Interactive online course (free):<br>Focusing and Calming Your Mind                                                                 | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>                 |
| March 31 – April 22           | Your computer                           | Interactive online course:<br>Tibetan Meditation                                                                                    | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>                 |
| May 04 – 06                   | Berlin, Germany                         | Weekend seminar:<br>The Seven Mirrors of Dzogchen, Part 2                                                                           | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.de">www.ligmincha.de</a>                   |
| May 12 – June 10              | Your computer                           | Interactive online course:<br>Tibetan Dream Yoga                                                                                    | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>                 |
| May 25 – 27                   | Paris, France                           | Weekend seminar:<br>A-tri, Part 1                                                                                                   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.fr">www.ligmincha.fr</a>                   |
| June 30 – July 22             | Your computer                           | Interactive online course:<br>Healing From the Source                                                                               | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>                 |
| August 11 – September 2       | Your computer                           | Interactive online course:<br>Tibetan Sound Healing                                                                                 | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>                 |
| August 21 – 26                | Buchenau, Germany                       | Retreat:<br>Twenty-One Nails, Part 4                                                                                                | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.de">www.ligmincha.de</a>                   |

You can also view free recorded Internet teachings from your computer or other device, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Access them on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com), [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org), [www.ligminchalearning.com/twr-live-video-archive](http://www.ligminchalearning.com/twr-live-video-archive) and [www.oceanofwisdom.org](http://www.oceanofwisdom.org).







# Ligmincha Europe Magazine

**# 27 – Winter 2017-2018**



The 34<sup>th</sup> Menri Abbot

Meditating with kids

Can you reduce pain online?

The Sacred Silence in Sounds





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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 the past six months, two events have had a great impact on the Bon community: the passing away of His Holiness the 33rd Menri Trizin and the election and enthronement of the 34th Menri Trizin as Abbot of the Menri Monastery in India. In September 2017 we lost the great Sun (the name of the 33<sup>rd</sup> His Holiness, Nyima means sun); and since January 2018 the Moon has risen to dispel all the outer, inner and secret obstacles, and to preserve the Yungdrung Bon tradition (the name of the new Menri Abbot, Dawa Dargye means waxing moon).



It was wonderful that we were all invited to go to India in person for these ceremonies, and those who didn't make it, were informed on the internet. In this edition, Yangri Sangmo reports on the history of the Menri lineage, the important role His Holiness the 33rd Menri Trizin played in preserving the Bon tradition, and how the 34th Menri Trizin was selected. We also publish the Long Life Prayer for His Holiness Lungtok Dawa Dargye Rinpoche.

In his teachings this year Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche has been singing one of the three Heart Mantras, the *Sa Le Ö Mantra*. It is the mantra of awareness of space, and it helps us to open, clear, and connect. Rinpoche advised us to listen to and/or sing the mantra before we go to sleep. There are several versions on the inter-

net: in this [video](#) you can read the text of the mantra, and in another [video](#) Raman Maharjan plays on a flute. [Here](#) you can find the explanation of the mantra. Finally, you can see this mantra carved into stone on the cover of this magazine.

From the online workshop offered in summer 2016 by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Glide-Wing, featuring Bon Buddhist teachings and meditation practices for reducing physical and emotional pain, a research study was conducted



to determine the effects of the workshop. You can read the whole report in this issue.

Since we have now interviewed all the Ligmincha sanghas around the world, we will not introduce a sangha this time. Instead, the sangha in Malaga, Spain, shares a story about how they implemented meditation for parents and children at school. You can read a poem; an article earlier published in the *Voice of Clear Light*; a text from a Bardo guide book; an excerpt from an article in *Buddhadharma*. Further, we bring news from Europe; the first 3 Doors International Retreat in Mexico, and the program of Lishu Institute.

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





# THE 34<sup>TH</sup> MENRI ABBOT: HIS HOLINESS LUNG TOK DAWA DARGYE RINPOCHE

The enthronement ceremony of the 34<sup>th</sup> Menri Abbot took place at Menri Monastery in Dolanji (India) recently. On the auspicious day of the birthday of Nyamme Sherab Gyaltzen the great founder of Menri Monastery, February 20<sup>th</sup> 2018, all the Bonpos of the world wide were invited to join the Menri monastic community. Before the enthronement ceremony, the selection of the new Abbot was performed. Yangri Sangmo gives us some background information on this process.

## Menri lineage

The lineage of the Menri enthronement holders started with Nyamme Sherab Gyaltzen (1356-1415) in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century. He founded the first Menri Monastery in 1405 in the place named Thobgyal, in the Tsang province in Tibet, after the Yeru Wen Sa Kha Monastery was destroyed by the flood. Yeru Wen Sa Kha had been the main centre

of Yungdrung Bon studies. He preserved and resurrected the tradition of Yeru Wen Sa Kha. At that time, the Bon lineages were held by several Masters, because of the persecutions of the Bon tradition taking place through Tibet's history. Though he performed numerous enlightened activities, one of his main activities was to unify all the streams of outer, inner and secret lineages of the Yungdrung Bon tradition. This is illustrated on the refuge tree thangka where those lineages converge at Nyamme Sherab Gyaltzen's image. The teaching system established by Nyamme Sherab Gyaltzen has been followed by other Bon monasteries. This is why he is called the second Buddha in Bon. All the transmissions, teachings and empowerments of these three vehicles have been held unbroken by the successive enthronement holders of Menri Monastery and over the time, the Abbot of Menri came to be considered as the head of the Bon tradition. In general, the role of all the Menri enthronement holders is to preserve the lineage and tradition of Menri Monastery. Menri Monastery is the mother Bon monastery.



His Holiness Menri Trizin 34<sup>th</sup>, with his retinue on the steps of Menri Monastery, on the day of his enthronement.







His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche.

### **The crucial role of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Menri enthronement holder, His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche**

During the cultural revolution that started in 1959, Menri Monastery in Tibet was destroyed. His Holiness the 33<sup>rd</sup> Menri enthronement holder Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, together with His Eminence Yongdzin Rinpoche founded and built a new Menri Monastery in Dolanji, India, and revived all the streams of the Yungdrung Bon teachings by establishing a Bon dialectic school. Thus preserving the heritage of the Bon tradition. Up to now, 133 monks have received the Geshe degree from Menri Monastery in Dolanji, and many of them are teaching in different parts of the world to benefit others.

In 2001, the 33<sup>rd</sup> Menri enthronement holder H.H. Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche founded the Ratna Menling nunnery near Menri Monastery. Together with H.E. Yongdzin Rinpoche, he revived the full fledged nun vows and bestowed the *Drang Song Ma Vows* to five nuns. Two of them have been pursuing the studies at the dialectic school with other senior nuns from Tibet and the

Himalayan region. They will become the first Bon Geshe-ma of this era. Moreover, His Holiness and His Eminence have given the opportunity not only to the nuns but also to the girls to have the same education as the boys.



Nyamme Sherab Gyaltsen.

### **Selection process**

When Nyamme Sherab Gyaltsen was 60 years old, he appointed his heart disciple Gyal tsab Rinchen Gyaltsen as his successor as Abbot of Menri Monastery and told him how to proceed with the selection of future Menri Abbots. He addressed his disciple in this way: *"You are the great blessed son of the Rigdzins, take care of my throne and be my regent. Prevail the Yungdrung Bon teachings, after you, who so ever becomes a Geshe in this Monastery, do ritual prayers to the Protectors and perform Tag Dril. Who so ever is selected, appoint him on my throne. With the great blessings of the wisdom Deity, Mawe Senghe, he will be able to serve the Yungdrung Bon teachings and all sentient beings."* This way of selecting the Abbot is unique and specific to the Bon tradition.

### **The Tag Dril**

*Tag* means showing signs, *Dril* means stirring; so the complete meaning is, the Protectors showing the signs of the chosen Abbot. This process was





also performed to select the 34<sup>th</sup> Menri Abbot and is explained in detail in the autobiography of Khen chen Nyma Tenzin, the 23<sup>rd</sup> Menri throne holder. As well, the *Tag Dril* ritual is described in the teaching of Buddha Tonpa Shenrab Miwo, the founder of Yungdrung Bon. The text (*tsa gyud nyi zer dronma*) describes how the names of the 1022 Buddhas were written on a special material and were put in a vase made of precious gems. After the names were stirred, the first 9 names that were drawn from the vase were the names of the first 9 Buddhas. Buddha Tonpa Shenrab Miwo was the 8<sup>th</sup> Buddha and the 9<sup>th</sup> Buddha will manifest when the era of Buddha Tonpa Shenrab Miwo's teaching (Enlightened Body, Speech and Mind) is completed.



The names of the candidates.

For the selection of the 34<sup>th</sup> Menri Abbot, *geshes* from both Menri Monastery in India and Tritten Norbutse Monastery in Nepal were selected as candidates. Before the selection process, all the eligible *geshes* received a letter from Menri Monastery. If one who did not wish to be in the lot he had the possibility of withdrawing his name. The name of each candidate was written on a paper and rolled in a ball of dough containing precious *Mendrub* (medicinal powder). The balls were dried then sealed in a vase with a wax. Afterwards, the balls were put into two special vases which were kept on the altar of the Protectors Temple of Menri Monastery for several weeks while the monastic community performed rituals. Following the rituals, the vases were shaken until one ball came out of each. The two balls that came out were again put in one vase for the final selection. At the completion of these rituals, on 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2018, in the presence of all the monastic community and the lay people, the name of the new Abbot was revealed and Geshe Drangsong Dawa Dargye became the new Abbot of Menri Monastery. He is from the Amdo region in Tibet. In a short video H.E. Yongdzin



His Holiness Menri Trizin 34<sup>th</sup>, Drangsong Dawa Dargye.

Rinpoche explains this selection process where he emphasizes that it was the protectors who select and appoint the Menri Abbot.

### Enthronement ceremony

Enthronement means taking the responsibility and full authority as the Menri Abbot to lead the Bon tradition. This is confirmed by sitting on the throne of the previous Abbot in the main temple in Menri Monastery. Traditionally, the throne of Nyamme Sherab Gyaltsen, has been successively occupied by all the Menri throne holders. Even the 33<sup>rd</sup> His Holiness, who was outside Tibet when he was selected went to sit on this precious throne of Nyamme Sherab Gyaltsen. It is an auspicious act to sit on this special throne and to oversee the enlightened heritage of Nyamme Sherab Gyaltsen. Similarly, sitting on the throne of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Abbot of Menri Monastery in Dolanji is preserving Yungdrung Bon through a difficult time. As well the newly selected 34<sup>th</sup> Abbot was enthroned on this throne. During this enthronement ceremony on the 20<sup>th</sup> of February, the birthday of Nyamme Sherab Gyaltsen, *Mandala Offering Prayers from Namdak Gyurmed* and the *Five Precious Offerings to the Lama* were performed. Then all the devotees paid respect and homage to the new Abbot by making offerings with a *khatta* (white scarf).







# ཡུང་རྩུང་བོན་གྲྭ་བུ་སྐོར་ལྷན་ཁྲིམས་ལྷན་ཚོགས།

## YUNG DRUNG BON MONASTIC CENTRE SOCIETY

(Registered under The Himachal Pradesh Societies Act, 2006)

Dear Bönpo Followers,

Dated 21<sup>st</sup> December, 2017

We hope you are doing well. I'm sure many of you are eagerly waiting for news about the appointment for the great successor, 34<sup>th</sup> Abbot of Menri Monastery. Since the passing of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Menri Trizin into paranirvana, the highest spiritual leaders of Yungdrung Bön have been deeply engaged in discussion concerning this selection. After much deliberation, we have finally reached a decision.

At this moment we are selecting geshe from Menri Monastery in India and also from Triten Norbutse Monastery in Nepal. We have decided to only include those geshe who are residing outside of Tibet due to present situation. There are about 60 geshe on this list. On the 19<sup>th</sup> of December each name was put inside a special pill made of tsampa, and blessed medicinal substances and then dried in the sun. On the 21<sup>st</sup> of December, the monks of Menri started the ritual for cleansing obstacles in the selection of the 34<sup>th</sup> Menri Abbot. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> we started the main rituals which will take 6 days. During these days prayers will take place in the Protector Temple, where two special vases will be placed with all of the candidates names sealed in wax. There, high lamas and monks will pray in the Protector Temple until the 27<sup>th</sup> of December. Prayers will be made to the Protectors and Deities, for help in choosing the most qualified geshe from the vase. During this time the majority of Menri Monastery's monks will pray in the main temple and offer 100,000 tsok offerings to Syipe Gyalmo. Concurrent to this, prayers will be offered in the Menri Abbot's residence to the main yidam of Menri Abbot: Purbha.

On the morning on the 27<sup>th</sup>, H.E Menri Ponlop Rinpoche will shake the two vases. After shaking the first vase the name of the first candidate will spring forth, and after shaking the second vase the name of second candidate will similarly jump from its vase. After the selection of those two names they will be put together in one vase. The high lamas will then pray for another 5 days.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2018 the vase with the two names will be shaken in the main temple in front of the statue of Buddha Tonpa Shenrab Miwo in the presence of the public. When the pill arises from the vase, everyone will be able to receive its blessings, and also have the opportunity to make their commitment, give their respects and seal their trust in the new Menri Abbot, who has been chosen by the Protectors and Deities. This is a most rare and special way for selecting an Abbot.

Please during this time, wherever you are, join in the prayers to support the selection of the best Geshe for the 34<sup>th</sup> Menri Trizin.

Mustug Marro  
General Secretary  
Geshe Dawa Dhargyal  
Yungdrung Bon Monastic Center Society



Vill. Dolanji, P.O. Kotla Panjola, Tehsil Pachhad, Distt. Sirmour, Himachal Pradesh, INDIA - 173 223

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On Facebook everybody could follow the procedure of the election of the 34<sup>th</sup> Menri Abbot. Here is a letter where the procedure is described.



Afterwards, as per the tradition of Menri monastery in which each of the throne holders sit on each of the thrones of Nyamme Sherab Gyaltsen. The new Abbot sat on all the thrones where the previous Abbots sat (Protectors temple, Yogi temple, Nunnery Gumpa, Labrang, Library, Medical Institute, Smoke Offering Place, Dialectic School Hall, Bon Children Home). In the autobiography of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Menri Abbot Khenchén Nyima Tenzin he related that due to lack of time, he did not sit on all the thrones, and he described this as not very auspicious.

Although on the 14<sup>th</sup> of September 2017, Yungdrung Bon lost the great Sun\* (Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche), leaving all Bonpos with deep sadness, it is with the great blessings of the Protectors and the prayers of all Bon devotees, that now the Moon\*\* (Lungtok Dawa Dargye Rinpoche) is rising to dispel all the outer, inner and secret obstacles, and to preserve the Yungdrung Bon tradition.

\* This refers to the name of the 33<sup>rd</sup> His Holiness, Nyima which means sun.

\*\* This refers to the name of the new Menri Abbot, Dawa Dargye which means waxing moon.

**Text by Yangri Sangmo**



His Holiness Menri Trizin 34<sup>th</sup>, Drangsang Dawa Dargye.



Ceremony at Menri Monastery.





# LONG LIFE PRAYER FOR HIS HOLINESS LUNGTOK DAWA DARGYE RINPOCHE

ཨ་མ་རྟོ།  
གྱེར་བསྟན་རིན་ཆེན་མཆོན་ཡང་ཕྱག་པའི་ཞིང་།  
ལྷ་རྟོགས་པ་དེ་མའི་དགའ་ཆེལ་བཞད་པའི་མགོན།  
འཕྲིན་ལས་རྟ་བདུན་སྒྲ་བ་གཤེགས་པའི་རྗེས།  
ཆ་རྟོགས་སྒྲ་བའི་མགོན་ལ་གསེལ་བ་འདེབས།

E MA HO  
GYER TEN RINCHEN TSEN YANG DHOG PE ZHING  
LUNGTOK PEME GA TSAL ZHED PI GON  
THINLEY TA DUN NANG WA SHEG PI JE  
CHA ZOG DAWE GON LA SOL WA DEB

*Marvellous,  
In a land where even the name of the precious teaching of Bon did not exist,  
A saviour, the Sun, who blossomed the delightful garden of lotuses of enlightened  
teaching and realization.  
After the dissolution of the great Sun, with the completion of its enlightened activities,  
I pray to the master who embodies the quality of a perfect Moon.*

མཆོག་གསུམ་ཡེ་ཤེས་སྒྲིབ་བལ་སྟུན་ལྷན་གྱིས།  
རྒྱལ་བའི་འཕྲིན་ལས་སྒྲོང་བའི་མགོན་བསྐྱོས་པ།  
གང་འདིའི་གསང་གསུམ་བཞེད་དོན་ལྷན་གྲུབ་པའི།  
བྱགས་མཆོག་གཡེལ་མེད་དམ་པར་མཛད་དུ་གསེལ།

CHOG SUM YESHE DRIB DRAL CHEN DEN GYI  
GYAL WE THINLEY KYONG WE GON KOE PA  
GANG DI SANG SUM ZHED DHON LHUN DRUB PI  
THUG CHOG YEL MED DAM PAR ZED DU SOL

*Through their unobscured wisdom eyes, the triple gems  
Appointed a saviour to preserve the enlightened activities of the Buddhas  
May all the enlightened beings and the protectors, unceasingly protect and  
spontaneously accomplish  
All His outer, inner and secret wishes.*

Prayer by H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche  
Translated by Dr. Yangri Sangmo





# CAN YOU REDUCE PAIN ONLINE?

In summer 2016, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and GlideWing Online Workshops offered a three-week online workshop featuring Bon Buddhist teachings and meditation practices for reducing physical and emotional pain. A formal research study was conducted to determine the effects of the workshop. Here you can read the report on this subject, published on [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org).

## Measuring the Effectiveness Of an online Bön Buddhist Workshop for Healing Physical and Emotional Pain

*Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, Barbara Stefik, Mark Stefik, Alejandro Chaoul, Claire Clark & Yue Teng*

### Abstract

In the summer of 2016, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche offered a three-week online workshop together with GlideWing Online Workshops. It offered Bön Buddhist teachings and practices for reducing physical and emotional pain. A research study was conducted to determine the effects of the workshop. The findings showed that the participants' physical and emotional pain was reduced by more

than a third after three weeks and that the effects persisted after the workshop. There was a very strong correlation between worst daily levels of pain and levels of draining or wasted energy for participants on the days of the workshop. The research also investigated the relative and combined effectiveness of the teachings and practices offered at the workshop.

### Overview of the Workshop and Study

An online workshop is a convenient and low-cost way to provide teachings. But does it provide healing benefits, such as a reduction in physical and emotional pain?

In the fall of 2015, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche together with GlideWing Online Workshops offered a three-week online workshop of Bön Buddhist teachings for reducing physical and emotional pain. With the permission of 19 workshop participants, an exploratory research study investigated whether the online course was effective in reducing pain.

The results were sufficiently promising that Tenzin Rinpoche suggested offering a much larger workshop with GlideWing in the summer of 2016 and carrying out a more comprehensive research study. This article is about that “Main” study and

gives a preliminary report of its findings.

Figure 1 gives an overview of the workshop. Twice a week throughout the workshop, a new session of videos, including teachings and supportive guided meditations, was made available for participants to work with according to their own schedules. Participants were encouraged to allocate about 20

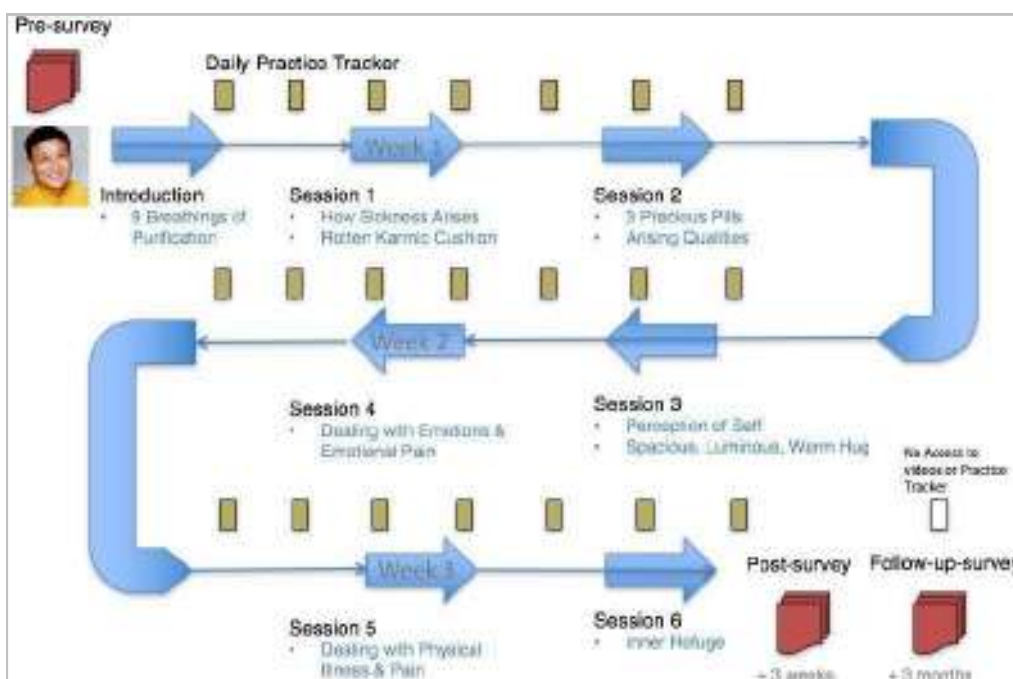


Figure 1. Overview of the 3-week online workshop and study.





minutes twice a day for the formal meditation practices as well as 20-50 minutes twice a week for watching the teaching videos. The overall daily time requirement for participants was to

- Do the formal meditation sessions (40-50 minutes)
- Do informal meditation practices 5 times throughout the day (5-10 minutes)
- Check in with the Daily Practice Tracker (5 minutes)
- Review the teaching videos as needed

Data were collected using three anonymous online surveys. A pre-survey was given ahead of the workshop. A post-survey was given immediately after the workshop. A follow-up survey was given three months after the end of the workshop. The surveys included two validated scales: the Global Pain Scale (GPS) and the Self-Compassion Scale (SCS). The Global Pain Scale is a valid and comprehensive assessment of pain evaluating pain, emotions, clinical outcomes, and daily activities by Dr. Ronald Melzack and Dr. Warren Torgerson. The Self-Compassion Scale is a valid and theoretically coherent measure of Self-Compassion by Dr. Kristin D. Neff. In addition, some teaching-inspired scales were administered.

In addition to the longer surveys, participants were given access to a “Daily Practice Tracker” app that ran on iPhones, androids, and a web browser as shown in Figure 2. It was suggested that participants check in every day to answer questions about which teachings and practices they did that day as well as provide an assessment of their physical and emotional pain and events of the day.



Figure 2. Daily Practice Tracker.

Of the 1,200 who registered, 198 people fully participated by taking the pre-, post-, and follow-up surveys and using the Daily Practice Tracker at least 15 times. The findings reported below are based on these participants, for whom we have the most complete data.

Unless otherwise stated, all reported findings have less than .1 percent chance of being the null hypothesis that is, being the result of chance.

### Assessing Physical and Emotional Pain

A primary question that we wanted to investigate was whether participants would experience a reduction in physical and emotional pain. To assess this, we used a validated 20-question scale. The Global Pain Scale has four five-question parts: physical pain, feelings (emotional pain), clinical outcomes and interference with normal activities.

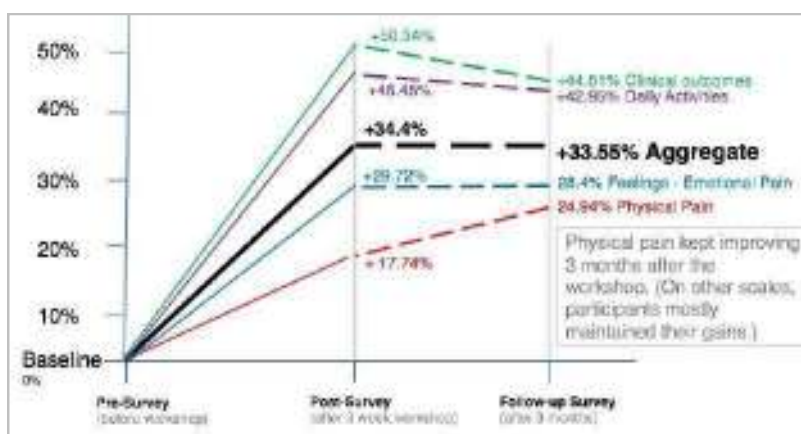


Figure 3. Improvements measured using the Global Pain Scale.

Figure 3 graphs the assessments for the four factors, and an “aggregate” score combines them. The baseline is the assessment at the pre-survey. As shown in the figure, participants improved in all four factors, with a reduction in aggregate pain of 34.4 percent in three weeks as measured by the post-survey. Three months later the scale showed that participants mainly maintained their gains. Physical pain kept improving three months after the workshop was finished.

One hypothesis for the main study was that improvements in pain might correlate with improvements in self-compassion. To test this the three surveys included an assessment of self-compassion. The findings showed that participants did improve in self-compassion by 12.83 percent by the post-survey rising to 16.63 percent in the follow-up survey three months later. So, participants had more self-compassion and less





pain after the workshop. A question is whether their improvements in self-compassion strongly related to their improvements in pain.

Figure 4 graphs the correlation of improvement in self-compassion and improvement in global pain. The correlation coefficient  $R=0.46$  indicates a moderate but not strong relation. In usual statistical practice, a correlation of 0.70 is considered strong. This finding of a *moderate correlation* suggests that there must be other factors besides an increase in self-compassion that are contributing to the reduction in pain.

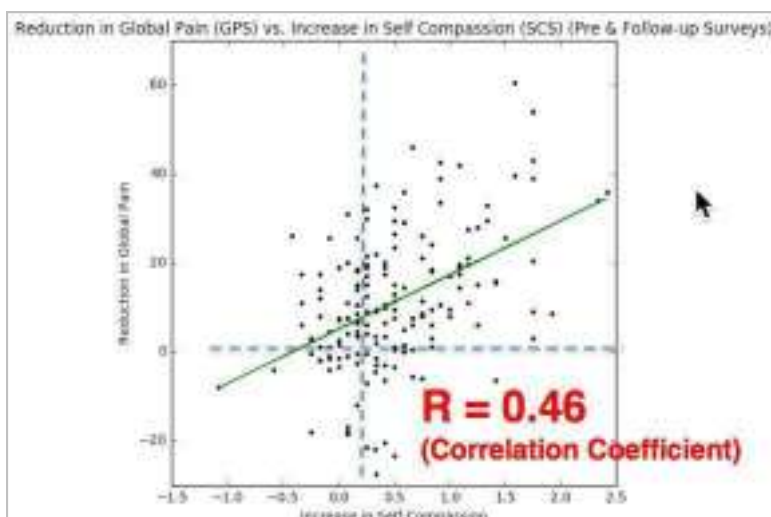


Figure 4. Correlating improvements in self-compassion with improvements in the Global Pain Scale.

#### Relationship to Draining: “More Drain = More Pain”

In addition to the findings from the validated and teaching-inspired scales, the research included data collected from the Daily Practice Tracker. One of the main teachings of the workshop concerned draining, defined as the “habitual wasting of energy.” Participants using the daily practice tracker assessed their daily worst level of draining every time they used the tracker and also their daily worst level of physical and emotional pain.

Figure 5 graphs the correlation of the daily-worst level of draining with the daily-worst level of physical pain. It shows that there was a very strong correlation between their level of draining

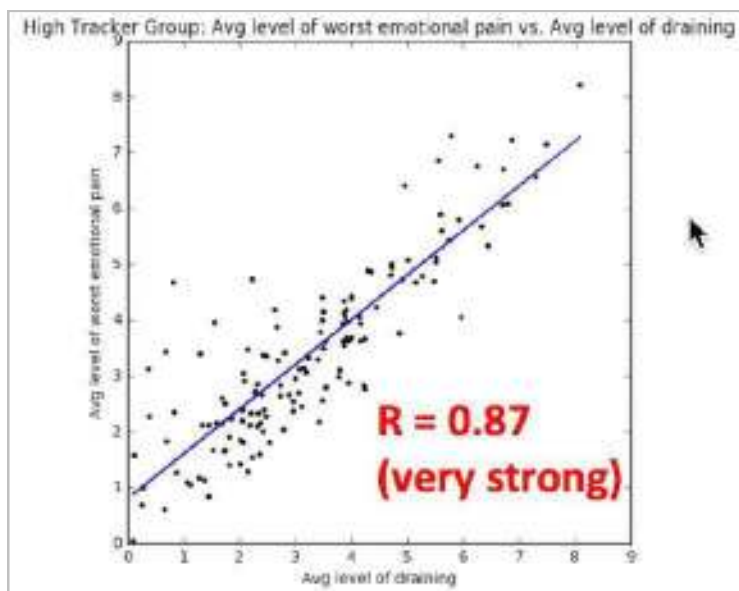


Figure 5. Correlating Average Daily-Worst Level of Draining with Average Daily-Worst Level of Physical Pain.

and their level of physical pain. A similar correlation was computed for level of emotional pain yielding a high correlation of 0.65. These correlations are strong enough to reliably predict a level of pain from a level of drain.

These results were consistent with the teachings in the workshop, which said that the energy saved by reducing draining goes toward healing, and that improvements in healing lead to reductions in pain.

The data from the Daily Practice Tracker enabled us to take a more detailed look at movements between levels of draining and levels of pain, on a daily basis. Figure 6 divides the population of participants into quartiles. The upper “quartile” shows a sample graph for a representative participant where the correlation was 0.70 or greater, as was true for 35 percent of the participants. For this participant and others in the quartile, the drain and pain assessments essentially move in lockstep every single day. The second quadrant shows a representative participant where the correlation was between 0.50 and 0.70. Again, the nearly lockstep movement is evident over the days of the workshop. The lockstep phenomenon was less evident in the lower two quadrants. In summary, this very tight correlated movement of level of draining and level of pain held for 60 percent of the participants.





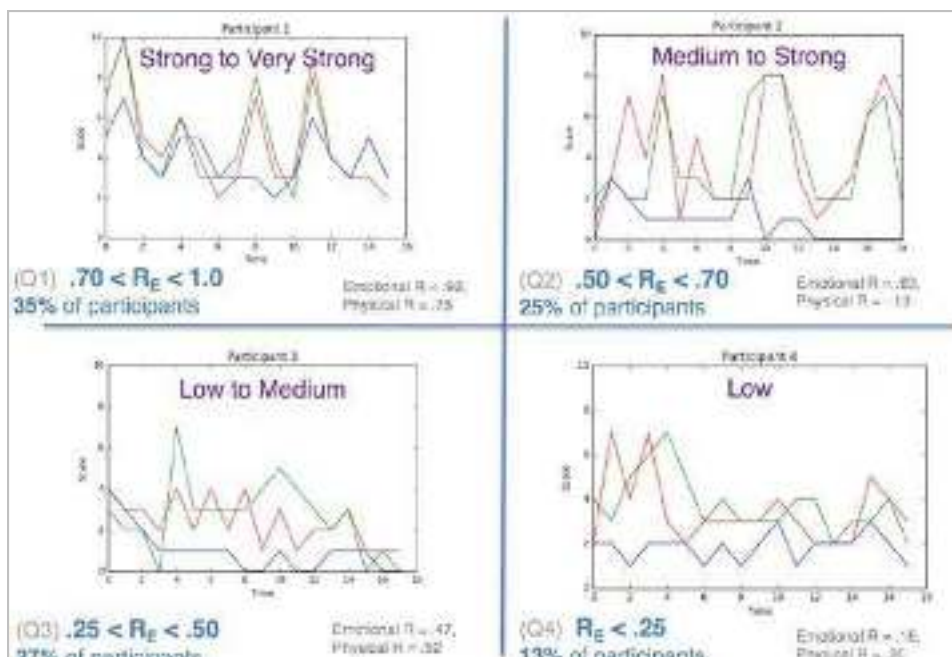


Figure 6. Daily Movement and Correlations by Quartile for Physical and Emotional Levels of Pain with Draining. Red lines show level of Draining. Green lines show Emotional Pain, and Blue lines show Physical Pain.

### Teachings and Practices for Behaviors that Reduce Draining

What teachings and practices from the workshop are intended to reduce draining? Figure 7 shows nine teaching-inspired questions from the scales that relate in some way to draining. They are organized in the figure in four groups. One question is an assessment of draining itself, as asked in the pre- and post- surveys. The next group of three questions correspond to the Three Doors – Stillness, Silence, and Spaciousness. Another

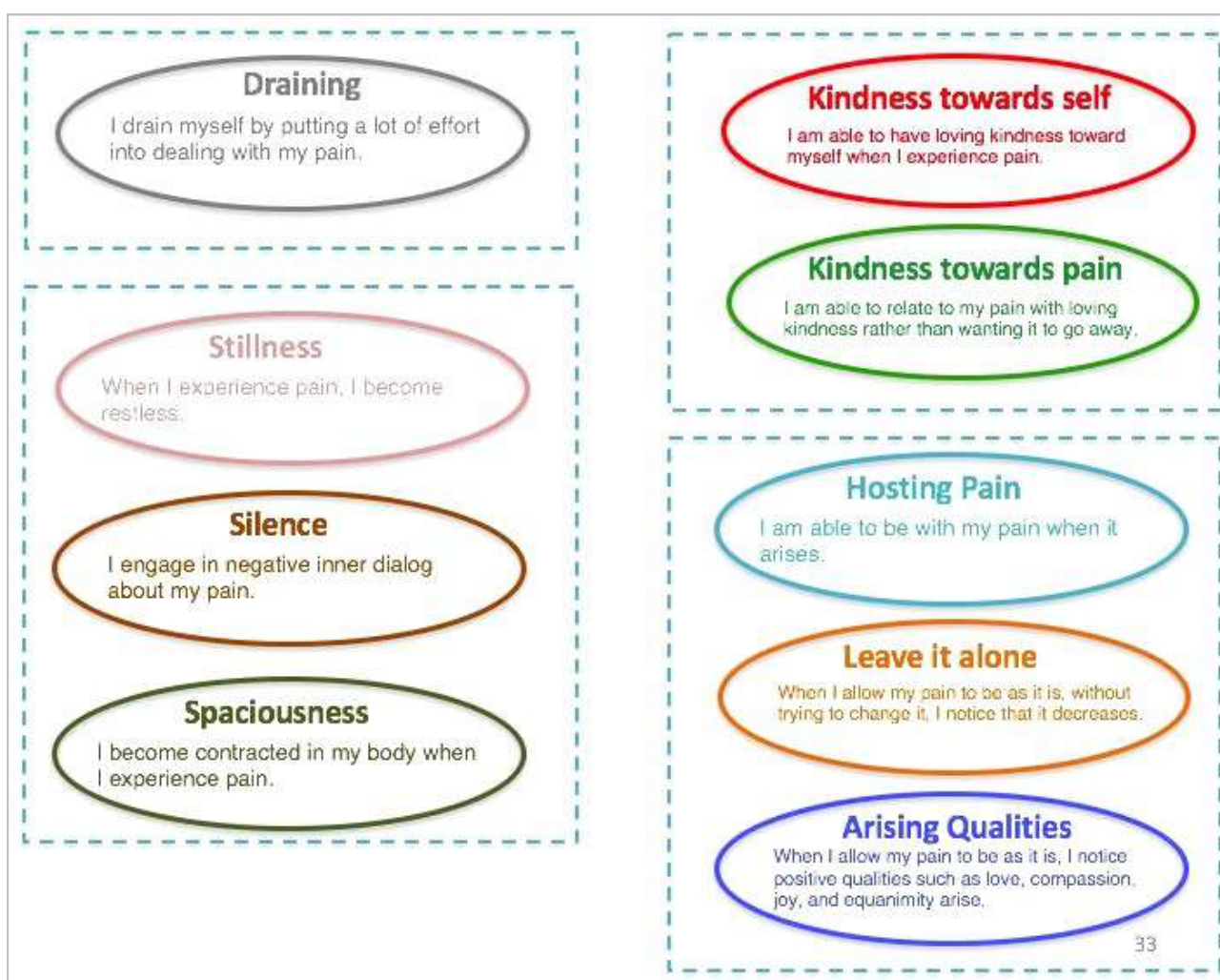


Figure 7. Teachings that relate to draining.





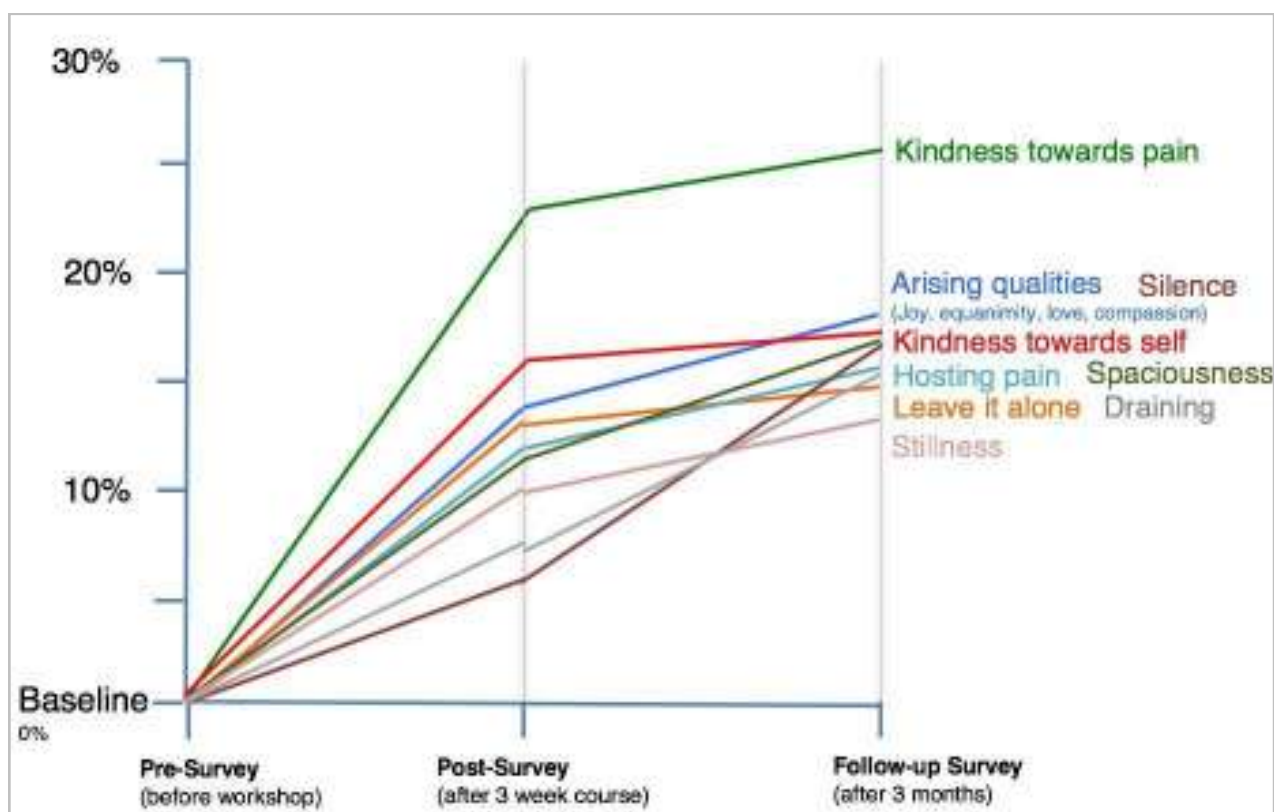


Figure 8. Improvements in Draining Behaviors related to Physical Pain.

group of two questions relates to kindness toward self and kindness toward pain. The last group assesses participants' relationship to pain – hosting it, leaving it alone, or noticing arising qualities.

Figure 8 shows that by and large participants' behaviors for the nine teachings led to increases in the corresponding behaviors for physical pain. In most cases, participants experienced a 12 percent to 20 percent increase in the behaviors advocated by the teachings. Kindness toward physical pain stood out as having about a 25 percent improvement three weeks after the workshop. A similar set of findings was found for behaviors related to emotional pain.

In summary so far, these graphs illustrate that the workshop taught about behaviors that could reduce draining, and that participants improved in these behaviors.

The question arises about which of these behavior improvements strongly and individually relate to reductions in pain. Figure 9 shows how these behavior improvements correlate to improvements in emotional and physical pain as measured by the Global Pain Scale.

The top behavioral correlates for reduction in emotional pain were behaviors for kindness toward self, stillness, draining itself, and kindness toward pain. The top correlations for reduction in physical pain were behaviors for spaciousness and draining. The individual correlation coefficients themselves were similar to those for self-compassion; that is, they are moderate but not strong correlations.

An interpretation of these findings is that no teaching or single behavioral change by itself

| Emotional Pain<br>Correlation Coefficients | Physical Pain<br>Correlation Coefficients |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| R=0.40 Kindness towards self               | R=0.40 Spaciousness                       |
| R=0.38 Stillness                           | R=0.35 Draining                           |
| R=0.32 Draining                            |                                           |
| R=0.32 Kindness towards pain               |                                           |
|                                            | R=0.29 Silence                            |
| R=0.24 Silence                             | R=0.23 Stillness                          |
| R=0.22 Leave it alone                      | R=0.22 Kindness towards self              |
| R=0.21 Hosting Pain                        | R=0.22 Kindness towards pain              |
| R=0.21 Arising Qualities                   |                                           |
| R=0.17 Spaciousness                        | R=0.11 Arising Qualities                  |
|                                            | R=0.05 Hosting Pain                       |
|                                            | R=0.02 Leave it alone                     |

Figure 9. Teaching-Inspired Questions and their correlation to Draining.





seems to drive the improvement in pain. Multiple teachings and practices from the course seem to work in combination to yield the behavior changes, reductions in draining, and improvements in physical and emotional pain.

The correlation coefficients for the “draining questions” on the teaching inspired survey scale were only 0.35 as compared to 0.86 in the analysis of practiced tracker data. The two instruments measure significantly different things.

- The Practice Tracker question asks about the worst daily level of *any* source of draining. The survey question asks about the level of effort (draining) in dealing with pain.
- The Practice Tracker collects data every day. The survey instrument collects data only three times, and relies more memory and subjective aggregation of experience.
- The Practice Tracker reviews worst level of daily physical and emotional pain during the day. The survey instrument uses the GPS (Global Pain Scale) aggregate pain assessment.

### Summary and Open Questions

In summary, here are the main findings from our research study.

- GPS *aggregate pain* improved by about a third over the workshop.
- This improvement was mostly maintained three months later.
- Participants' ability to *be with their pain* also improved by about a third (survey data).
- Self-compassion (SCS scale) improved by 16 percent and has a moderate correlation with improvement in pain.
- The **average worst-daily-level of draining** strongly correlates with the **average worst-daily-level of emotional pain** (.87) and **physical pain** (.65).
- For most participants, Daily Practice Tracker data shows that *draining* typically goes **up and down** every day (in lockstep) with emotional pain (not just up and down on average for participants over the workshop).
- This study identifies nine teachings that are intended to foster behavioral changes that can reduce draining. The top two to four correlates of reported behavioral change had *moderate correlations* with improvements in pain as measured by the Global Pain scale (GPS). This suggests that the improvements measured by the instruments are the result of either

synergistic influences or possibly that different behavior changes work better for different individuals.

Research typically sheds light on some questions and introduces more questions for further research. The following research questions are on our minds at the end of this study.

- Would participant's reductions in pain continue to improve if the workshop ran longer (e.g., six weeks or several months)?
- It was encouraging that reducing draining seems to quickly affect level of pain as per the lockstep nature of results from the Practice Tracker. This suggests that physiological measurements might be practical, relating the draining practices to physiological evidence. What physiological mechanisms correlating to draining could be identified? Which of these would be practical to use in a study that combined self-reporting with physiological measurements?
- What practices alone or in combination have the greatest power for reducing draining?

### Acknowledgments

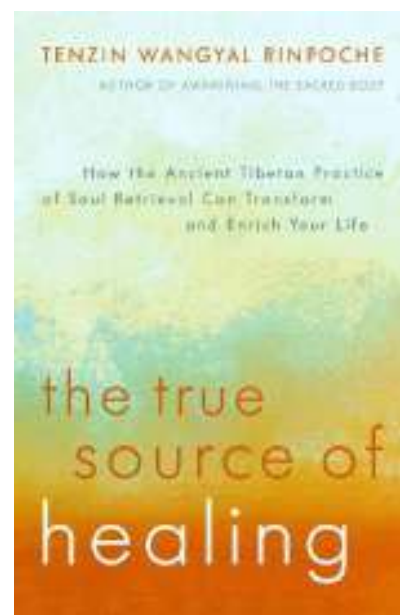
*Special thanks to ...*

Bob and Marina Felix (GlideWing Online Workshops)

Polly Turner (Ligmincha International)

Ryan Viglizzo, M.A. (Designer at Mount Sinai Hospital)

And the 1,200 participants in the online workshop.





# THE 3 DOORS PROGRAM NEWS

In this update, we share highlights from The 3 Doors, including upcoming programs and community news.

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS

### The Next North American 3 Doors Academy

*"The 3 Doors Academy is a program that helps you unleash your full potential and truly transform your being. As you transform, you can see the impact on others – your family, coworkers, friends, relatives, and society."* Frank Jeri

Applications are now being accepted for the fifth North American Academy that begins on October 3-9, 2018 at the Serenity Ridge Retreat Center in Shipman, Virginia. Taught by 3 Doors Senior Teachers Marcy Vaughn and Gabriel Rocco, this two and a half year program is built around six in-person group retreats and interactive online support. The Academy is a journey of personal discovery where participants are asked to make an active commitment to daily meditation and self-reflection. A great strength of the Academy program is that it draws upon the collective power of the group for support in transforming personal limitations and leading to actions that benefit others.

After graduation, participants join an active network of practitioners from more than 20 countries, who support each other in maintaining an ongoing commitment to their meditation practice and serving the wellbeing of others.

[Learn more, view welcome videos from the teachers, and apply](#)



Gabriel Rocco and Marcy Vaughn at Serenity Ridge.



### The Joy of Embodied Presence

*"Laura's clear warmth comes through in a way that allows participants to discover their own. To discover that afresh each Saturday morning in my living room speaks to the power of practice and the new possibilities that are available when a teacher knows how to guide with a presence gentle enough to allow an exploration and awareness of one's subtle energies."* Phil Tonne

Led by 3 Doors Senior Teacher Laura Shekerjian, this online meditation program explores the body as a powerful doorway into open awareness and the vibrancy of direct experience. The next four-week session will take place on Saturdays April 21 and 28, and May 5 and 12, 2018.

- Use shifts in posture to open the body, connect with stillness and increase inner stability.
- Use breath to slow the moving mind and deepen relaxation.
- Refine attention to bodily sensation to increase attunement to the present moment.
- Recognize how the immediacy of bodily experience, when grounded in the space of being, increases joy and deep well-being.

Simultaneous Spanish translation will be available for this course via the internet radio app [Mixlr](#), and will be audible only to those who wish to use it. Everyone else will hear the program in English only.

[Learn more and register](#)



Laura Shekerjian.





## Walking the Healing Path

Based on The 3 Doors Tibetan meditation practices and led by Senior Teacher Raven Lee, PhD, there are two opportunities coming up for those called to a subtle energy healing path:

A residential retreat at Pauenhof Retreat Center, Germany from June 16-19, 2018. [Learn more and Register.](#)

A 3-month interactive online program from September-November 2018. [Learn more and Register.](#)



Raven Lee.

## The 3 Doors International Retreat

The 3 Doors hosted its first International Retreat for Academy graduates, current students, and senior teachers in Merida, Mexico from January 4-9, 2018. The themes underlying the days of practice and conversation included collective wisdom, service to others, and growing connections within The 3 Doors community.

These words by Phil Tonne, selected from his reflections, represent his perspective on the experience: *"The weather was amazing, and Rinpoche talked about our organization and offered fresh direction for the future of The 3 Doors without abandoning any of its foundation. In the moist warm air, he shared his vision, accompanied by birdsong, colorful butterflies, flowers and hummingbirds, the whimsical song of grackles carried from large fig trees, ornaments to his voice. (...)*

*For an extended period of time, we sat in an arc around Rinpoche, moved by his presence, his open heart and his vulnerability, the trust and warmth opening each of the three doors. There was a sense that we could each participate more fully and come alive within this collective journey that was only possible because of the journey to the West by a young man who kept Dawa Gyaltsen's 5-fold teachings in his pocket as his support. (...)*

*There was a word that emerged that captured the*

*experience of being held by trees, warm moist air, and an amazing collection of individuals and beings – Apapacho, a warm collective hug much like the gumpa hugs we send to each other in celebration and support."*



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche spent 3 days with the group, offering practices, guidance, and inspiration to carry The 3 Doors into the future.



Seventy participants from 10 countries (Austria, Canada, Costa Rica, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Mexico, The Netherlands, Peru and United States) attended The 3 Doors International Retreat.



The Hacienda grounds in Merida, Mexico provided a sunny and warm respite for those coming from winter climates.





# NEWS FROM LISHU INSTITUTE

The retreat on the *Six Lamps* and eight chapters of a sacred instruction in Lishu Institute were successfully completed on March 22, 2018. During this trimester the students and teachers had also the great fortune to be part of the enthronement of His Holiness 34th Menri Trizin Rinpoche and the Geshe graduation ceremonies in Menri Monastery. The teaching and practice of *The 21 Nails* will start on April 9th to June 15th, 2018. Here are some photo impressions from Lishu Institute and the visit to Menri Monastery.







## Program September 2018 – June 2019 at Lishu Institute

Lishu Institute is launching a new program with a full curriculum study starting in September 2018. This is a great opportunity for long-term, in-depth study of the Bön tradition, and for deepening one's practice in the special environment of Lishu retreat center near Dehradun, India.

The proposed curriculum for this offering, including long (8 to 10 weeks) and short (2 weeks) retreats, is as follows:

- 🌀 **3<sup>rd</sup> September 2018 to 9<sup>th</sup> November 2018** — Bon Lam Rim (path of enlightenment) and Ngöndro practice retreat
- 🌀 **12<sup>th</sup> November 2018 to 25<sup>th</sup> November 2018** — Yeshe Walmo rituals
- 🌀 **7<sup>th</sup> January 2019 to 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019** — Tummo and Dream Yoga from the Mother Tantra
- 🌀 **4<sup>th</sup> March to 17<sup>th</sup> March 2019** — Atri Phowa
- 🌀 **1<sup>st</sup> April to 8<sup>th</sup> June 2019** — Dzogchen Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud: 12 Small Tantras

For more information, contact  
[yangrisangmo@gmail.com](mailto:yangrisangmo@gmail.com)

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





# OPEN FOR THE PRESENCE OF KIDS DURING MEDITATION

In Málaga, Spain, students of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche started a practice group at a primary school for the parents. The children are free to walk around while their parents are meditating. Here is their story, as told by Jose Ignacio Garcia Acosta.

This is our story about families. My name is Jose Ignacio. My wife Laura and I have been following Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche since 2008, when he visited Spain for the first time. We are the parents of two lovely kids, Gael age 6 and Leo age 3. They study at Maria Montessori's International Center, an American School in Málaga. The school applies the original Montessori system, characterized by respect and individualization in the learning process, particularly by taking care of the individual curiosity of each child as a basis for spontaneous learning.

Some parents knew about our *Tsa Lung* practice group and suggested starting a group at the school. As parents, we feel the benefits of our spiritual practice and face the challenge of bringing our children up with awareness. The parents at the school asked for a creative solution to this; a place where they and their children could practice. Because we already had some good experiences practicing with the *Tsa Lung* group in nature, we thought of a practice group for adults that was open to the presence of children.



We realized we needed to prepare a space for the children, with activities that could be done in relative silence, and in an appropriate place. And, we had to accept that the kids would need a learning process of months to establish a good relationship with silence. We thought it could work, as the Montessori method works in that direction. We



Practice Group at Maria Montessori's International Center in Málaga, Spain.







Presentation with video of the HECAT School Project in Torreón, México.

began this free group knowing that the “noise” in our own heads is mostly stronger than the noise our kids make. We need to find silence in the middle of the daily life noise of bringing up children. This could be our little contribution to increase our awareness while raising kids, and to help others in their difficult moments. That's the origin of the group's name, “Open Meditation” meaning open to the presence of kids. Everybody who comes knows how the group works, and some find it a way to support future change in the global conscience, a gift we offer to the children.

When we were thinking of how to organize this, Alejandro Torrealba told me about the HECAT (Hermandad Educativa CAT A.C.) School Project in Torreón, México and Guillermo Vera sent us some information. [For more information on HECAT see [Ligmincha Europe Magazine # 23](#)]. I found the video on the internet of a visit by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche to the Project where children share their experiences with meditation. When we presented our plan at the Montessori school we showed this video to the teachers and parents.

We created a group with the parents and their children, with each parent in charge of his/her kids. Attending to their needs is the priority and also helps create good conditions for practice. Sometimes one or two parents take charge of all the kids, and the next week others take that task. We try to help the kids make contact with the silence with patience and awareness. Sometimes we have the experience of a wonderful spontaneous shared silence, which becomes a very special moment with the kids. The sessions are short, about 30 minutes of practice in a 45-minute period. At the end we share our experiences and

talk about the practice, our doubts, and answer questions. During the practice, the kids sometimes come sit beside us (or on us), connect, and, a few minutes later they continue with their activities (drawing, coloring mandalas, making puzzles, reading books, modeling, making origami. It is a beautiful spontaneous effortless connection.

An important reason we choose this setup is the conviction that if the children see us while we

practice it will have a positive effect on them, now and in the future. For them, meditation and silence becomes part of their daily routine. As a kid, I saw my father helping with the domestic work and that helped me to learn that it is something both men and women do.

We began at the end of September 2017, and since then we've practiced every Thursday. In December I prepared a short introduction to *Tsa Lung*, explaining some basic points from the book *Awakening the Sacred Body*, and strongly encouraging everyone to read it. The participants of the group are mainly families, but some single people accepted the challenge too. After all, it is open to everyone.



Up until now we continue, from one beginning to another, sharing with other families our quest and the desire of keeping this alive. It has not always been easy, particularly in the beginning, where only a few people had some experience in meditation. Step by step we grow in commitment and perseverance.

**Text and photos by Jose Ignacio Garcia Acosta**





# WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN EUROPE

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



**February 23 – 25:**

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught in Amsterdam, The Netherlands the *A-tri Essentials*. There were about 150 participants.



**March 3 – 4:**

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught in Grenoble (Montbonnot St-Martin), France, *Dream Yoga and The Clear Light*.







**January 5 – 7:**

Geshe Choekhortshang Rinpoche taught *Tummo* part 2 in Budapest, Hungary. Over 200 people participated.



**January 13 – 14:**

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche had been teaching on *A-tri* for 5 years in The Netherlands. This sangha-weekend in Biezenmortel was for some a repetition of the *A-tri* practices, for others it was an introduction.



**March 24 – 25:**

In Vienna, Austria, during the sangha-weekend with Wolfgang Krebs the *21 Nails* were practiced as taught by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche during the Summer Retreat in Buchenau, Germany.







### January and February 2018:

Geshe Mönlam Wangyal from Triten Norbutse Monastery visited Finland from mid January until the end of February. During his stay Geshe Mönlam gave teachings on the Tibetan *Bardo* and on *Tsa Lung* and Meditation. These weekend retreats were organized jointly by the Finnish Yungdrung Bon Association, Dechen Ritro and Ligmincha Finland as well as the two week's Mandala-painting course by Geshe

Mönlam. The chair of Dechen Ritro, Anne Brunila invited Geshe la to Finland and sponsored the rare and very beautiful *thangka* exhibition on the Great Masters of Bon that Geshe-la has painted. The exhibition was held at the Helinä Rautavaara Museum.



### November 2017:

Khenpo Gelek Jinpa gave a teaching on *Gyalwa Chaktri* in Finland. About 40 people attended.



### November and December 2017:

Anna-Kaisa Hirvanen gave courses on *Trul Khor* in Tampere and Oulu, Finland.







### January 18 – 24:

Drubdra Khenpo Tsultrim Tenzin Rinpoche taught in a place near near Bratislava, Slovakia. He gave a truly wonderful explanation from the *Mother Tantra* focused on *Trul Khor* and *Tummo* and as well on the practice of *A-tri*. The focus during the retreat was on meditation practice and many people had great benefit from that. After these teachings our weekly meditation group has grown, which is a truly wonderful result.







### March 9 – 11:

In Berlin the 21 Nails were practiced with Wolfgang Krebs as taught by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche during the Summer Retreat 2017 in Buchenau, Germany.



### November 17 – 19, 2017:

Marcy Vaughn taught the *Mother of Wisdom and Love, Sherap Chamma* in Berlin, Germany.

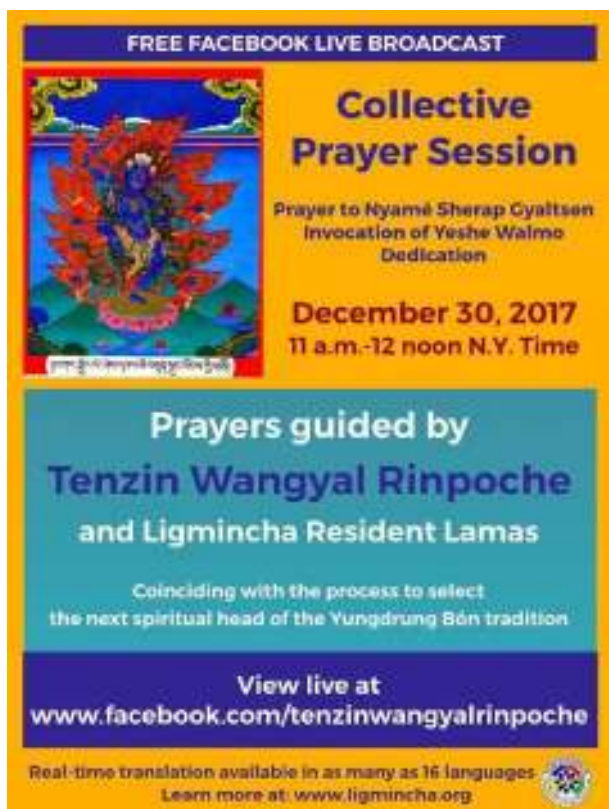


### March 9 – 14:

Marcy Vaughn guided in the Pauenhof, Germany, the practices of *Sherap Chamma* and *Sipé Gyälmo*.







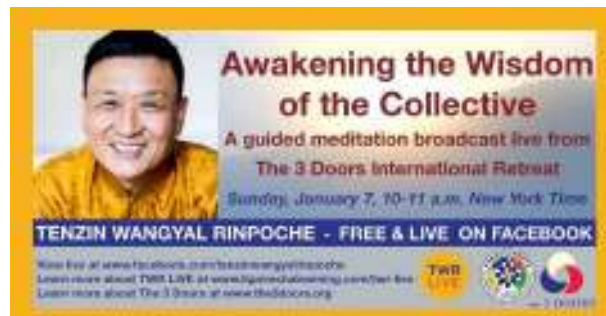
You can watch the recording here:  
[Collective Prayer Session: Selection of the 34th Menri Trizin](#)



You can watch the recording here:  
[Common Ground Among Six Spiritual Traditions of Tibet / English translation](#)



You can watch the recording here:  
[The Healing Power of Dynamic Energy: Perspectives from Tibetan Medicine on Balancing Your Vital Winds](#)



You can watch the recording here:  
[Awakening the Wisdom of the Collective](#)



You can watch the recording here:  
[Prayers and Practice on the Tibetan New Year](#)



You can watch the recording here:  
[Mantra of Light \(Sa Le Ö Mantra\)](#)







**You can watch the recordings here:**

**Discovering the Dance of Stillness**  
January 18

**Finding the Melody in Silence**  
January 27

**Embracing the Warmth of Spaciousness**  
January 29

**The Greatest Gift of Life (Part 1)**  
February 22

**The Greatest Gift of Life (Part 2)**  
February 22

**The Power of Awareness: To succeed in life,  
connect with the light of awareness**  
March 1

**Between Past and Future, the Treasure That Is  
Now**  
March 8

**The Four Lamps, Part 1: The first lamp, the  
physical eye, clears worldly darkness —  
allowing us to see**  
March 21

**The Four Lamps, Part 2. The second lamp —  
the clear vision of sound, light, and rays —  
removes the view of nihilism**  
March 28

**The Four Lamps, Part 3: Clearing the Darkness  
of Ignorance**  
April 4

**The Four Lamps, Part 3 (continued): Clearing  
the Darkness of Ignorance**  
April 6



**TWR LIVE** is an innovative way to connect with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, the ancient Tibetan teachings, and fellow students around the world through regular live broadcasts that can be easily viewed on Rinpoche's Facebook page. All broadcasts are free and open to all — you don't need a Facebook account to view them.

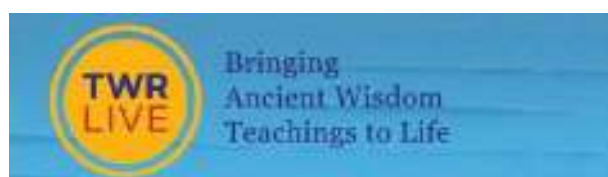
### **Introductory video**

**To access the viewing screen, visit Rinpoche's Facebook page** at the time of the broadcast. If the screen doesn't appear right away, the broadcast may not have begun yet, so try reloading the page. If you have a Facebook account, you'll have an opportunity to submit questions and receive answers from Rinpoche. Be sure to like his page and click "Follow" to receive a notification each time Rinpoche goes live — that way you won't miss one of his spontaneous broadcasts between scheduled sessions. All broadcasts are recorded: [2018 archive](#) / [2016-7 archive](#)

**Every few days** Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will broadcast live discussions of his books, [interviews with experts](#) in the fields of science and spirituality, pith wisdom teachings from the Tibetan Bon Buddhist tradition and much more. Through TWR LIVE you can broaden your knowledge and deepen your connection to the ancient wisdom traditions of Tibetan Bon Buddhism. You can also learn meditation practices and cultivate awareness for greater social and personal transformation.

**Real-time translation:** Through the generosity of volunteer translators, real-time translation of these broadcasts is available in as many as 18 languages. If a given translation isn't available live, it may be accessible later as a recording. [Access translations here](#)

**Join the discussion!** In the new TWR LIVE discussion group, Facebook members can share experiences of these meditation practices and learn from the experiences of others. It's recommended that you view TWR LIVE before joining. [Join now](#)





# TEACHINGS IN WILGA, POLAND

The Polish sangha invite several lamas and teachers in Chamma Ling Poland in Wilga (near Warsaw). The teachings will be in English and translated into Polish.



## May 31 – June 3:

John Jackson will teach *Six Lokas*. More information and registration: [www.ligmincha.pl](http://www.ligmincha.pl)



## June 21 – 24:

*Dzogchen teachings* by Ponlob Tsangpa Tenzin Rinpoche. More information and registration: [www.ligmincha.pl](http://www.ligmincha.pl)



## July 9 – 15:

*Powa retreat* with Nyima Woser Rinpoche. More information and registration: [www.ligmincha.pl](http://www.ligmincha.pl)



## August 14 – 19:

A retreat with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. The topic is *The Essential Teachings of Great Master Tapihritsa*. More information and registration: [www.ligmincha.pl](http://www.ligmincha.pl)



## September 13 – 16:

Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche teaches *Heart drops of dharmakaya*. More information and registration: [www.ligmincha.pl](http://www.ligmincha.pl)





## A DREAM IN THE DREAM, IN THE DREAM...

Being all together in bliss and harmony,  
being all together we are fully free.  
Dreams come, dreams go,  
some as light, some as shadow.

We are all connected in this space,  
in this mysterious realm without a face  
You are speaking to me – to us – to all  
in this enlightened, golden hall.

The poet heard this rhyme while sleeping,  
recognized it, and while writing  
He realized: If I'm still abiding  
without me worrying – I am creating.

***Rita Rickenbacher***





# TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE



Painted by Andréa Sechini





# HOW TO DIE

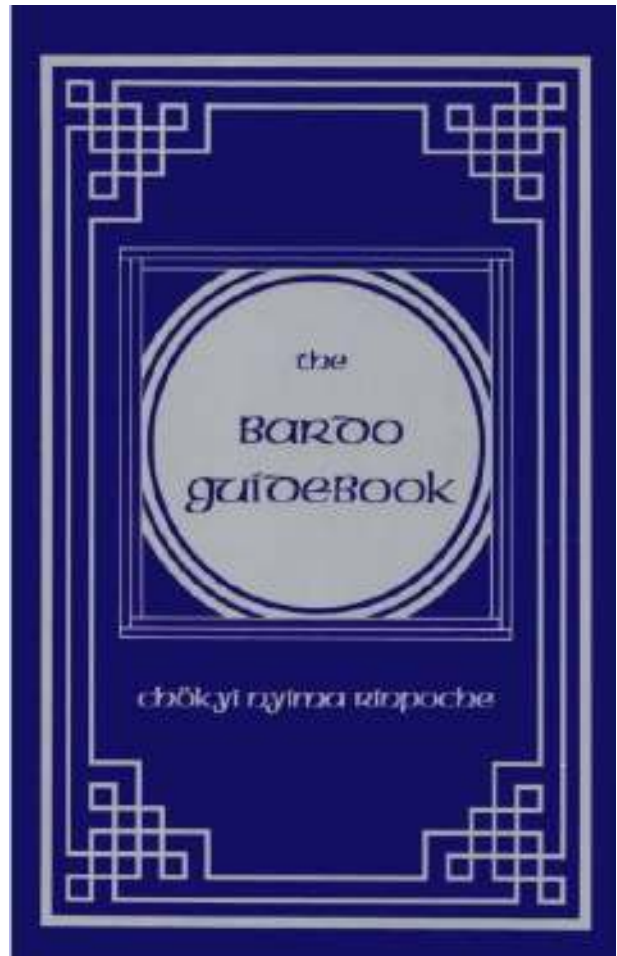
**The Bardo Guidebook by Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche is a practical guidebook and easily applicable. This book covers the first three bardos: the bardo of this life, the bardo of dying, and the bardo of dharmata. The book also gives instructions on preparing to die. We reprint the pages 95 – 99 from the chapter *How to Die*.**

We must acknowledge the impermanence of all conditioned things and especially that human life is fleeting. By doing so, we understand that it is crucial to prepare ourselves for death. What is it that dies at the moment of dying? It is our body and speech that die; the mind can never die. It is our mind that continues to wander through samsaric existences. Not our present body or voice. Only that which benefits our state of mind can be of help at the time of death. To concentrate on what is truly valuable when dying is considered intelligent, whereas to only worry about physical comfort is quite foolish. By all means, make some preparation for the moment when your life has come to an end.

The worst misfortune is to know how to take advantage of one's present situation but fail to do so. We all know that there is an end to this life, but no one knows the exact moment when it will happen. The time of death arrives without warning. Of course, to have a guaranteed life-span of seventy years would be very convenient. We could plan to spend a certain number of years on mundane projects, thinking, "After that I will focus on Dharma practice and everything will work out very nicely." But we do not know when death will come. The time of death can catch up with us at any moment.

Usually we think that only old people with a lot of wrinkles and grey hair are close to death, while youngsters with sparkling eyes and radiant complexions will not die soon. There is actually no such guarantee. Sometimes just the opposite happens: people who are already old remain for a long time while young people suddenly die.

What is of real value when we arrive at the



moment of death? It is personal experience in Dharma practice: the practices of purifying obscurations, gathering the two accumulations, and especially our insight into egolessness and emptiness, our training in the view free from mental constructs. Other than that, whatever benefits we acquire such as money, fame and worldly accomplishments, or anything else that is greatly valued during this lifetime is totally useless at the moment of death. The chief support is our understanding of egolessness.

We should ask ourselves, "What will help me when I die?" When we have difficulties now, we can turn for help to family and friends. When we are sick we can consult a doctor. But at the moment of death who can we see? Who can we turn to for help? We should ask ourselves these questions. When we honestly think about this it becomes clear only the results of our Dharma practice will help at that time. We should immediately prepare for the moment of death.





We can spend years studying whatever religion or school of thought is of interest to us. Even within Buddhism different philosophies and different levels of teachings exist. But simply studying these teachings, thinking about them and clarifying them in our mind, is not enough to be of true value at the moment of death. Only the application of teachings in personal experience through meditation practice will help; words and theories have no great value when facing death. Give thought to that now and know that only practical understanding and real meditation experience can help you at the time of death.



A small child does not make long-term plans or look very far ahead. If his immediate needs are attended to, then the child is happy and content. The attempt to avoid seeing what will come is childish. But many grownups act in this way, concentrating only on fulfilling immediate needs, fickle-mindedly running after whatever is in front of their noses and giving no thought to preparing for death. Then death arrives suddenly and it is too late.

Even while engaging in so-called Dharma practice there are many ways in which we can deceive ourselves. We can fool ourselves by spending our whole life gaining an intellectual comprehension of the structure of the Dharma teachings, memorizing all the stages of the path, the bodhisattva bhūmis and the different levels of meditation experience. We can become very learned in the details of the Four Tantras, such as the complete

structure of the tantric approach and all the rituals. However, this type of intellectual understanding is of little value at the time of death. Furthermore, we may become very skilled in debate if we have a sharp mind and a good tongue. We can excel at challenging the different arguments, refuting objections to the teachings and so forth. But that kind of competence is also useless when it comes to dying. What is really important now is to practice in order to realize egolessness. Just being able to talk about egolessness without practical experience is to fool yourself.

Religious people might be very successful in gathering followers, building temples and representations of the enlightened body, speech and mind, taking care of many disciples and giving teachings. But if they lack personal conviction about the state of nonconceptual wakefulness, the very essence of Dharma practice, then at the moment of death they will still have doubts, regrets, grasping and attachment. Do not let that happen to you.

When death approaches, abandon all attachment to spouse, children and parents, friends and relatives, possessions and property. To ensure liberation, completely cut all ties of clinging to these things. That does not mean that we should cut off love for other people such as close relatives. Love







is genuine when it is compassionate kindness embraced by bodhichitta and not strangled by attachment. Ordinary love that is mixed with attachment, anger and delusion is a cause for further entanglements and binds us to samsaric existence, whereas the love embraced by the great passion that is wisdom and compassion inseparable is a cause for liberation and enlightenment. This type of love is a million times more precious than ordinary affection for others. Ordinary love and affection is quite fickle, whereas the love that is embraced by bodhichitta and insight into emptiness is unchanging.



It does not matter what the object of attachment is. It can be attachment to ordinary things, even one's shoes; or attachment to one's body and life, country and home, or to gold and silver. Even attachment to religious objects such as one's statues and texts is still attachment. The main point here is to leave no object of attachment for your mind to fixate on at the time of death. It is better to give away whatever you have, either to poor people, friends, relatives or to your teacher. Make sure no material thing remains to which your mind can be attached. We should be without possessions when we know that the time of death is near. It is best to give away everything. That will

make it much easier at the time of death as one of the main obstacles to resting in the composure of meditation will have been cleared away.

At the time of death we should have exhausted all plans, whether virtuous or evil. For example, although we may not have succeeded in getting ahead of our competitors, we should not worry about that at the time of death. We should also give up any idea of seeing a particular relative or a close friend one last time. Maybe there is an enemy we would like to see in order to have the last word; we should completely abandon such aims. There are stories of people who could not let go and die because they wanted to witness one last attack on their enemy. Even half dead, they still would not let themselves die out of anger, spite or a grudge. They wanted a last chance to take revenge. Only after hearing that the other party had died could they finally relax and pass away. We should not be like that. Let absolutely nothing unfinished capture your thoughts.

(...)

### **Bibliography**

*The Bardo Guidebook*, Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche, Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche & Rangjung Yeshe Publications, First Edition, 1991.

### **Text selected by Ton Bisscheroux**





# THE SACRED SILENCE IN SOUNDS

We reprint an interview with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, and an edited excerpt from an oral teaching given by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, that was published in *The Voice of Clear Light*, April 2004.

## THE HEALING POWER OF SOUND

*This interview with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche was conducted at Serenity Ridge on December 29, 2003 by Helen Gatling-Austin.*

**Sound is important in many spiritual traditions – but, you point out, it can also be used in healing. How is sound used in healing in the Tibetan tradition?**

We know that in healing practices such as acupuncture, when a needle is placed in a part of the body, it sends a vibration or message to another part or to an organ, which causes balance and healing. In a similar way, the vibration of sound as it reverberates on the lips, in the head, and in the chest, can affect the body and organs in a very healing way.

**How does one know what sounds to use?**

This is a very ancient system and is described in a number of Tibetan texts. I'm teaching primarily from the Bon Mother Tantra (*Ma Gyud*). The Mother Tantra describes specific sound practices to treat physical ailments such as headaches, chest pain, and other problems. Ancient yogis who lived in the wilderness far from medical care used these and other yogic techniques to maintain their health. The right sounds can create balance between the five elements of earth, water, fire, air, and space. These elements, that are present in nature, are also present in each one of us. Our own particular balance of the elements strongly affects our mental and physical state – so maintaining this balance is essential to good health.

There are practices of chanting certain sounds, certain syllables, which activate or pacify each of the elements. These have a subtle but potent effect on our organs, and on our mental and spiritual states.

**So these sounds work on all levels – the physical,**

**mental, and spiritual?**

There are different levels of sound practice. As the health is affected, so the higher forms of consciousness – emotions, mind, spiritual practice – are also affected. If you are chanting the syllable RAM for the fire element, for example, that vibration is going to open particular channels and chakras, which will affect certain organs, in turn giving a particular experience of higher consciousness.

**Mantras, strings of sacred syllables, are very important in the spiritual practices of Tibet, India, and other parts of Asia. Can you say anything about the origins of mantras?**

Historically, there were enlightened individuals who themselves awakened in those sounds, who realized the power of those mantras, and saw how they could benefit sentient beings. They then developed whole cycles of teachings and practices related to those mantras.

In essence, though, it is much deeper. Energetically, each individual sound is produced by its own root, which is beyond time and space. This is beyond historical concept. It says in the teaching that when the sound and innate awareness merge, it produces speech – enlightened speech and samsaric speech. So clearly, whenever we speak, if our speech is connected with awareness, it will be aware speech, very pure.

I will give an example of what I call “primordial sound.” In Bon dzogchen (Great Perfection) the three most important seed syllables are AH, OM, and HUNG. These can be written in Tibetan letters, but the real AH, OM, HUNG are the sounds themselves. And these sounds can have a profound effect on the person chanting them.

When someone produces the sound AH, it clearly opens their heart center in a very spacious way. This unblocks energetic, emotional, and psycho-



AH OM HUNG

logical blocks. Then, through chanting OM, one can reconnect with missing elements or qualities within oneself. Let's say that someone has a sadness that blocks her whole existence.

With AH you open the channels, then with OM





you try to connect with a sense of joy that has been hidden, and with HUNG you try to bring it into manifestation. So to use this as a practice, once connecting with the joy, we would continuously sound HUNG and feel more and more joy. It's like charging up a potential. When the soul is finally charged with that joy, when you open your mouth, so many beautiful words come out. You want to write letters, you want to do things for others, you want to have joy and fun in your life. Using sound in this way can be a very healing practice on many levels.

**It sounds like these practices are very relevant for modern people, not just for the ancient yogis.** Very relevant. In this modern time, with the many stresses we face, we need to develop ways to balance and harmonize our energy. This is important of course for health. But, most important, it can support our spiritual growth. That is my purpose in teaching these very ancient Bon practices – to help support people in their spiritual growth. That is the most important reason for me.



## THE SOUND OF SILENCE

*An edited excerpt from oral teachings given by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche during the Bardo Retreat at Serenity Ridge, April, 2003.*

When you find a moment of silence, you can see it in two ways. One way is to see what is not there. You may say, “The beautiful music is not there anymore” or, “Someone I love to talk to is not talking anymore.” You see it here as an absence rather than recognizing what silence itself is. However, you can also look at silence in a different

way. When you find a silent moment, don't think of it as the absence of all those sounds but rather, realize that the silence itself is an open space where pure sound, knowledge, teaching, or anything can appear. You recognize the silence in this way as complete, clear and open. You recognize silence as the potential for manifesting all the speech of enlightened beings, and not only enlightened beings, all beings. You recognize silence as full of power. You recognize it as full of joy.

When you open that door to what silence itself is, you feel more and more of the joy and power in it. It's a very opening experience. Silence is not the absence of something. It's not dead. It's full of energy and it's full of joy.

When you walk into a room and there is a sign: “Silence Please” that is not what we are talking about here. That sign just means “Hush up!” or “Don't make noise!” That sign implies that in that room we are bothered by sound and we would enjoy an absence of sound. It doesn't foster an insight or recognition of the silence itself. It is not saying that there is a great thing inside the silence, nor is it encouraging you to discover that. This difference in perspective is as huge a difference as that of earth and sky. Or, probably like the difference between sutra and dzogchen. One who is practicing sutra may try to avoid sound by going up into the mountains. But a dzogchenpa might go up into the mountains and visit the same silent place not to avoid sound, but rather to discover the inside of silence, the life in silence, the recognition in the silence. I don't mean that sutra will not do that, but the original intention is very different.

A little later, Rinpoche emphasized: There is a very important distinction between one's being aware of the silence and just being silent. Silence is always there. The nature of mind is always there. When you're awake, it's there; when you're asleep it's there; when you're confused, it's there; when you're happy, excited, jumping, it's there. It is always there. We are not talking about whether the presence of your awareness is there or not, we are talking about your awareness of that presence. Right? Being aware of what it is is more important than knowing something is there.

**Text selected by Jantien Spindler**





# START WITH YOUR BODY

In the 2009 Fall issue of *Buddhadharma* was a panel discussion about meditation and body awareness with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and other Buddhist teachers. We reprint the answers by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, and start with the introduction by Anne Carolyn Klein. You can read the complete article on [www.lionsroar.com](http://www.lionsroar.com).

**Anne Carolyn Klein:** When we hear words like “meditation,” “mind-fulness,” or “mind training,” we often assume we’re working with our minds alone. But nothing could be further from the way it really is. Meditation, mindfulness, and mind training are full-being enterprises. They involve our whole body and our body’s energies, including how speech expresses those energies, and how mind rides on them.

It’s not surprising that we think about mind training in this way. Since Descartes, Western culture has articulated a chasm-like divide between mind and body, and an analogous one between reason and emotion. But emotions are experienced so strongly through the body that when we leave it out of our meditation equation, we are likely to leave feelings aside as well. And when meditation does not encompass feelings, it is difficult for practice to reorient our lives as deeply as we intend it to do and need it to do.

The discussion here illuminates the body’s importance in several ways. As Phillip Moffitt and Reggie Ray point out, observation of the body helps us overcome the sense of solidity we have superimposed on it. In this way, the body gives us access to our conditioned nature, a teaching central to Buddhist teachings. The more dualistic our sense of mind and body, the more we objectify the body and see it as a tool for our use. This, in turn, reinforces our mistaken sense of the body as a thing. As all students of Buddhism know, moving past the illusion of solidity is vital for removing the further delusion that we are, or have, a self-enclosed independent self. We are not such a self, and we don’t have such a self. Never did.



The panelists note that by beginning with “the part of our minds we call the body,” we find easier access to stabilizing our awareness. As Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche points out, if we work with the body, we can avoid forcing the mind to be quiet. The mind will quiet naturally, because body and mind profoundly affect one another. Focused on the body, our mind is less likely to wander off into our own story lines.

Moreover, through understanding the way coarse and subtle energies move through the body, we can appreciate that our posture directly affects our minds, just as the state of our mind will also affect our body. This is the significance of the different postures and movements of Tibetan and Indian yogic practices.

Through an experience of the conditioned nature of the body, we also begin to approach the unconditioned. The body can bring us to the ultimate in two ways.

First, as noted, we can see through the illusions of permanence, solidity, or independence that we superimpose on our body and everything else, especially our sense of self. Unless we stop to





reflect, even our own mind appears to us in that guise: "I'm always angry. I can't change this."

Second, the state of enlightenment itself is expressed in what are known as the three bodies, or dimensions. These are purified analogues of our own body. Our "buddha-fied" physical body becomes the emanation body (*nirmanakaya*), our energy becomes the resplendent body (*sambhogakaya*), and our genuine mind becomes the truth body (*dharmakaya*). There is much to understand here at a refined level. At the very least, it is clear we must open deeply to the subtle reality of our own body, speech-energy, and mind-nature to manifest their enlightened potential.

Viewed in these ways, the body is not just something associated with our individual manifestation in the world. When we feel into it more subtly, we can experience what Cyndi Lee calls "the energetic circuitry" that connects people. This is a palpable force in practice, and an important reason why all Buddhist traditions encourage us to practice together, in the same room, or in imagined synchronicity, so that the dedication of our full minds and bodies can support us in the unfolding of practice. As Nagarjuna famously said, through paying attention to the conventional, the conditioned, we will recognize the ultimate, the unconditioned. We recognize it not as some abstract truth, but as our own intimate nature, the ground of the entire mind-body system.

**Buddhadharma:** In Western culture, meditation is most often thought of as a mental or psychological practice. In what way is it also a body practice? (...)

**Buddhadharma:** You [Phillip Moffitt] spoke of the Buddha's formulation of "awareness of the body in the body." What do you take this to mean? (...)

**Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche:** In our tradition, we often talk about practice from the perspective of the body, the flow of the wind (*prana*), and the arising awareness of the mind. The average person can deal with the body much more easily than working immediately with the flow of wind, or energy, or the subtleties of awareness of the mind. So it's good to start with posture, with a good sitting position, such as the five-point or seven-point posture. The moment somebody is

sitting in one of those positions, all the channels and the chakras align, which supports good flow of the wind, which supports awareness. Mind requires much less effort to be in the state of awareness. The role of the body, then, is to help the prana, and the prana helps the mind. If someone wanted to bypass the body and the wind, and try to directly force the mind into achieving sudden awareness, that would be almost impossible.

We also practice a physical yoga, *trulkhor*, with movements designed to open particular chakras and channels, because in those chakras and channels, there are particular forms of prana, which are the direct cause of specific kinds of awareness. Whenever they are open and the winds are flowing better there, it's easier for the mind to be aware. Working with the body can avoid trying to force the mind to be quiet. When you try to tell the mind to sit quiet, it often does the opposite. If you're trying to tell mind what to do, mind never listens. But if you create the right causes and conditions, mind will follow.



**Buddhadharma:** Isn't *trulkhor* a relatively advanced practice?

**Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche:** Some kinds of *trulkhor* are quite subtle, but the overall point of the physical yoga is that it can be easier to work with the body as a support for awareness than to work directly on the mind. Why are so many people interested in yoga? Because it's easy to follow. Of course, it's not necessarily easy to do, but it's much easier than dealing with a lot of complicated stages of mind practices. The popularity of yoga in the West is a wonderful thing because it can become a door to dharma. It can start as an interest in fitness, well-being, and health, and gradually it can become the door to higher understanding. Unfortunately, it can also be just a physical fitness regimen, and its original purpose of supporting awareness is lost. (...)





**Buddhadharma:** How is something as rarified as the sambhogakaya and the dharmakaya still “body” in the sense that we understand body, as the thing with ears and nose and toes?

(...)

**Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche:** In my tradition, we work with body, speech, and mind as three doors. The body is a doorway into the nirmanakaya, speech into the sambhogakaya, and mind into the dharmakaya. If we engage these well, they become gateways to enlightenment, to buddhahood. If we leave them aside, we will not develop the kayas, the enlightened manifestation. If you don't work at all with the body, for example, you are going to miss the nirmanakaya aspect. I have been teaching about sound and speech as healing, which works with the sambhogakaya aspect.

(...)

**Buddhadharma:** There can be a lot of pain, discomfort, and loss of ability associated with the body that can make practice difficult, and many people have been known to just give up practice. What kinds of instructions can be helpful for people who are experiencing diminished function?

**Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche:** I often hear of people who have had an injury, perhaps even a brain injury, and their ability to meditate is not what it was before. But just because your body has become weaker doesn't mean the mind is unable to practice. In some sense, the mind has the



ability to do its own practice regardless of the conditions of the body. That must be understood. In the end, mind is totally free. It does not depend on the body. We may think, even deep in our consciousness, that if our body is not working well, we are no longer able to practice. We think the body is getting old, so the mind is getting old. Mind is ageless, beyond birth and death. Thinking that whatever happens to body happens to mind, to me, is the biggest problem we have. It's one of the biggest sources of suffering.

(...)

**Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche:** Illness and adverse physical conditions affect what we call the moving mind, the thinking mind, the mind that can guide awareness in various directions. But in the end we'll have to give up the thinking mind. It dissolves into space along with everything else, and we're left with pure awareness. Nothing affects pure awareness.

(...)

**Text selected by Ton Bisscheroux**





# TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE'S 2018 EUROPEAN SEMINARS AND ONLINE TEACHINGS

| When                      | Where                         | What                                                                              | More information                                                 |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Flexible dates and times  | Your computer or other device | TWR LIVE                                                                          | <a href="http://ligminchalearning.com">ligminchalearning.com</a> |
| May 4 – 6                 | Berlin, Germany               | Weekend seminar:<br>The Seven Mirrors of Dzogchen, Part 2                         | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.de">www.ligmincha.de</a>           |
| May 8 – 9                 | Berlin, Germany               | Public talks:<br>Meditation – The Impact of Gross and Subtle Energies on the Mind | Bodhicharya Deutschland                                          |
| May 11 – 13               | Vienna, Austria               | Weekend seminar:<br>The Five Wisdoms                                              | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.at">www.ligmincha.at</a>           |
| May 12 – June 10          | Your computer or other device | Interactive online course:<br>Tibetan Dream Yoga                                  | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>         |
| May 19 – 21               | Bulle, Switzerland            | Weekend seminar:<br>The Practice of the Heart — The Heart of the Practice         | <a href="http://www.twr-bulle.ch">www.twr-bulle.ch</a>           |
| May 25 – 27               | Paris, France                 | Weekend seminar:<br>A-tri, Part 1                                                 | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.fr">www.ligmincha.fr</a>           |
| June 30 – July 22         | Your computer or other device | Interactive online course:<br>Healing From the Source                             | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>         |
| August 10 – 12            | Helsinki, Finland             | Weekend seminar:<br>The True Source of Healing                                    | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.fi">www.ligmincha.fi</a>           |
| August 11 – September 2   | Your computer or other device | Interactive online course:<br>Tibetan Sound Healing                               | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>         |
| August 14 – 19            | Wilga, Poland                 | Retreat:<br>Dzogchen Teachings of Tapihritsa                                      | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.pl">www.ligmincha.pl</a>           |
| August 21 – 26            | Buchenau, Germany             | Retreat:<br>Twenty-One Nails, Part 4                                              | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.de">www.ligmincha.de</a>           |
| September 7 – 9           | Budapest, Hungary             | Weekend seminar:<br>The Practice of the Six Lokas                                 | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.hu">www.ligmincha.hu</a>           |
| September 29 – October 28 | Your computer or other device | Interactive online course:<br>Awakening the Sacred Arts                           | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>         |

You can also view free recorded Internet teachings from your computer or other device, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Access them on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com), [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org), [www.ligminchalearning.com/twr-live-video-archive](http://www.ligminchalearning.com/twr-live-video-archive) and [www.oceanofwisdom.org](http://www.oceanofwisdom.org)







# Ligmincha Europe Magazine

*# 28 – Spring 2018*



Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche

Ceremony at Menri Monastery

Serving at Serenity Ridge

Spontaneous Creativity





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## THE LIGMINCHA EUROPE MAGAZINE

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# GREETINGS AND NEWS FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Readers, Dear Practitioners of Bon,

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche regularly invites us to share our experiences. I want to share how the practice supports me in daily life. Recently I started a job where I had to work with a computer program I did not know. I could see no logic in it, didn't understand the elaborate procedures, and I got lost in its maze. This evoked anger, madness and panic attacks. At the end of the day I was completely exhausted and although I have been practicing for many years, I felt completely lost. When I brought this to my meditation practice, I realized that the computer program mirrored some deep, unresolved issues in me. After working with it for a few weeks with the support of The 3 Doors, I felt calm. Although I had issues with the program every day, I no longer complained about it. One of the practices that helped me was working with having compassion for myself. Another support was the *Nine Breathings of Purification*: releasing my anger and desire to have a better program and working with my difficulty in understanding it. Two lines of Dawa Gyaltsen – *Vision is Mind; Mind is Empty* – helped me to disidentify with the story. Asking myself “who is the one who panics?” and “who is lost?” it became clear that the issues were related to trust and asking for help. After I resolved these issues it was interesting to see my colleague responding to me with more warmth and openness. With every new task I wandered again in the maze, but I found my way out. This transformation was due to my participation in The 3 Doors Academy. Something that was difficult for me became effortless and spontaneous!



Dawa Gyaltsen.

In this issue we bring you a preview of Rinpoche's new book, *Spontaneous Creativity – Meditations for Manifesting Your Positive Qualities*. While reading the book I had two different WOW experiences. The first was when I recognized something I already knew, but realized that I hadn't trusted my understanding. So, now I could relax. The other was being impressed by how Rinpoche explains the Bon teachings. I thought I understood it, and 5 minutes later wondered what I had been reading!

This issue also contains an interview with Pat Leavitt, the head cook of Serenity Ridge Retreat Center. She has been serving the community for more than 20 years.

You are all invited to go to Menri Monastery in September and be part of the ceremony commemorating the departure one year ago of His Holiness the 33rd Menri Trizin, as well as the enthronement of the 34th Menri, Trizin Lungtok Dawa Dhargye Rinpoche.

And, you can read a biography of H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, a poem, an article published previously in the *Voice of Clear Light*, a Phowa text, and Bardo Practices. In addition there is news from Europe, information about a 3 Doors Retreat in Germany, and the Lishu Institute program.

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





# MEDITATIONS FOR MANIFESTING YOUR POSITIVE QUALITIES

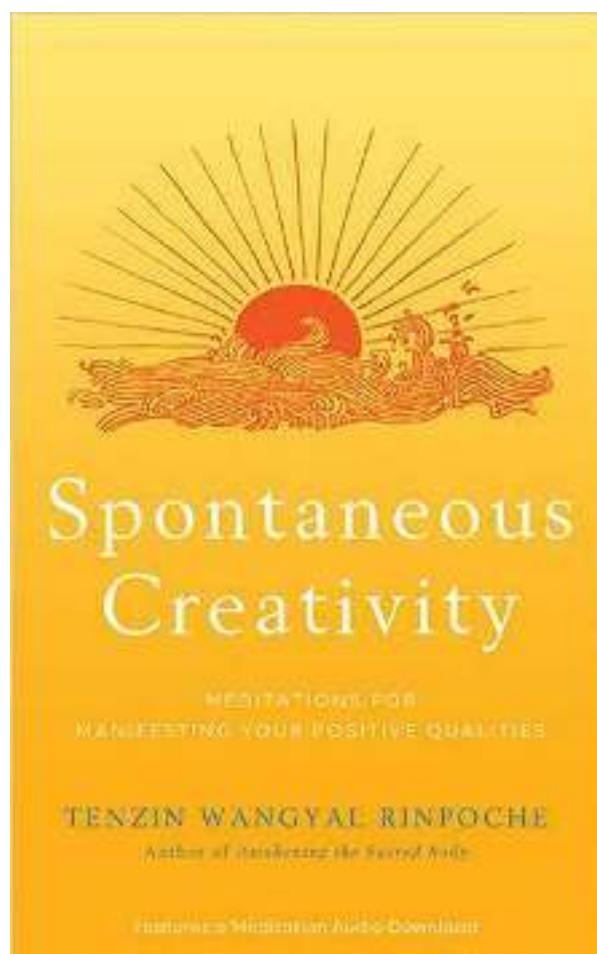
The following is the introduction of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's upcoming new book, *Spontaneous Creativity – Meditations for Manifesting Your Positive Qualities*. The book will be available July 17, 2018, through [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and other outlets.

## Introduction

We are all creative. The kind of creativity I am talking about in *Spontaneous Creativity* is not just a quality possessed by the artist or a gifted few. It is a capacity we all possess, a flow of energy that arises naturally from within, enlivening every aspect of our experience. Creativity is the sacred fire that ignites positive change for ourselves, for others, and for the world. Our very nature is creative, and humankind has evolved because of this.

But it seems to be a condition of human nature, and certainly of our times, that when anything goes wrong, we disconnect from our creative nature and look around for someone or something to blame. It could be our parents, our community, our leaders, even humanity at large, but we hold forces outside ourselves responsible for messing up our lives. We may not be doing this consciously, but often we behave as if someone else is in control, making our decisions for us. We waste precious time and energy focused on others – blaming them, complaining and gossiping about them, and criticizing those who do not share our views. Instead, we need to turn our precious attention to the creative source within and take charge of our own lives.

The practices I offer in *Spontaneous Creativity* are from the dzogchen tradition of Bön Buddhism. *Dzogchen* is Tibetan for “great perfection.” Perfection in this sense is not a state to which we aspire but the essential completeness we already are. The perspective of dzogchen is boundless, meaning there are no fundamental conditions or limits defining our essential nature. When we are not caught up in our pain, doubt, or fear, we can open creatively to what each moment of life has to offer and to the treasure that we have to offer life. Freed of our limitations and agendas, we



become more flexible, more productive, more aware.

I have studied and practiced dzogchen since I was a young monk in India many years ago. Although the origins of these teachings lie in the ancient wisdom schools of Zhang Zhung and Tibet, their essence is like pure water. It is timeless and universal, not the province of any religion or culture. Open and inclusive, the teachings are as relevant today as they were centuries ago. Drawing on these teachings, the guided meditations and practices in *Spontaneous Creativity* are designed to help you activate your ability to meet the challenges you face and express your positive qualities in creative ways.

Chapter 1, *Connecting to the Source*, introduces you to your creative nature and reveals how to connect to the inner refuge, the sacred source of all positive qualities, such as love and joy.

Chapter 2, *Getting to Know Your True Self*,







Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

describes the medicine of the inner refuge and offers methods for accessing it through the three doors of body, speech, and mind.

Chapter 3, *A Journey from Openness to Manifestation*, maps out a five-stage path to realizing your full potential through awakening the creative powers of openness, awareness, inspiration, ripening, and manifesting. The creative potential at each stage is explored, along with practical methods for dissolving any obstacles you may encounter.

Chapter 4, *The Sacred Expression of Suffering and Wisdom*, describes another approach to manifesting your creative potential. Rushen art and tögel art enable you to clear emotional blocks and tap into your innate creativity. In rushen art, expression of pain becomes a path to healing, while tögel art expresses the positive qualities that spontaneously arise.

Chapter 5, *Enlightened Service and Leadership*, moves beyond individual creative expression to the culmination of spiritual practice: service as a sacred path. You discover ways to apply your creative energy and innate skills for the benefit of family, workplace, community, and the wider world, expressing your natural wisdom and compassion as a caregiver and an enlightened leader.

Each of us is part of a larger family, connected to all of life in its myriad forms. If we want to go beyond simply repeating our human history, we need to do more than point out the mistakes of our ancestors. We need to embrace our personal and collective challenges with openness and courage and move forward with fresh inspiration. In this way, we will be able to receive the blessings of those who have come before us and ensure the well-being of generations to come.

My deepest wish is for you to receive great benefit from these teachings as you explore them, take them to heart, and allow them to come alive in your life.

*Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche*

*Spontaneous Creativity*

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The calligraphy was created by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.



NYINGJE – Compassion.





## COMMEMORATING THE DEPARTURE OF H.H. THE 33RD MENRI TRIZIN



ཡུང་རྩུང་བོན་ལྷན་ཁྲིམས་སྤྱི་ཚོགས།

**YUNG DRUNG BON MONASTIC CENTRE SOCIETY**

*(Registered under The Himachal Pradesh Societies Act, 2006)*

### Announcement for All Members of the Bon Community Around the World

Date: 3 May 2018

This is to announce that on the two days of September 3rd and 4th, 2018 (the 23rd and 24th of the 7th month on the Tibetan calendar), Menri Monastery will host a ceremony commemorating one year since the departure of our great guide, refuge, and protector, His Holiness the 33rd Menri Trizin, who passed away last year, completing his intention and dissolving back into the sphere of reality.

We request all his followers and disciples to reserve this important date, and feel welcome to come to the monastery to pay your respects.

Yungdrung Bon Monastic Center Society

Menri Monastery



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Ph.: 91-01799-253003/4 Fax : 91-01799-253005  
Email id: ybmc2@rediffmail.com





## GRAND ENTHRONEMENT CEREMONY FOR H.H. THE 34TH MENRI TRIZIN



ཡུང་རྩུང་བོན་གྲྭ་རྒྱུ་རྩེ་འཛིན་སྐྱོང་ལྷན་ཚོགས།

**YUNG DRUNG BON MONASTIC CENTRE SOCIETY**

*(Registered under The Himachal Pradesh Societies Act, 2006)*

### **Announcement of Grand Enthronement Ceremony for His Holiness the 34th Menri Trizin Rinpoche**

Date: 3 May 2018

On the auspicious day of January 1, 2018, Geshe Dawa Dhargye was chosen as the 34th Menri Trizin: the throne holder of Menri Monastery, and the spiritual leader of the Bon religious tradition. The Menri Trizin was chosen in our ceremony called Tagdril (*rtags sgril*), which relies on the wisdom of the chief protector deities of Yungdrung Bon in making the proper selection. When the selection was complete, all the members of the Bon community around the world welcomed the new Abbot with flowers, and celebrated the fortunate occasion.

Then on February 20, 2018, the anniversary of the birth of the founder of Menri Monastery, Nyamme Sherab Gyaltsen, we held a brief enthronement ceremony in which His Holiness the 34th Menri Trizin Lungtok Dawa Dhargye Rinpoche was officially enthroned on Nyamme Sherab Gyaltsen's throne, a golden throne supported by images of five fearless lions.

Because that ceremony was only a basic enthronement, we are now preparing to hold a more extensive enthronement ceremony at Menri Monastery. This grand enthronement will take place following our commemoration of the passing of a year since the departure of the 33rd Menri Trizin, who completed his intentions and passed to bliss last year.

The grand enthronement ceremony will take place at Menri Monastery on the days of September 6th and 7th, 2018 (the 26th and 27th of the 7th month on the Tibetan calendar). We warmly invite and welcome all of you to come and participate in this celebration.



Yungdrung Bon Monastic Center Society  
Menri Monastery

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# HEALING AND BEING A HEALER



## **A Report from *Walking The Healing Path* in Germany, and other news from The 3 Doors.**

In June 2018, 25 people gathered at the Pauenhof Retreat Center, Sonsbeck, Germany for the first *Walking the Healing Path* program led by Senior 3 Doors Teacher Raven Lee, Ph.D. This new 3 Doors program supports those called to a subtle energy healing path. Over 2 ½ days, the group explored how three qualities – openness, awareness, and warmth of our true nature – can support us as healers and enhance the healing process. Participants shared their perceptions of healing and being a healer and examined the causes of suffering and challenges in our work with others, such as feeling overwhelmed or fatigued, taking on suffering and doubts, or being attached to results.

Participants gave positive feedback about their experience, and dates have been set for next year's retreat, which will be held June 10 – 13, 2019, on Lake Constance in Switzerland. Details and registration will be announced at a later date.

*"A wonderful experience. I use these meditations in daily life, and they help me to not get overwhelmed. Raven is an exceptional teacher with unlimited energy to encourage us. Thank you for this experience."*

G. Jansen, The Netherlands

*"I was really impressed by Raven's touching delivery style and her connection to the heart of each single participant."*

R. Rickenbacher, Switzerland

*"Receiving is important if we want to give. I really enjoyed the feeling of being part of this sensitive group of people and sharing what healing means for everyone."*

T. Bisscheroux, The Netherlands

*"I went to the seminar without expectation and was overwhelmed by the simplicity and effectiveness of the way Raven conducted the retreat."*

W. Hofmann, Switzerland

## **The Next Opportunity: *Walking The Healing Path* Online, Sept-Nov, 2018**

For those who would like to experience *Walking the Healing Path* from their home, The 3 Doors is pleased to announce that registration is open for a three-month interactive online course from September – November, 2018.

Learn more about the program and Senior 3 Doors Teacher Raven Lee, and register [here](#).



Raven Lee.

*"With over four decades of experience on the healing path, I am aware of the challenges of being empathic and sensitive to others, and the potential to become overwhelmed by subtle energies. It gives me tremendous joy to share the simple yet powerful practices of The Three Doors to support others who are on a similar path."*

Senior 3 Doors Teacher Raven Lee

Please see [The 3 Doors website](#) for information about other upcoming programs, including the next *North American Academy* at Serenity Ridge, VA; the next 9-month *Compassion Project* in Philadelphia, PA; *Exploring the Wisdom Breath Energies* (online in Spanish, with English translation); and *The Awakening Power of Breath* (online).





# BON LAM RIM COMBINED WITH ZHANG ZHUNG NYEN GYUD NGONDRO RETREAT IN LISHU INSTITUTE

In the *Ligmincha Europe Magazine Winter 2017-2018* issue we announced the new Lishu Institute curriculum, starting in September 2018. In this article Sangmo Yangri discusses one of the texts that will be studied.

## Introduction

In September 2018 Lishu Institute will offer a new 8 week long teaching, on the Bon *Lam Rim* combined with an intensive *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud Ngondro* retreat practice. The text of *Lam Rim*, written by Me sTon Sherab Woser, a great Bon Master in 11<sup>th</sup> century, contains foundational teachings in the Bon tradition. Yet, it is generally not well known in the West. This article describes the biography of Me sTon Sherab Woser, and gives an overview of the teaching contained in the *Lam Rim* text.

## Biography of Me sTon Sherab Woser

From the oral transmission *Namkhe Trul Pa Ni, Me la Nam Drag jawa jung*. In the great clan of Me, where the great manifestation of Drenpa Namkha (1) will manifest with a name of Namdrag.

From the oral transmission of Zu Khrul Yeshe (2), in the eastern direction of Tibet, where my blessed son named Sherab Woser will come. The great manifestation of him was already prophesied in the great texts of Yungdrung Bon teaching.

Me sTon Sherab Woser was born in 1058 A.D, to a nomad family in a region Taklung Ra Wa Marpo (3) from the Me clan. He was the youngest son of Yungdrung Nyen (father) and Gur Za Dhar Re (mother). When he was born, he had a circle of hair between his eyebrows, in the middle of his forehead like a fine feather of vulture. At the time of his birth, the sky was filled with light and rainbows. The earth was trembling and blissful sound was echoing from everywhere. Witnessing all these auspicious signs, the villagers generated a great devotion. He was named Namdrag. When he was young, he was calm and inherited a great nature of wisdom.

When he was six, he learned reading and writing



Sangmo Yangri teaching at Lishu Institute.

skills, and received several sacred instructions from his grandfather. At the mere age of eleven, he had attained a great understanding in all the higher texts. At the age of 12 and 13, he studied Tibetan sciences and received many sacred instructions from the Geshe Ta Ton. When he was 16 years old, he went with his brother to Tsang Kyid Khar (4) where they received *chod tor* (5) and *Namdag* (6) teachings from master Zhu Kye Se Chenpo from Zhu (7) clan. Then they went back to their village.

When he was 21 years old, he went to Nyang Tod Kyid Khar (8) where he stayed and performed the weekly offering ritual prayer for the late Zhu Kye Se Chenpo. During that time he listened 13 times the teaching of Gab pa (9), Sem tren (10), Sem De (11), Zod (12) and Sa lam (13) and Tibetan sciences from master Drol Wa Shen Gyal from Zhu clan. Within three years he got perfected in all these teachings and attained the great clarity and understanding like his master Drol Wa Shen Gyal. Yet, he studied those teachings seven more years in the monastery. He did not only study them, he also recorded all his master's (Drolwa Shen Gyal) teachings in a written form and prevailed them in all over the Tibet.

When he was 27, he received Ge Nyen vows from the master Drol Wa Shen gyal (lay practitioner vows). He sometimes did retreats in monasteries, and sometimes he practiced living a life like a mendicant. When he heard that the great master Je Gong Zod Ri Trod Chenpo (14) was in the Shang Phug Le (15) region, he went to meet him and received several sacred Dzogchen instructions and





teaching from him. He practiced Dzogchen consistently and had a great experience of the awareness nature of the mind.

Je Gong Zod Ri Trod Chenpo told him, "Accepting the Gen Nyen vows and negating the monk vows and perceiving them in a bias way is an illusion. Give up the illusion. Inseparable practice of a sutra and tantra is great practice of former great masters." At the age of 29, he received the novice monk vows from him and was named Sherab Woser. He then received Drang Srong vows from Dru Je Yungdrung Lama

(15) and Dru Dul wa Gyaltsen (17) (18). He recorded all the oral teaching of Je Gong Zod Ri Trod Chenpo in written form and showed it to him. Je Gong Zod Ri Trod Chenpo was very delighted to see them and praised him by saying, "You realized the great fruit of my 12 years practice in two years. Your recording of the teachings would also be beneficial for the retinues. Now you must have to stay with me all the time for the sake of preserving my teaching. As I will not live forever and if you don't stay, then the sacred instructions will not get preserved and it will not last long to benefit others. For oneself, practice and do retreat, for others' sake prevail the teaching, for self and others write commentaries on the teaching."

Shortly thereafter he asked his master for permission to go back to his homeland where he gave all the property and land to his brother. He gave a great teaching on the renunciation from samsara several times to his brother. Both had renounced all their belongings. In a Ra Mar cave he did a great practice by cutting through the connection



The Bon Refuge Tree.

to worldly affairs and people. He then turned the wheel of doctrine three times to his devotees in his homeland Tag Lung. Je Gongzod Ri Trod Chenpo had four main disciples. One of them was Me sTon Sherab Woser. He was entrusted all the teaching of him. Among great scholars and practitioners he was performing as if wisdom deity Ma We Senghe has donned the great robe of monks. According to the needs and request of his disciples, he gave 9 to 15 teaching sessions a day. Among his many great commentaries his five great commentaries was most popular:

- *Ta Wa ten la phab pa u ma den nyi* (Establishing the view by revealing the two truths of Madhayamika).
- *Chod pa ten la wab pa Jang Chub Drub Thab* (Establishing the conduct by revealing the great method to accomplish the stages of the path to enlightenment).
- *Ta chod zung drel ten la wab pa dulwa kuntu dhang* (Vinaya conduct).
- *Dulwa dordhu* (Establishing the inseparable practice of view and conduct by revealing the Dulwa kuntu and Dulwa dordhu).
- *Gompe dhon dhu Bon khor tsig zhi Ka Drel* (For the practice reveal the four cycles of Bon precepts).

He attained a great Parinirvana at the age of seventy five while preaching to his disciples in the year 1132.

Though there are many commentaries available on the 320 root verses of the great method to accomplish the stages of the path to enlightenment, e.g. Jangchub Drub Thab Lam gyi Rim Pa. We







chose to teach in Lishu Institute next fall from the commentary of Shen ton Namkha Gyaltsen (A.D. 1088 –1163). He was a close disciple of Me Ton Sherab Woser. Me Ton entrusted all his documents to him. He received *Drang Song* vows from Me Ton Sherab Woser and named him Namkha Gyaltsen. For 13 years he received the teaching from the master and cut through all his doubts.

### The teaching:

Jangchub Drub Thab Lam kyi Rim Pa literally means “a great method to accomplish the stages of the path to enlightenment.” That is through the diligent practice of this teaching, the disciple will be able to enter the path of enlightenment and reach the ultimate liberation. This text provides the disciple with a complete map to follow, starting from the very beginning of the journey. It reveals the different stages of the path and explains the methods to apply.

The teaching will cover the following topics:

- *Relying on a (qualified) teacher*
- *Revelation of the precious human life*
- *Revelation of the fault of samsara*
- *Revelation of the great aspect of devotion*
- *Revelation of the refuge in triple gems*
- *Revelation of the adopting and abandonment of virtuous deeds and non-virtuous deeds*

- *Revelation the afflictions and its antidotes*
- *Revelation of the generating the mind of enlightenment*
- *Revelation the contemplation*
- *Revelation the lack of inherent existence of self and phenomena*
- *Revelation of the sacred oral instruction.*

Though this text is based on the higher Sutric vehicle, these are fundamental teachings that are also found in the preliminary teachings of Tantra and Dzogchen. The former great Masters as well as our current Masters have insisted that these teachings are crucial, as a path on their own but also as an opening door to high tantric and Dzogchen teachings and practices.

### References:

- (1) He was a great master and Siddha in Bon tradition.
- (2) He was a great Bon master in 1196 B.C. He brought the Bon vinaya lineage from Ol Mo Lung Ring to ZhangZhung.
- (3) It is situated in the southern direction of Lhasa, capital of Tibet.
- (4) It is a place of residence of the master of a Zhu lineage and is situated in Tsang province in Tibet.
- (5) It is a text of a outer tantric cycle.
- (6) Text of a outer tantric cycle.
- (7) Zhu is the one of the greatest clan in Bon tradition.
- (8) It is a place of residence of the master of a Zhu lineage and is situated in Tsang province in Tibet .
- (9) Dzogchen text.
- (10) Dzogchen text.
- (11) Dzogchen text.
- (12) Bon cosmological text.
- (13) Text of higher Sutra teaching.
- (14) He was one of the greatest Zogchen master in 11th century and he was the one who revived the Atri Lineage of Gabpa.
- (15) A name of a place which is near Tsang region.
- (16) One of the great master of Dru lineage. Dru is one of the greatest clan in Bon tradition. Two reincarnations of the Penchen Lama was born in this lineage.
- (17) One of the great master of Dru lineage.
- (18) Ordained monk with 250 vows.

**Text by Sangmo Yangri**





# LET'S HAVE A LOOK IN THE KITCHEN

During the Fall Retreat 2017 at Serenity Ridge Retreat Center Ton Bisscheroux, while sitting at a table in the dining room, heard Pat Leavitt talk. Pat is responsible for the meals during the retreats. Ton was impressed by the wisdom words she spoke, and invited her for an interview.

**Pat, when I heard you talk, I thought about the *Tenzo* in the Zen monastery. The *Tenzo* is responsible for preparing the meals for the monks. Since ancient times this position has been held by accomplished monks, or by senior disciples, because the position requires wholehearted practice and aspiration for enlightenment. How did you get the job?**

I had done some cooking for small workshops; one of these was with a friend, Ida Smith, who was then a Ligmincha Council member. She asked me to cook for a small Ligmincha retreat that was held at a Girl Scout camp outside Charlottesville. Then after they acquired Serenity Ridge I began working at the first summer retreat. That was the beginning.

**You've known Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche for 20 years now. Are you close to him?**

There has never been much one-to-one time. I connect with him through *Guru Yoga*, through his talks, his presence and humor when he's here at Serenity Ridge, guided meditations, through his books. Rinpoche's calligraphy is a strong connection for me. I feel his energy through that. His presentation of inner refuge as a practice I think is just brilliant. It's a teacher-student relationship. I was grateful to receive guidance from Rinpoche, after my mother died, about what practices to do for her, and all the lamas here at the time did prayers for her, which meant a lot to me. This may sound funny, but I connect with him through the whole sangha. We're all together in this. I'm on his team, I support his work with my work. I try to.

**Were you familiar with the Bon tradition?**

That was my first encounter with the Bon. After I had been working at the center for a while I began reading Rinpoche's books. *Healing with Form, Energy, and Light* had the most impact on me. The



Pat Leavitt: for more than 20 years head cook at Serenity Ridge Retreat Center.

language about the elements relates to my long-time interest in native American spirituality. The nature-based spirituality. We link new information to what is already familiar: "I chewed it up with my own saliva." See, I view everything through the lens of food! But it took me a while to get accustomed to Tibetan Buddhism – the prostrations, the faces of the wrathful deities were very foreign to me.

I've seen some Western people here who feel very involved with Tibet, they want to go there, do a pilgrimage, wear the clothes, speak the language. It would be wonderful to go to Mt. Kailash but I don't feel a strong need to make myself Tibetan. As I have adopted these prayers into my life I would be satisfied just to know enough Tibetan to understand the prayers in the original language.

I became aware that the Tibetan culture has a hierarchical tradition, where the lay people serve the monastic people. That's how it was done in Tibet, the villagers support the monasteries and the lamas. When asked to give ingredients for the lama house or something they need for a ritual,





we should give the best, the unopened, the freshest. In the East you touch the feet of the person you respect.

You regard your root lama as the Buddha. When you serve them, cook for them, don't breathe on it, wear gloves, take special care, have only pure thoughts when you prepare their food, be as conscious as you can be of your actions. Make yourself as pure as possible so the food is pure. There is a definite sense of the higher and the lower. You don't put a dharma book on the floor; you don't place other things on top of it.

I began to take this more seriously, embodying the respect inherent in the relationship. You regard your teacher as a perfect being, you don't cast doubt or suspicion on them. However, at the same time you have to confirm for yourself that they are an authentic teacher. You look at their credentials. This is stated in all the fundamentals! Once you have done that and satisfied yourself that they are not fake, then you have to treat them with utmost respect. Yet according to Dzogchen view everything is pure and untainted. It sounds like a contradiction but you have to give yourself time to work with these ideas.

### **Would you call yourself more a cook than a Bonpo?**

Why must it be an either-or question? It's all about integration. All day long I connect with the lama attendants, with retreatants. They sometimes tell me what Rinpoche said that made an impression, what was their highlight from the talks. It's in the whole energy of working with the members of the Ligmincha organization, the staff at Serenity Ridge, dedicated practitioners, my co-workers. But there can be disconnection.

### **Can you give an example of that?**

Years ago there was a retreat, there was a talk having to do with beings who lived in onions and garlic. Well, the sangha came back for lunch asking if there was garlic in the food. "Yes, there is plenty of garlic. Why do you ask?" But nobody had communicated to the kitchen ahead of time: Keep the food garlic-free for this retreat. How frustrated and excluded I felt in that moment. I think there must have been a sense of frustration on both sides. The retreatants now felt conflicted about eating garlic-laden food and bringing bad karma on themselves. I felt left out of the loop

and sabotaged, unable to succeed in my aim. So it happens.

### **Have you done Bon practices?**

The Bon Mother Tantra was a strong practice for me early on. You are generating compassion for all sentient beings of the past, present and future with the help of the lama, the yidam, and the khandro. I happen to work well with imagery, so visualization as a way into the meditative zone was a great support. I connected with the power of Sangchog Gyalpo. The construct of using the magical help of these beings is like getting the league of super heroes to help you end suffering of all beings. You're not alone.

Yeshe Walmo taught me how wrathful energy is a positive quality. In the kitchen I have to be wrathful. I often have to protect boundaries, with the wrathful energy I can do that in a clear way to keep people safe.



Yeshe Walmo.

Sherap Chamma is a favorite practice, I get a lot of support from her. I find it restful, cleansing, soothing. It's easy to connect to and rest in that boundless maternal energy.





The activity of hosting one's suffering, as taught by Rinpoche, feels very natural. To be able to divide and shift the attention, these are great and useful skills for everyday life.

The image of the child recognizing the mother, as referenced in the Prayer of the Intermediate State, is a universal one that was already familiar to me. As a metaphor it's so deep and clear.

Many years ago, I attended the Ngondro retreat led by Alejandro Chaoul. He made the point that Guru Yoga is a complete practice. As a fairly new practitioner, this was like a stamp on my forehead that was great. I've spent a lot of time with Guru Yoga, it's a real friend. I've gotten a lot of mileage out of that. How I understand it is that Rinpoche is holding the space for me, representing a realized being, until I manifest myself as a realized being. One is getting more comfortable with the notion of enlightenment. It gave me the chance to develop a relationship with that completely realized being, opening a space inside to taste the qualities of love, compassion, joy, equanimity.

I also sat the Ngondo with Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche, a dedicated teacher with the proverbial voice of the lion. It was inspiring to watch him give the teachings and commentaries, I could feel the freshness, even though he must have presented this many times, the conviction was still there. I could feel the clarity of his connection with this body of teachings.



His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche.

Impermanence contemplation, as taught in *Ngondro*, has been life-changing and so very applicable all the time in the kitchen. We prepare the food, it gets eaten and it's gone.

### **Do you work with the practice of impermanence every day?**

Well, it comes up because the opportunity is there all the time! I have shared with the other kitchen staff people the awareness of impermanence. Change is always with us. When someone makes a mistake, bring awareness to that and move on. Don't attach with disapproval or blame. Always try to transform an obstacle into an advantage.



### **Is there a retreat you have special memories about?**

I have seen many lamas teach here and felt a deep respect for what they are doing. A very special retreat was with Geshe Nyima Oser, who gave a workshop on Tibetan mask-making.

Each of us constructed a mask of Yeshe Walmo using traditional materials and methods. In the practice session we did the Yeshe Walmo prayer. Geshe-la brought his artistic ability to this ancient form such that it was not about personal expression, rather about continuing a living tradition. I saw that larger-than-life face of the wrathful goddess emerging from my hands on the table before me, out of the clay. In that moment I really connected to the wrathful as a positive quality. Yeshe Walmo is like your mother actively protecting you.

### **What does cooking mean for you?**

Cooking is a great element teaching. In the kitchen you encounter the elements. The ingredients are composed of different combinations of them. You can taste the earth in a beet or in lentils. You wash the vegetables in the water, you cook with a fire. You can see how leafy things have wind, the circulation of their veins. You could think of the space element as the consciousness or presence of the cook, the carrier of intention to transform these into the final product. Cooking doesn't happen as an accident.







Pat in the new dining room, doing a mandala offering.

I have come to see clearly that there is no cooking without cleaning, this reiterates the understanding that every action brings a consequence, a fundamental teaching of Buddhism as well as physics. Sometimes we use a bell to mark a pause, and invite everyone in the kitchen to step back and restore their presence, take a breath, notice how they are in their body. I like to think of refreshing my verticality as a human. We don't have to hunch down over the table to peel vegetables.

I also use that moment to ask for help, to connect to Rinpoche from the top of my head. I just flash a brief thought on behalf of the workers and what we're doing for the sangha.

When we pray over our food, we're thinking of offering that food to the higher beings who inspire us, may it be pleasing to them, and may they empower us to free others from suffering. In that pause I pray that through our actions in the kitchen the food will be appropriate and pleasing for the people doing practice on their retreat.

#### **Do you have an aspiration for enlightenment?**

The possibility of complete enlightenment was something I had to chew on, so to speak, to con-

sider it as a reality and not a fairy tale. To allow the possibility that a regular mortal human being could free themselves from conditional time and space, this is quite a leap. Once I could allow that, it changed my orientation to living. I saw it's all about purification. Do it enough and it reveals the natural mind.

#### **Do you want to share some observations you made?**

People come back year after year for retreats. I could see that sharp edges of their personality had worn down, and they were a little brighter, sweeter, softer. I have seen people doing the Three Doors Academy training, over the years becoming more focused. They can contain their energy very well, they come into the dining room, there is no chatter, no dispersal.

We have been having more silent periods in the Bon retreats in recent years. It contrasts with the usual joyful exchange, noise and laughter which is also part of building the sangha community.

But we're still pretty new at this silent containment. On the feedback survey after the retreat one of the questions was "How did you like the silent periods?" and one person answered "What silence?"

One thing I love here is that we are honoring the natural world. When construction began for the second wing of the dorm, huge boulders had to be moved out of the hillside. The lamas performed a ceremony to apologize for moving and scratching the stones. They go to the river to make offerings, honoring the relationship with this place. When we do a tsok, we give to all beings. We weave the practice with the place where we are.



The Lamas are chanting water element mantras.





### **Do you feel the energy of different groups?**

Once we had a retreat in the summer, it was the Tummo practice. People were especially grouchy, bad-tempered and there was a sense of friction. It had to do with what they were working with, I think they had to confront themselves with an obstacle. I felt it too. There was a rare occurrence of an unpleasant verbal exchange between a retreatant and a kitchen worker.

### **How do you see your role at Serenity Ridge?**

I feel so fortunate and blessed to cook for people who are doing inner work. With many I have lovely friendships, it feels like a big family, this network of sangha from all over the world. Together with my team, I strive to complement everything that Rinpoche is doing. The retreat group goes back and forth all day between the Gumpa and the dining room. They can find much to help integrate the teachings – the food, the presentation, the quality of attention in the cooking, even the washing, the cleaning. The work exchange and volunteers can embody in a practi-



Pat Leavitt working in the new kitchen.

cal way. Washing your plate can be a purification practice.

There was once a young man on work exchange, and he had the job of collecting the trash. He had his book with the teachings in his hand. So I suggested that he put it on a shelf to stay clean while he collected the trash, then wash his hands and pick up the book.



Double rainbow over Kunzang Khang, the new office, kitchen and sound studio at Serenity Ridge Retreat Center.





**How do you manage the work, and for so long?**

I agreed to do a job of feeding the people who come to retreats here, in a manner that is appropriate, that fits the energetic essence and purpose of this place, to manifest the food that goes with this teaching experience. It comes out of my vision, creative drive, and how I understand seasons, the qualities offered by different ingredients. We aspire to express values: fresh, local, natural, healthful and affordable meals. The food should be abundant and pleasing, and it should give people a feeling of comfort, of relaxation, security and stability. If people come to a retreat to transform suffering within themselves, the food should support the process.

There's a lot of joy in bringing together the kitchen staff and the volunteers, the residents, everybody contributes something to the mandala. I don't do it for appreciation from others. Yes, we want folks to enjoy what we serve, but praise and criticism can be such a trap of attachment and aversion. Yes, one must listen to the feedback and adjust the menu, increase the quantity, etc. I occasionally do feel like the playwright reading the bad reviews the next morning! But it should not be taken personally.

**How do you reach that result?**

I cheer on my team all the time, validate their work. When a new person comes to work as a dishwasher, I make sure that they understand that everybody's work depends on their work, and how much we all appreciate the job they do. Washing dishes is a tremendous merit. When you're washing everybody's dishes, you're doing purification practice on behalf of every person in the retreat! If they are a practitioner they can recite OM MA TRI MU YE SA LE DU while wiping tables, sweeping, etc. The hired kitchen staff enjoy this beautiful place to work. There is a good vibe and they like the people on the retreat. We work hard and enjoy each other's company.

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

When you serve, doing functional things to support the retreat, then you have to get the teachings where you can find them!

**Interview by Ton Bisscheroux**

Photos by Jana Kolarikova, Polly Turner and Salvador Espinosa



Serenity Ridge Retreat Center with the Garuda House, the Gompa, Kunzang Khang and the lama House.





# WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN EUROPE

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



**May 11 – 13:**

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught in Vienna, Austria, *The Five Wisdoms*. There were about 125 participants.



**May 4 – 6:**

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught in Berlin, Germany, *The Seven Mirrors of Dzogchen*.







**May 19 – 21:**  
Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche  
taught in Bulle, Switzerland,  
*The Practice of the Heart –  
The Heart of the Practice.*



Ligmincha France &  
Suisse romande

**May 25 – 27:**  
Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche  
taught in Paris, France, *A-tri*.







#### May 5 – 6:

In Finland we had the great joy to have for the first time Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche and Geshe Samten Tsukphud to give teachings from *The Heart Drops of Dharmakaya*. It was a great success with about 90 people attending the teachings. Khenpo Rinpoche lead a global livestream meditation for World Peace and Harmony on Saturday evening.

#### June 22 – 24:

In Budapest, Hungary, at the Dharma Gate Buddhist College Choe-khor Tshang Rinpoche taught *A-tri Dzogchen preliminaries*, and quite a few people took refuge with Rinpoche.

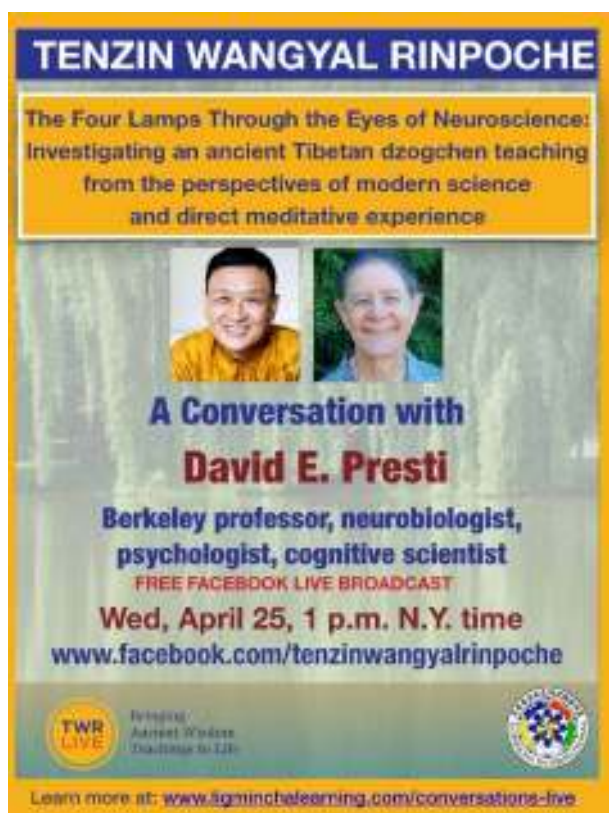


#### June 23 – 24:

Geshe Lhundup taught *Connecting to the Five Elements* on Saturday in Sittard and on Sunday in Utrecht, The Netherlands.







You can watch the recording here:  
[The Four Lamps Through the Eyes of Neuroscience](#)



You can watch the recordings here:

[Healing Pain Through Meditation, Part 1 — May 10](#)

[Healing Pain Through Meditation, Part 2 — May 17](#)

[Healing Pain Through Meditation, Part 3 — May 24](#)

[Healing Pain Through Meditation, Part 4 — May 31](#)

[Healing Pain Through Meditation, Part 5 — June 7](#)

[The Wisdom of Emptiness: the wisdom that realizes the empty, illusory nature of all experience — May 10](#)

[The Wisdom of Emptiness, continued — May 16](#)

[Mirrorlike wisdom: the wisdom that recognizes the clear, unobscured, and unchanging reflective quality of the base — May 17](#)

[The Wisdom of Equanimity: the wisdom that realizes form and space are in equipoise — May 24](#)

[Discriminating wisdom: the wisdom that realizes every phenomenon as being clear and distinct in itself \(begins 37:26\) — May 31](#)

[All-Accomplishing Wisdom: the wisdom that realizes all phenomena are spontaneously, effortlessly, and naturally perfected in the base of self-arising wisdom \(begins 32:32\) — June 7](#)



You can watch the recording here:

[Guided Meditation from the Summer Retreat, continued: Resting in Stillness of the Body, Silence of Speech, and Spaciousness of the Mind — July 1](#)



You can watch the recording here:

[Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Kelly Greene at Chopra Center — May 2](#)





# A TEAR



**A tear of the laughing sun drops in the ocean.**

*Gabriele Karelse*





# PHOWA AND BARDO PRACTICES

In the book *Heart Drops of Dharmakaya* Shadrza Tashi Gyaltsen presents a complete Dzogchen meditation manual from the Bon tradition. The manual is complemented with a commentary by His Eminence Lopon Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche. We reprint the pages 115-119.

## THE THIRD CATEGORY OF ESSENTIAL TEACHINGS FOR THE PRACTICE

*The Traveller Who Crosses the Mountains and Having Mistaken His Way is Helped to Find the Right Path*

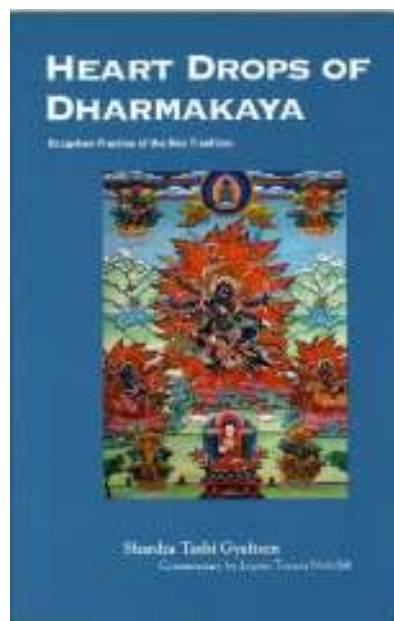
These are the teachings for liberation during the bardo intended for the practitioner of medium capacity. This teaching has three subdivisions, namely the teachings for the intermediate state of life, the instructions just before the moment of death and the instructions of emptiness.

Lopon comments that this section is for those who have not practised during their lifetime and who therefore have to depend on bardo teachings.

## THE TEACHINGS FOR THE INTERMEDIATE STATE

All the beings within what spontaneously exists possess two types of alaya. For example, a mirror automatically collects grime, even though no one puts dirt on it. In the same way, if you have not purified all the tough and subtle causes then those previous karmic traces that you have collected become the seeds for future karmic actions. You have collected many causes and so, without being able to choose, you take birth in the six realms of sentient beings and experience the feelings of happiness, suffering or neutral emotions. These traces have the power to do this. When karmic traces are mixed with consciousness it is called 'deluded consciousness.'

Human beings in particular are bounded by the five aggregates. These five limit human experience so we are completely restricted; thus we don't see the visions of the five Buddha Bodies.



So this limitation of the five aggregates and the five consciousnesses restricts our experience and covers the vision of the pure lights. Also we are bound by the emotions and karmic causes. By this the vision of unification, wisdom and emptiness is covered. We are always taking and collecting deluded visions and being bound by them. By this cause we circulate for innumerable lives in samsara.

Lopon comments that this refers to basic alaya, which is consciousness and those karmic traces dependent on consciousness. These are body, mind, perceptions, emotions and sense organs; other realms have fewer skandhas. For example, the demigods and gods are not bounded by body. Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya, Nirmalakaya, Nature Body and Perfection Body.

Because we always have these sufferings and miseries we begin to search for nirvana, wanting to be released from these fetters. One who raises this intention must from the beginning listen to and learn the right teachings. In the second place what is learnt must be practised with contemplation. Finally what has been practised should give fruit. During this life you must do this or without any doubt you will remain trapped by samsara. This is the purpose of a worthwhile life.

Quote from the *Text of Molten Gold*: "During the bardo of normal life you must learn and practise."





## THE TEACHING FOR THE PERIOD JUST BEFORE DEATH

Now there are three capacities of practitioner. The first dies like a child dying, the second like an old dog dying and the third like a king dying.

For the first, there is no worry about whether one is alive or dying, just as a young child does not know whether it wants to be alive or die.

For the second, there are a further two subdivisions. The first is like a dog who has not prepared for death, but when it realises it is dying, runs from the crowds of people and lies down beside the road outside the town. The second is like a dog who when it realises it is going to die makes time to go away for a long distance to find a cave or an empty valley where it is certain to be undisturbed.

Lopon comments that it does not say to go directly into meditation after having only heard a few teachings — you must learn and understand first. This is like when the Fifth Dalai Lama rebuked the Kagyupa order of Tibetan Buddhism on the grounds that there was no learning, only practice for Siddhas in their monastic syllabus. Indeed it was said of those days that half of Tibet were beggars and most of them were Siddhas!

The third is like the king dying. When he is sick everybody is trying to cure him with medicines and pujas, and after his death all the relatives surround him and shed tears for him and hear his will. Then the people make prayers for forty-nine days, and there is an elaborate funeral with a large gathering. This kind of death is for a person who shows the sign of not being a real Dzogpachenpo practitioner.

That is the way of death for ordinary beings.

The real practitioner, who has visions and experiences with wisdom and clear light, chooses the right body posture for death. This is the lion lying down. The mind is transferred through the eye and mixes with the unification without any extending and conclusion. One just remains there in the natural state and takes death without any distractions.



*Magyu.*

Quote from the *Text of Molten Gold*: “It is important to remember not to be deluded but to be in the natural state just before taking death, which will stop all the elements. The best way is to remain in the unification of clear light. If the practitioner does this then the practice and experience will all help to send him or her to the visions of the intermediate state. The practice will send and the visions of the intermediate state will receive, so one is able to be liberated in a moment.”

Lopon comments that this is like the posture of the Shakyamuni's parinirvana seen in statues.

Lopon comments that this refers to the fact that our body is connected with five elements, each supporting the mind. When the elements disconnect the mind starts to lose its support, then the body, having no connection with mind, no longer works. It becomes like a corpse or rock.

### Bibliography

*Heart Drops of Dharmakaya - Dzogchen Practice of the Bon Tradition*, Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen  
Snow Lion Publications, 2002  
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Text selected by Ton Bisscheroux



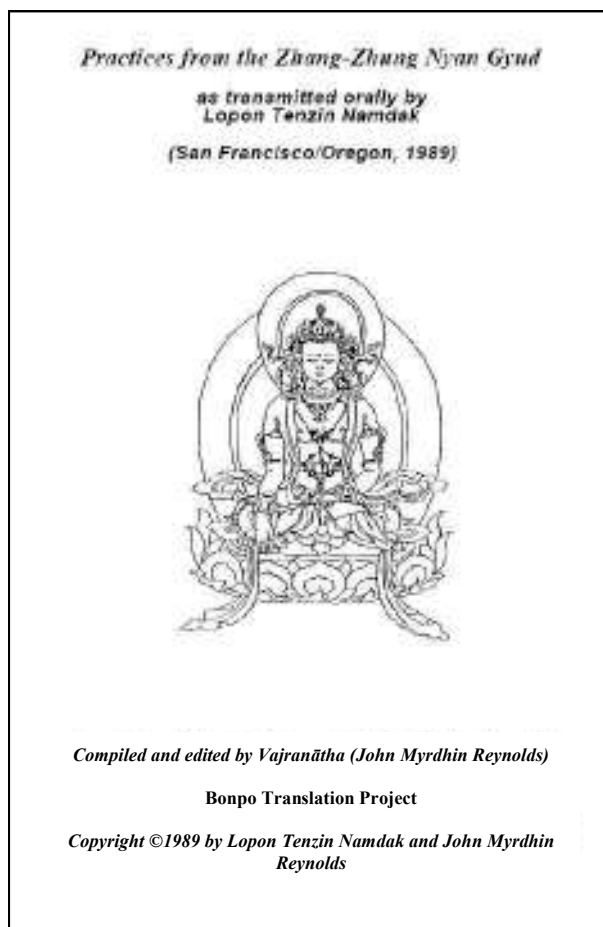


# HOMAGE TO H.E. YONGDZIN TENZIN NAMDAK RINPOCHE

We introduce the most senior teacher in the Yungdrung Bon tradition, His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, by reprinting a chapter from the book *Practices from the Zhang-Zhung Nyan Gyud*. In this book John Myrdhin Reynolds sketches the biography of H.E. Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche. More than any other individual, Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche is responsible for the survival and the development of the ancient Bonpo tradition outside of Tibet. To make the text easier to read, in this reprint, we left out the Wylie transcript when the text was translated.

## LOPON TENZIN NAMDAK

Lopon Tenzin Namdak was born in 1926 in Khyungpo Karro in Kham province of Eastern Tibet. At the age of seven (1933) he entered Tingchen monastery in the same district and in 1941 he travelled to Yungdrung Ling, one of the two leading Bonpo monasteries in Central Tibet. Coming from a family famous for its artists, he was



His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche.





largely engaged here in helping to execute a series of wall paintings in the new temple at this monastery. In 1944, he went on pilgrimage to Nepal, including Solu-Khumbu, Kathmandu, Pokhara, and Mustang. In 1945, he returned to Yungdrung Ling to begin his studies in philosophy. From 1945 to 1950, he lived more or less a hermit's existence with his tutor and master Gang-ru Rinpoche under whom he studied grammar, poetics, monastic discipline, cosmology, and the stages of the path to enlightenment. Following his master's advice, in 1950 he went to Menri monastery, "the medicine mountain," in Tsang province in Central Tibet, in order to complete his studies in preparation for the Geshe degree examination, the Tibetan equivalent to a Doctor of Philosophy. In 1953, he obtained this degree from Menri.

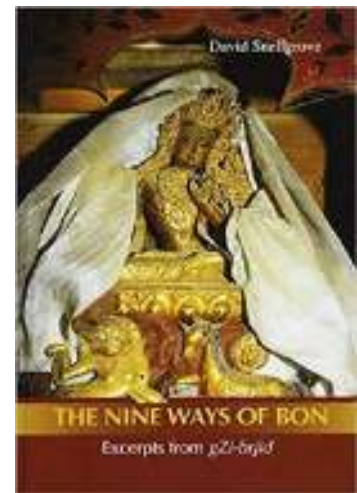


Menri Monastery in Tibet.

From 1953 until 1957, he was the teaching master or professor at Menri. He retired from this position in 1957 as conflict between the native Tibetans and the encroaching Chinese Communists increased in Central Tibet. Until 1960, he remained in retreat at Se-zhig monastery on the Dang-ra lake in northern Tsang. March 10, 1959 saw the Lhasa uprising against the Communist Chinese tyranny over Tibet. Many of the most famous Lamas of Tibet, including the Dalai Lama and the Gyalwa Karmapa, were forced to flee their home and a flood of Tibetan refugees entered India and Nepal. In 1960 Lopon Rinpoche also sought to flee, seeking refuge in India, but he was shot and wounded on the way by Chinese soldiers and was incarcerated in a Chinese prison for ten months. Finally, he was able to make an escape and find his way to safety in Nepal, by way of the small principality of Mustang.

In 1961, while in Kathmandu, Lopon Rinpoche met

and was befriended by the celebrated English Tibetologist, David Snellgrove, who invited him to come to London. Thus Lopon came to serve as a visiting scholar at the University of London and receiving a Rockefeller Foundation Grant, he resided for a time at



Cambridge University. The collaboration with Professor Snellgrove resulted in the publication of *The Nine Ways of Bon* (Oxford University Press, London 1967), which contains translated extracts from the famous Tibetan *gZi-brjid*, the most extensive hagiography of the Buddha Tonpa Shenrab. This was the first scholarly study of the Bonpo tradition from original sources to be made in the West. Lopon Rinpoche remained in England for some three years from 1961 to 1964. He made a second visit to Europe in 1969, when at the invitation of Professor Helmut Hoffman, he was a visiting scholar at Munich University, contributing to the monumental Tibetan-German-English dictionary being compiled there.

Among the nearly one hundred thousand Tibetan refugees who had fled the Chinese occupation of Tibet, a number belonged to the Bonpo tradition. Escaping from Tsang province, the monks of Menri monastery, which had been totally destroyed by the Communists, found themselves in the Kulu-Manali district of Himachal Pradesh state in northwestern India. Impoverished, they were forced to secure a livelihood as road workers. Among their number was Sherab Lodro, the thirty-second Abbott of Menri (1935-1963). Finding the road work hard and exhausting, many of the monks died or suffered from serious illness.

Thus Lopon Tenzin Namdak undertook the task of raising funds and finding land in order to establish a Bonpo settlement in India. With the financial help of the Catholic Relief Service, he purchased a piece of undeveloped forest land at Dolanji, near Solan in Himachal Pradesh. In 1967, the settlement was formally established and registered with the Indian Government under the name of the Tibetan Bonpo Foundation. About seventy







Menri Monastery at Dolanji in Himachal Pradesh, India.

families transferred there from Manali and each received a house and a small piece of land, the size depending on the number of people in the family in question. The Tibetan Bonpo Foundation possessed its own constitution and administration, with the Abbot of Menri acting as president. The new settlement at Dolanji was given the name Thobgyal Sarpa after the village of Thobgyal in Tsang province which was located near to Menri Monastery. Most of the Tibetans in the new settlement came from the Mt. Kailash region and from Upper Tsang in the west and from Hor, Kongpo, Derge, Amdo and Gyarong in the east.

After the death of Sherab Lodro, the Abbot of Menri in 1963, the Abbott of Yungdrung Ling became the spiritual head of the Bonpo community in exile. He came to Dolanji with a group of monks and founded a new monastic community, overseeing the erection of some small houses and a small prayer chapel. In 1969 the successor to the deceased Abbot of Menri was chosen by lot. The office fell to Jongdong Sangye Tendzin (1928-1968), who thus became the thirty-third Abbot of Menri. Following the death of the Yungdrung Ling Abbott, Sangye Tendzin assumed the spiritual leadership of the Bonpos in exile. More houses were erected, as well as a library, and an Abbot's residence. Monastic life was organized around the ordinances of the Vinaya. The foundation for a main temple was laid in 1969 and completed in 1978. It was given the name of Pal Shentan Menri

Ling. The whole complex was designated as the Bonpo Monastic Centre and formed part of the Tibetan Bonpo Foundation.

From 1970 to 1979 Lopon Rinpoche continued teaching and writing while residing at the Bonpo Monastic Centre, and in addition, he was much engaged in the publishing in New Delhi of a large number of important Bonpo texts. From 1967, when the first monks came to Dolanji, the teaching was done by Lopon Sangye Tenzin, the former head teaching master at Menri, assisted by his successor, Lopon Tenzin Namdak, the founder of the settlement at Dolanji. When Sangye Tenzin died in 1968, Lopon Tenzin Namdak was assigned the full responsibility for the education of the younger generation of monks. By 1978, a sufficient number of Bonpo texts had been published, so that classes could be organized around them in a curriculum. Thus a Lama's college was established in 1978, organized under the guidance of Lopon Rinpoche, who served as one of the two professors at the college. The official name of the college is Yungdrung Bon Shedrup Lobnyer Dude.

Historically, the first Bonpo monastery to be erected in Central Tibet was established under the patronage and the leadership of the Dru family in 1072 and it was known by the name Yeru Wensakha. It was destroyed in a disastrous flood in 1386 and was revived in 1405 as Menri, which soon became the foremost Bonpo monastery in



Triten Norbutse Monastery in Katmandu, Nepal.





Central Tibet. Yungdrung Ling monastery was founded much later in 1834. The purpose of the new Lama's college at Dolanji was to preserve the tradition of education in philosophy established and developed at Yeru Wensakha, where philosophical analysis and logic were applied to the understanding of the mdo sngags sems gsum, that is to say, the teachings of Sutra, Tantra, and Dzogchen. Unlike the Nyingmapa tradition, the Bonpos developed a system of logic and debate specifically relating to the Dzogchen teachings. At Menri in Tibet, the monks studied the five scriptural systems in the philosophy college, but all instruction in Tantra and Dzogchen was done in private with individual masters. The five scriptures, actually five collections of texts, are:

1. logic and epistemology;
2. the Perfection of Wisdom Sutras;
3. philosophy;
4. cosmology, and
5. monastic discipline.

However, at the revived Menri at Dolanji, students also study Tantra and Dzogchen in the college, as well as the above five scriptural systems which pertain to the Sutra level of teaching. Also included in the course of studies are the secular sciences, such as grammar, poetics, astrology, medicine, and so on. The college has a nine year program of studies which prepare the student for the Geshe degree examination. The first group of young monks completed the course in 1986. Recently, another Bonpo monastery and college has been established under Lopon Tenzin's direc-

tion in Nepal. Known as Norbutse, it is located near the famous hill of Swayambhu, to the west of Kathmandu.

In 1989, Lopon Tenzin Namdak made his third visit to the West, this time to England, America, and Italy, at the invitation of the Dzogchen Communities in those countries. During the course of several months, March through August, Lopon Rinpoche presented to interested Western students the Dzogchen teachings according to the Bonpo tradition of the A-khrid and the Zhangzhung snyan-rgyud.



His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche with John Myrdhin Reynolds.

**Thanks to John Myrdhin Reynolds, who gave us permission to reprint this text.**

Website: [www.vajranatha.com](http://www.vajranatha.com)

***This summer there are two opportunities to go to teachings with His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche in Shenten Dargye Ling in France.***



Dzogchen teaching and practice retreat with Yongdzin Rinpoche and Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche. [Registration](#)



Practice retreat on Dzogchen meditation with Yongdzin Rinpoche and Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche. [Registration](#)





# RECOGNIZING YOUR RELATION TO PRACTICE

We reprint an oral teaching given by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, summer 2005, that was published in *The Voice of Clear Light*, July 2006.

As I guide meditation practices at retreats, I often say during the visualization, “Try to imagine and feel.” But there are other ways to approach the practice. The best way would be that you don't even have to imagine, that you don't have to visualize, that you don't have to try and feel; rather, the moment you intend to be in the experience, you are there. It's like when you are eating lunch – do you have to imagine eating lunch? Do you have to feel that you're eating lunch? Do you have to think that you're eating lunch? No, you are eating lunch and that's it. There's no question that would be the best way to practice, right?

What would be the second best way to do practice? Feeling the experience, right? Feeling it with heart, feeling it in a real or authentic way. When I am feeling the presence of a divine being of light, for example, the sense of reality in that experience can be just as strong as when I experience a

negative feeling or emotion. How real does that negativity feel? It is with that same sense of reality that I can feel the presence of the quality of love, or generosity, or openness. So, having this feeling naturally arise in practice would be the next best thing.

And then, to simply imagine the presence of the divine being of light, or the quality of generosity, say, during practice is the next best way. “Imagine” is a word I use a lot in teaching. In every positive experience we aspire to in practice, we first have to imagine it happening. We have to imagine it well, and we have to have a good, creative imagination. When done right, this imagining has a sense of realness to it, a good sense of clarity to it. There is some sense of certainty there, but still it is imagination. When the imagination is real, clear and certain, then the practices will definitely have power. That is not so hard to imagine, is it?

Finally, if imagining is difficult for you, then the next best possibility is for you to use your conceptual mind and in a way, think your way through the practice, talk yourself through the practice.





This is similar to being guided by someone else in meditation. The practice leader is guiding your experience by talking to you. You are listening to the sound of the words, and hopefully following the leader at that moment. Over time, with the help of the leader you can develop confidence and a deeper connection to the practice.

So you can see the different ways in which practice can work. They are all valid in their own ways. The only question is: Which way do I normally find myself connecting to practice; and from that place, how can I further develop my connection?

Students often tell me, “I can feel” or “I can't feel”; or, “I can visualize” or “I cannot visualize.” They'll ask, “Am I doing it right?” “Am I supposed to do it a different way?” These questions always pop up in people's minds, right?

In a way, everyone is in the right place in practice, no matter what method they are using. It cannot be the wrong place, because it is the only place that exists at that moment for you, so to be there is the right place to be. It is important to recognize that it is indeed the right place for oneself at this

moment – while also to recognize that other experiences are possible. For example, if you have become comfortable with using the imagination during practice, then you may want to try practicing now a little bit more from the place of feeling. If a better approach is easy for you, then begin practicing in that better way. If it's not so easy, then understand that the way you are connecting to practice at the moment is fine. Don't think, “I am unable to do it the better way; I'm only able to do it this way – what's the matter with me?” When you think in this way, not only are you saying that your way is a bad way, but you are mistakenly labeling yourself. Recognizing this will be the first step of growth in your development.

Looking at the different ways of doing the practice, where do you stand? Have you reflected on your choices? Have you narrowed them down? Can you now look at your practice and say, “I think I practice this way and sometimes that way”? Have you become comfortable in a certain way of practicing? And have you looked into the next step you can take?

**Text selected by Jantien Spindler**





# TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE ON FACEBOOK LIVE



Bringing  
Ancient Wisdom  
Teachings to Life

Four July broadcasts include conversation with prominent female teachers of Buddhism and meditation.

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche has scheduled four free TWR LIVE broadcasts in July 2018, including a 90-minute conversation with five prominent female teachers of Buddhism and meditation, plus three teachings/guided meditations in his series of “Pith Instructions: Personal Reflections on the Heart Essence of Dzogchen.” See full schedule below.

All broadcasts can be viewed on the [Facebook page of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche](#). You don't need a Facebook account to view them. Real-time translation will be available in as many as 17 languages. Access translations at: [www.ligminchalearning.com](http://www.ligminchalearning.com)

For more information, visit: [www.twrlive.org](http://www.twrlive.org)

**Thursday, July 26, 18.00 h – 19.30 h C.E.T.:  
Honoring the Feminine: How the Warmth of  
Wisdom Contributes to Social Change. A conver-  
sation with prominent female teachers of Bud-  
dhism and meditation.**

*“It has been one of my longstanding dreams to converse with female teachers of Buddhism and meditation, and now this dream has come true. On July 26 at 12 noon New York time I will host a free, Facebook Live conversation with Lama Tsultrim Allione, Anne Carolyn Klein, Sharon Salzberg, Traleg Khandro and Marcy Vaughn. Each of these prominent and knowledgeable Western scholars embodies qualities that are so much needed in this world, such as love and compassion.”*

Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

More information about this conversation and invited presenters can be found at: [www.ligminchalearning.com](http://www.ligminchalearning.com)



**Sunday, July 15, 2018, 15.00 h C.E.T.:  
Finding Fullness in Emptiness**

**Sunday, July 22, 2018, 15.00 h C.E.T.:  
Discovering Light in the Darkness**

**Sunday, July 29, 2018, 15.00 h C.E.T.:  
Unification of the Three Spaces**

In three live teachings and their associated guided meditations, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche helps you realize that even in feelings of emptiness one can discover a sense of fullness and completeness; even in the deepest darkness one can find the light of awareness; and within all levels of experience – no matter how painful or blocked – one can discover the ultimate refuge: the single vast space of wisdom from which love, joy, and other positive qualities naturally arise.

The three broadcasts are part of Rinpoche's ongoing series of “Pith Instructions: Personal Reflections on the Heart Essence of Dzogchen.” Learn more about the series at [www.twrlive.org](http://www.twrlive.org).

View live at:

[facebook.com/tenzinwangyalrinpoche/videos](https://facebook.com/tenzinwangyalrinpoche/videos)

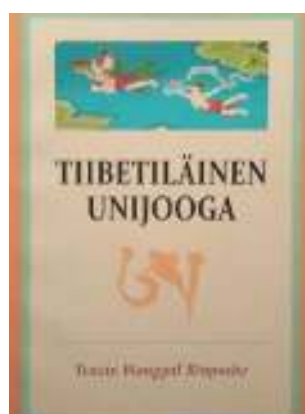
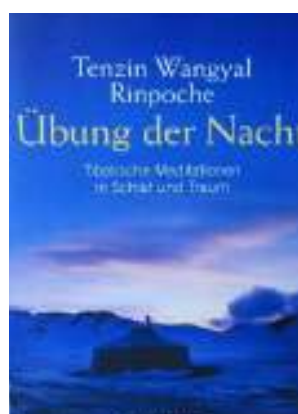
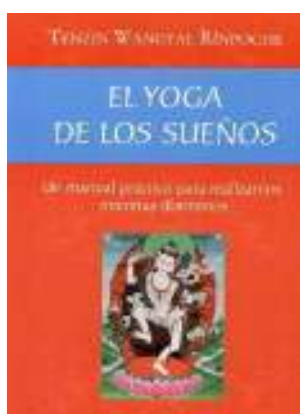
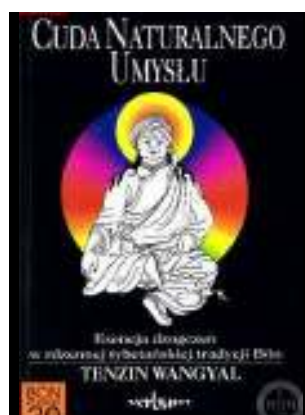
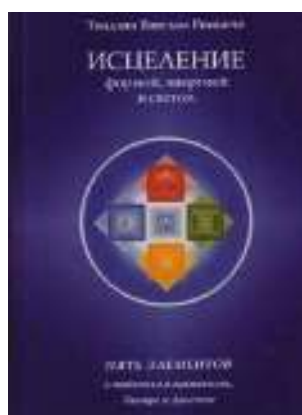
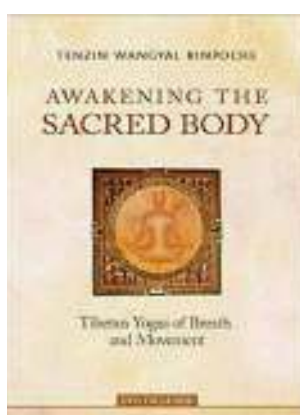


Lama Tsultrim Allione, Anne Carolyn Klein, Sharon Salzberg, Traleg Khandro, Marcy Vaughn and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

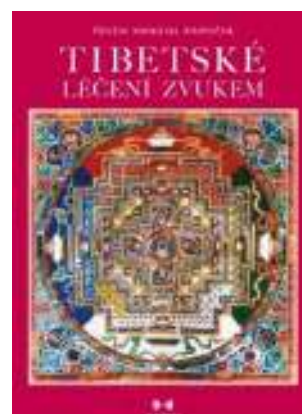
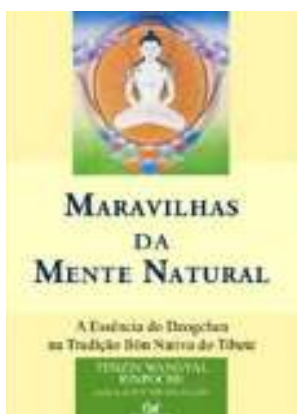
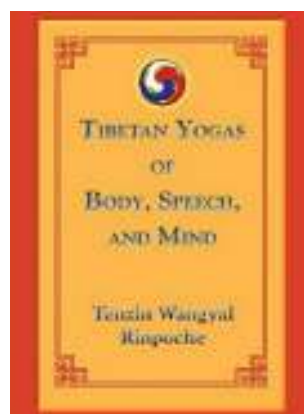
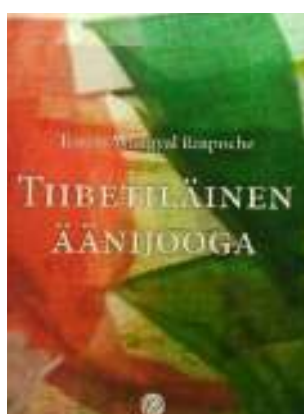
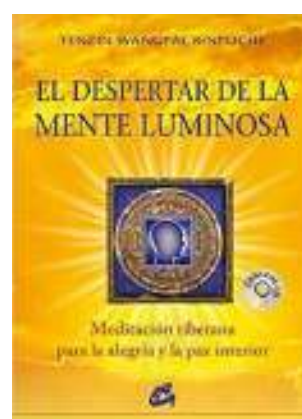
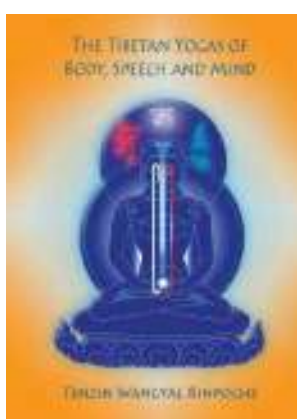
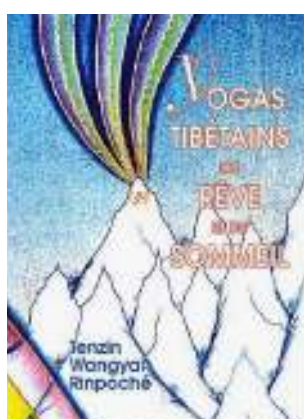
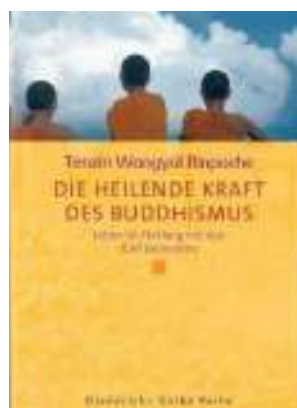
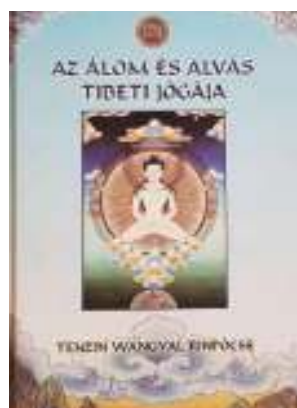


# BOOKS BY TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche has written books in English, along with several other books in Dutch, Spanish, and Tibetan. His books have been translated into 19 different languages. You can find a listing of Rinpoche's published works, including translations, at the [Ligmincha International website](http://ligmincha.com).









## TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE'S 2018 EUROPEAN SEMINARS AND ONLINE TEACHINGS

| When                                | Where                         | What                                                                                                                                                                          | More information                                                 |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| July 15<br>15.00 h C.E.T.           | Your computer or other device | TWR LIVE on Facebook: Finding Fullness in Emptiness                                                                                                                           | <a href="http://www.twrlive.org">www.twrlive.org</a>             |
| July 22<br>15.00 h C.E.T.           | Your computer or other device | TWR LIVE on Facebook: Discovering Light in the Darkness                                                                                                                       | <a href="http://www.twrlive.org">www.twrlive.org</a>             |
| July 29<br>15.00 h C.E.T.           | Your computer or other device | TWR LIVE on Facebook: Unification of the Three Spaces                                                                                                                         | <a href="http://www.twrlive.org">www.twrlive.org</a>             |
| July 26<br>18.00 h – 19.30 h C.E.T. | Your computer or other device | TWR LIVE on Facebook: Honoring the Feminine: How the Warmth of Wisdom Contributes to Social Change. A conversation with prominent female teachers of Buddhism and meditation. | <a href="http://www.twrlive.org">www.twrlive.org</a>             |
| August 10 – 12                      | Helsinki, Finland             | Weekend seminar: The True Source of Healing                                                                                                                                   | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.fi">www.ligmincha.fi</a>           |
| August 11 – September 2             | Your computer or other device | Interactive online course: Tibetan Sound Healing                                                                                                                              | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>         |
| August 14 – 19                      | Wilga, Poland                 | Retreat: Dzogchen Teachings of Tapihritsa                                                                                                                                     | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.pl">www.ligmincha.pl</a>           |
| August 17 – September 22            | Your computer or other device | Interactive online course: The Three Heart Mantras                                                                                                                            | <a href="http://ligminchalearning.com">ligminchalearning.com</a> |
| August 21 – 26                      | Buchenau, Germany             | Retreat: Twenty-One Nails, Part 4                                                                                                                                             | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.de">www.ligmincha.de</a>           |
| September 7 – 9                     | Budapest, Hungary             | Weekend seminar: The Practice of the Six Lokas                                                                                                                                | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.hu">www.ligmincha.hu</a>           |
| September 29 – October 28           | Your computer or other device | Interactive online course: Awakening the Sacred Arts                                                                                                                          | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>         |
| November 17 – December 16           | Your computer or other device | Interactive online course: Tibetan Dream Yoga                                                                                                                                 | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>         |

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# Ligmincha Europe Magazine

**# 29 – Summer 2018-Summer 2019**

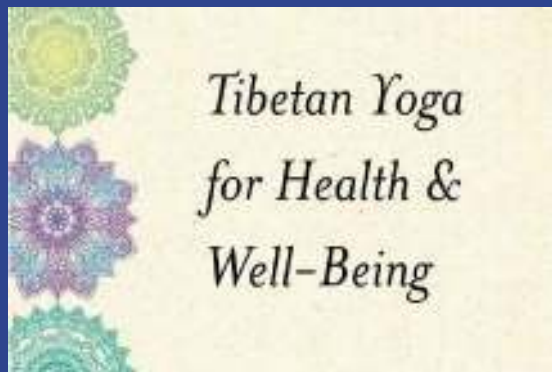


**H.H. Lungtok Dawa Dhargyal Rinpoche**

**Enthusiasm in Our Dharma Family**

**CyberSangha**

**Dying with Confidence**



*Tibetan Yoga  
for Health &  
Well-Being*





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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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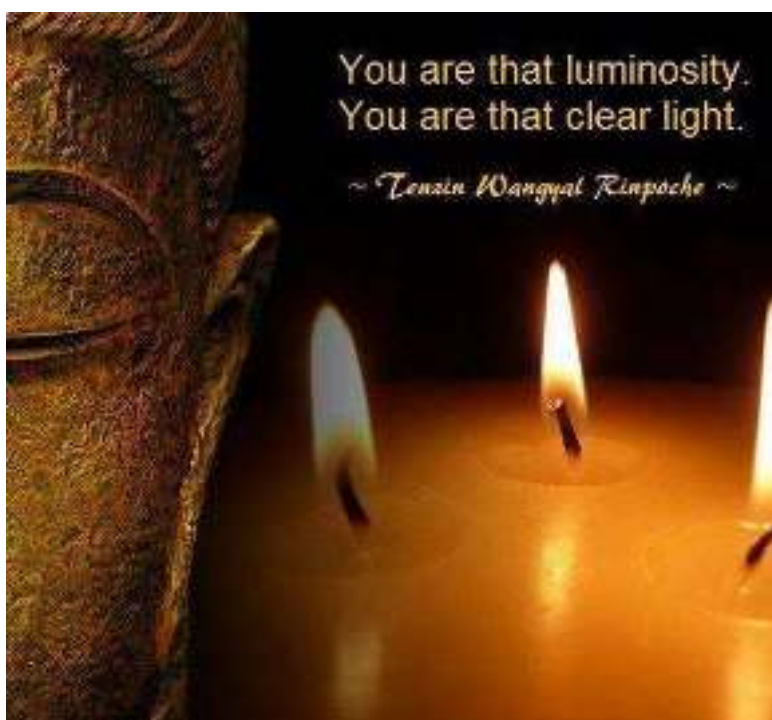
# GREETINGS AND NEWS FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Readers, Dear Practitioners of Bon,

It's been a year since we published our last magazine. This is because I had some personal challenges in my life, where I felt stuck and just could not write.

During that time, I remembered Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche talking about a dark room where you can turn on the light. In doing so, the room is at once illuminated, whether it was dark for one hour, or for thousands of years. While I was in that darkness I often felt frozen, paralyzed, and with very little awareness. Although it felt as if the

This issue also contains an interview with Rob Patzig. We talked about his work as Chair of the Ligmincha International Board of Directors and President of Ligmincha International, and asked him some personal questions. We also interviewed Alejandro Chaoul and discussed his work as a researcher and professor at several schools of Texas Health Science Center in Houston, and his role as Senior Teacher for Ligmincha International and the 3 Doors Academy. You can read how he found his own way to bring the Bon teachings into the World.



meditation practice did not bring any change, there was also trust. In the past, after practicing, I often found the switch to turn on the light. When that happened, it was hard to imagine the darkness. Unfortunately, over the last year, it has not been possible for me to stay in the light all the time. Often I disappeared back into the darkness, and the light had to be turned on again and again.

In this issue we bring you a summary of special ceremonies and events at Menri Monastery: in September 2018 we had the Commemoration of 33rd Menri Trizin and the Enthronement of 34th Menri Trizin.

You can read a poem, a selected text from the book *Dying with Confidence*. In addition there is news from Europe, and information about the Lishu Institute program.

This year, H.H. Lungtok Dawa Dhargyal Rinpoche, the 34th Menri Trizin visited Europe, the United States and Mexico. In [The Voice of Clear Light, August 2019](#) you can read an [interview](#) with him and see many beautiful [photos](#) of his journey.

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





# FIVE EXTRAORDINARY DAYS AT MENRI MONASTERY

Rob Patzig, President and Chair of the Ligmincha International Board, was among a group of Ligmincha participants at a week of special ceremonies and events at Menri Monastery: the Commemoration of 33rd Menri Trizin and the Enthronement of 34th Menri Trizin. He shares his experience with this article, published in *The Voice of Clear Light*, October 2018.

Bon practitioners from around the world gathered at Menri Monastery in Dolanji, India from September 3–7, 2018 for a week of special events commemorating the end of the mourning period for the passing of the 33rd Menri Trizin, Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, and the enthronement of the 34th Menri Trizin, Lungtok Dawa Dhargyal Rinpoche.

About 700 guests, including a group from Ligmincha International, joined the more than 500 monks, nuns and children of Menri Monastery and Redna Menling Nunnery. Among the countries represented were India, Nepal, Tibet, the United States, Austria, France, Italy, Mexico, Russia, Ukraine, Switzerland, Poland and China. The Menri Trizin is the abbot of Menri Monastery and head of the Bon lineage.



Rob Patzig receiving blessings from His Holiness.

## Commemorating H.H. Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche

The one-year anniversary of His Holiness the 33rd Menri Trizin, Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, dropping his body (on September 14, 2017), and the end of the official mourning period, was commemorated on September 3 and 4, 2018.

Events began with the consecration of a beautiful white marble stupa on the site where His Holiness' body had been cremated last year. Even though the entirety of Menri Monastery is a monument to the greatness of His Holiness' life and work, the stupa, which sits just to the left of the main



Stupa honoring H.H. the 33rd Menri Trizin.





temple, is a powerful reminder of his abiding presence in our lives. It also embodies the refounding of Bon outside of Tibet and Nepal.

Later the same day, a statue of His Holiness was welcomed to Redna Menling Nunnery, and the five objects (butter lamps, incense, water, food and flowers) were offered. In the evening hundreds, and possibly thousands, of butter lamps were lit in the main courtyard of Menri Monastery. The five objects were offered again, with participants reciting His Holiness' prayer many times and circumambulating the temple and stupa.

The second day began with many prayers offered in front of a new thangka of H.H. the 33rd Menri Trizin. Offerings of body, speech and mind, as well as the eight auspicious symbols and the seven precious jewels, were made. At this time, dozens of books, banners and symbols of respect were offered by the various departments of Menri and by many Bon organizations. His Holiness was conferred a new title: "The great father who preserved the ancient treasures of Zhang Zhung and Tibet."

In the afternoon everyone visited the new museum dedicated to the life of His Holiness. A life-size and highly realistic statue of His Holiness



Statue of H.H. Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche in the museum.

was on display, along with many of his personal practice items and objects of his daily use. Finally, in the evening, another mandala offering was made in his honor, followed by musical offerings by the monks at the main temple, the Protector's temple, and His Holiness' private residence.

### Enthronement of H.H. Lungtok Dawa Dhargyal Rinpoche

Following a free day in which practitioners could visit the temples, practice, go to town and rest, two days celebrating the enthronement of His Holiness the 34th Menri Trizin, Lungtok Dawa Dhargyal Rinpoche, took place. September 6 began with the raising of new prayer flags on Lhagyal Hill behind the monastery and a large *Sang Chöd* offering. Then the chief guests joined the monks in the main temple for the enthronement ceremony.



Commemoration of 33rd Menri Trizin.







H.H. Lungtok Dawa Dhargyal Rinpoche during the enthronement.

The 34th Menri Trizin took his seat on the Golden Throne, and mandala offerings for his long life began. Hundreds of objects — statues, stupas, sacred texts, the eight auspicious symbols, tormas and more — were offered to His Holiness. During the enthronement ceremony thunder could be heard resonating across the valley. The thunder was seen as auspicious! Immediately after the enthronement Ligmincha had the honor to join with a small number of other groups in offering tea to all the monks, nuns and children of Menri, a total of 530 people. Thanks to the generosity of our global sangha, we offered 1.000 rupees (\$15) to each monk, nun and child, along with the tea and sweet rice.

In the afternoon H.H. the 34th Menri Trizin gave the empowerment of the wisdom deity Mawei Senge and made his first public address. There was a light rain during the empowerment that grew into a real rain shower. This, too, was auspicious as it was interpreted as a cleansing and refreshing in that moment for the future work of the 34th Menri Trizin. The evening saw all the guests gather in the playground of the Bon Children's Welfare Center for an evening of musical and dance performances by many different groups.

The final day saw more light rain in the morning and into the afternoon. Beginning just after

breakfast many speeches were made, mostly in Tibetan, but some in English as well. The talks presented in English, one by Dr. Lobsang Sangay, the president of the Tibetan Government in Exile, and one by the 34th Menri Trizin Rinpoche were both profound and emotionally moving. Dr. Sangay spoke of the long history of persecution of



Menri in the evening.





Bon within Tibet, both by the Chinese but also by Tibetans from the main schools of Buddhism. He connected the work of the 33rd Menri Trizin with that of ancient Bon masters who also had to fight and struggle to preserve the texts and maintain the unbroken lineage of the Shenraps. He also pointed us toward a future in which, with the leadership of the 34th Menri Trizin, Bon would not only grow and expand in India and abroad, but also come back to the Tibetan people both in Tibet and in the diaspora.

The talks concluded with an address by the 34th Menri Trizin, Lungtok Dawa Dhargyal Rinpoche. He is very plain spoken and matter-of-fact. In front of all of the monks and guests, he confessed the many ways in which he felt unsuited for the role to which he has been elected. But he also expressed confidence in the process of the election and promised that his every effort would be honest and diligent, and that he saw himself as a vehicle for carrying forward the mission and vision of the 33rd Menri Trizin.

It was clear through his speech and also by watching him throughout the week's ceremonies and events that H.H. the 34th Menri Trizin has all of the desired qualities to effectively lead Menri into a new era. He is humble, attentive, deeply experienced in administration, friendly to everyone, serious, intelligent and diligent. And



Inside the main temple.

many other skilled and capable monks surround His Holiness. He is not alone in serving the Bon community. All of us left Menri with a deep sense of respect for the new His Holiness, and a strong feeling that the future of Bon is in excellent hands.

**Text by Rob Patzig**

Photos by Salvador Espinosa and Rob Patzig.



Gathering in the courtyard on the second day of commemoration.







## RETREAT PROGRAM 2019/2020 AT LISHU INSTITUTE

Lishu Institute is launching a new retreat program for 2019/2020 featuring important novelties.

Since we are aware that it is often challenging for most retreatants to find extended periods of time for retreats, we are now offering retreats for 2 month, 1 month or two weeks. Students can join the program for one or more retreats per year.

A retreat at Lishu Institute is a great opportunity for in-depth study and practice of the Bön tradition in the serene and special environment of our retreat center near Dehradun, India.

The curriculum includes one long (8 weeks), two medium (4 weeks) and one short (2 weeks) retreats and is as follows:

- 🕒 **16<sup>th</sup> September to 10<sup>th</sup> November 2019 (8 weeks)** — Chöd from the Bon Mother Tantra and Six Lokas from Dzogchen text Kusum Rangshar
- 🕒 **13<sup>th</sup> November to 27<sup>th</sup> November 2019 (2 weeks)** — Daily Offering Rituals in the Bon tradition
- 🕒 **20<sup>th</sup> January to 16<sup>th</sup> February 2020 (4 weeks)** — Phowa and Bardo from the Bon Mother Tantra
- 🕒 **24<sup>th</sup> February to 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020 (4 weeks)** — Trek Chod and Thod Gal from the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud (Four Cycles of Precepts)

**All retreats include teaching and practice**

For more information, contact  
yangrisangmo@gmail.com

**www.lishu.org**





# THERE IS MUCH ENTHUSIASM AND EXCITEMENT IN OUR DHARMA FAMILY

Rob Patzig has been Chair of the Ligmincha International Board of Directors since 2014 and President of Ligmincha International since 2015. He also serves as Ligmincha's chief financial officer. During the 2018 European Summer Retreat in Buchenau, Germany, we had a chance to ask him some questions about himself and Ligmincha. Recently we updated the interview because activities evolved in the past year. Here is the first part of the interview. In our next issue, the interview will continue with activities that are still in progress.

**I have often wondered how you manage to do so much work for Ligmincha. Can you tell us about your position as Chair of Ligmincha International?**

In my first months as Chair of the Board, I worked for five or six hours a week for Ligmincha. But after I quit my regular job on December 31, 2014, when I didn't need to work for a living anymore, I have worked about five to six hours a day, five or six days a week as service for Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. Coincidentally, Rinpoche asked me to serve him on the day I was quitting my old job. I was at the airport on my way to inform my employer when Rinpoche called me. It's like magic — Rinpoche has that quality to attract people at the right time.

**Why did you quit your job?**

I worked for more than 20 years in investment management in venture capital, and it came to a place where I no longer found joy in the work that I was doing. I like to do yoga and meditation. The more I practiced, the less pleasure I found in managing money. At some point I found that I could not keep up these two different activities, and decided that I could live on what I had earned. My wife had a good job as professor, and my boss was extremely generous and gave me probably far more than I was ever worth. So life can be simple for me: I have a yoga mat and a cushion. I teach yoga, together with my wife, a couple of times a week, and I serve this sangha.



Rob Patzig.

**Can you tell us more about that job?**

In the beginning I was responsible for a small investment portfolio, and we grew it into a multi-billion-dollar portfolio, mostly invested in biotechnology. We worked with early-stage companies, startups that were rapidly growing. As the chief investment officer my job was to work with companies, develop business plans, figure out viable economic models, help them with their staffing needs, and develop commercialization strategies. And help them implement that up to the point where they had enough momentum and skill in-house that they could do without me. Then I would go on to another company and do more or less the same thing in different circumstances. Some of the companies were successful, and others were not. As a result, I learned a little bit about almost everything. I know a little bit about science, accounting, fundraising, staffing and hiring, legal stuff related to companies and organizational structure, but not a lot about any of it. I've spent thousands of hours in board meetings and preparations for board meetings, and I've worked with management teams to execute the vision of a founder or senior scientist.

**Looking at what you have learned in your old job, what do you feel translates as relevant for**







The new look of the Ligmincha International website.

### Ligmincha International?

Everything I learned in finance for 20 years is important for the work to be done for Ligmincha to become an organization that is here in 100 or 1.000 years. We need to build teams of people; we need to find better ways to collaborate; we need ways to resolve conflicts with one another when they arise; and we need more coordination of how we do things. We need less dependence on any one person to be in charge from an organizational point of view.

When Rinpoche was responsible for all the spiritual teachings and guidance for Ligmincha, he was also responsible for all the day-to-day decision-making, and everything had to run through him. It's just too much for one person. That also kept him from doing what he does best, and that is being our teacher. My first job was to learn how to assume some of the responsibilities for the operational decisions-making he had done. The next step is to make it solid so that it does not depend on me, either. I think the best way to do one's job is to make oneself unnecessary by supporting and training other people, by giving people freedom and authority to do the work they want to do. And by trying to recognize people's talents and gifts, and find the best places for them.

People always tell me that I get so much done. But what I really feel I'm doing is finding people and directing energy in the places where I see energy, or where energy is already being put. I wanted us to have a new website 5 years ago, but nobody seemed to want to do it. All of a sudden in the

summer of 2018, there was a lot of energy for a new website, so all I had to do was to connect people: donors, IT-people and designers. We formed a team and things are moving forward. The new website is now online. People might think that Rob got so much done, but really there are other Board members, members of our Peruvian community, the Mexican sangha, a couple of people in the US, throughout Germany people are working, and I am just the person in front to whom everybody gives the credit. It is rarely me who is getting all the work done. Having wonderful groups of people working on exciting projects that serve the dharma and spread the Bon teachings makes it easy to get a lot done. We have so much enthusiasm and excitement for



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, Rob Patzig and the Mandala Council in Maria Alm, Austria (2014).







His Holiness Lungtok Dawa Dhargyal Rinpoche in the The Great Bon Stupa for World Peace in Valle de Bravo, Mexico.

what we are trying to do together as a dharma family.

### **How often do you visit sanghas around the world?**

Once or twice a year I travel with Rinpoche, depending on our schedules and needs. Mostly it is about connecting with people. Most of the time I am listening, and when somebody tells me he or she wants to do something, then I might reply, "That's interesting, there is someone who did that two years ago and it was great. You two should talk to each other and see what happens."

Sometimes there is a little conflict in a community, and we don't agree on everything. Then my job is to find that space to open it back up again. It is an amazing community; I never met anybody where I thought, "I don't want to work with that person." Everywhere I go they treat me as if I am a cousin – in Tibetan they say cousin-brother.

Coming to Buchenau, I see so many familiar faces from Austria and other places. I used to never feel at home anywhere in my life, but when I travel to the sangha I feel completely at home wherever I am. That is Rinpoche's blessing to us: whoever you are, whatever you think, there is room for you

here if you give it to yourself. If you allow yourself space, it will feel fine.

There are people I find harder to work with than others, but it is not that I dislike them. Our energies are different and I can see that. Sometimes I bring a little pain speech or they bring a little pain mind to a meeting, and then I say, "We didn't start with *Guru Yoga*, so let's do that now." After having done that, the problem usually dissolves.

### **What is the most important issue on the agenda of Ligmincha International?**

The most urgent and critical thing to move forward on is the creation of a formal and easy-to-understand Code of Conduct. We are very blessed to have a teacher whose behavior has been impeccable. But as we grow and think of the future, we will have different resident lamas and several Western teachers, and we may not know what they are doing.

When we look at the things that have come out in the Catholic Church, Shambhala and other religious organizations about the treatment of women, treatment of new students or financial abuses that have taken place, it becomes clear that while we all hope to be superior practitioners





and manifest enlightened activity, we don't in fact do that all the time. We really need to be transparent and clear about what our expectations are for the ways we treat one another, for the ways we relate to each other. And we need to create mechanisms within our organization that will support the hearing of challenges and problems and abuses if and when they happen. This is a challenging thing to do.

### How are you going to do that?

We have created a group of Board members and senior students from around the world to discuss these things, to talk about these needs and try to articulate them.

My personal feeling is that while we all have an enormous amount of responsibility to carry for our own individual actions, ultimately our teachers, our umdzes [meditation leaders] are the most responsible. Students need to feel empowered to talk about situations if they become uncomfortable, or they see misbehavior on the part of our staff, teachers, umdzes or any of our volunteers. Then we need to be able to hear of these things, investigate them and make decisions about how to make corrections in the organization, how to educate our teachers, how to move forward in ways that are supportive for everyone. Whether you have been in Ligmincha for 25 years or this is the first time you have ever come to a meeting, we are all absolutely equal in terms of our right to respect, to fair treatment, to kindness, to compassion, to be heard and to be seen.



### Why is it such an important issue?

Of all the things we are doing, this is not the most exciting thing, but the most important thing. Rinpoche's vision is that if you, he and I are all dead, and everybody has forgotten us, Bon still needs to be here. It is our goal is to create a plat-

form for other teachers in the future to be able to present these teachings and help people. We have to make sure that that platform has integrity and transparency. This is a way of laying the foundation for a future that is not 2 or 5 years out, but 20, 50 or 100 years out. The real vision is: What happens in 100 years? The Bon lineage is 18,000 years old; we can't mess it up, that is why this is important.



### Recently Ligmincha launched a free online course, where people can find instructions when they want to invite people into their homes to practice together. Can you tell us more about his program?

The Host Training Program is launched on March 1, 2019. You can find it on [www.ligmincha-learning.com](http://www.ligmincha-learning.com). In the first month about 50 people filled out the survey of the Host Training Program, about 35 started to take the video course, and about 10 people completed the course and were certified. In the course you find a series of training videos about how to set up a space, how to prepare, how to be welcoming, how to promote. We have a selection of training videos of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, many from the Facebook Live program. We have included a Code of Conduct, in terms of what we expect from a host. The certification is valid for 12 months, so if you want to continue every year there will be sort of renewal process, so we can be in contact with people and know how it is going and learn more about their groups. The reason we certify them is to make sure that there are no issues, or that there are ways we can improve the program or better support people.

### Is there something you want to share with our readers?

I want to thank you for doing *Ligmincha Europe Magazine*. The article on Pat Leavitt in the last edition was awesome. I have known Pat for 10 years, and I didn't know half of what you wrote. It was such a beautiful teaching about her notion of service and connection to Rinpoche through the sangha. That is exactly how I feel, but I never said





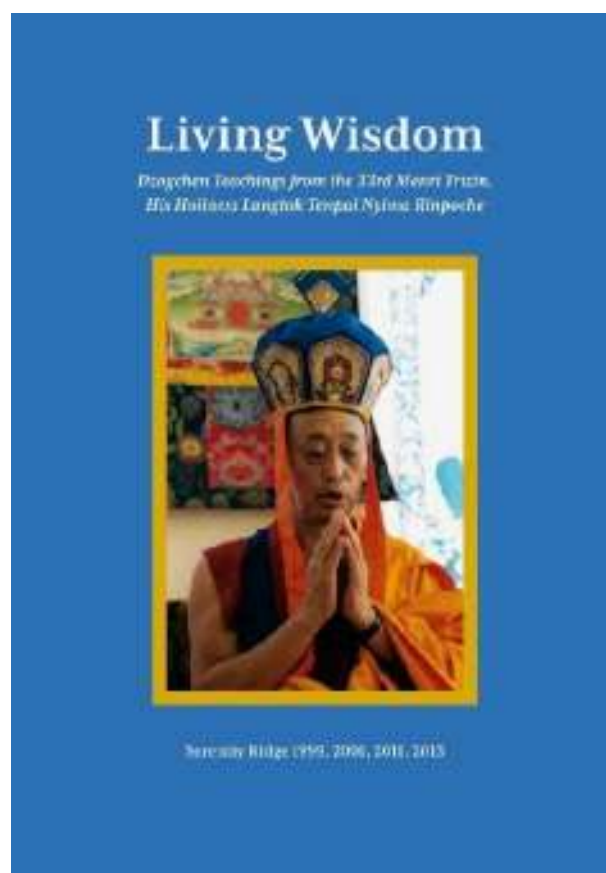


Pat Leavitt in the kitchen at Serenity Ridge.

it as well as she did in your interview. It was a very touching article. I have been so busy in my role that I didn't see her in the fullness of her role. I can see the fruit coming out, and say thank you, Pat. There is a whole life behind that fruit, and that came out in that article. I also enjoyed reading the articles about the lamas. This is a really beautiful way to help people to stay connected.

One of our new activities is Sacred Sky Press. Our goal is to work with Raven Cypress Wood, other translators and Rinpoche to publish two or three books a year. Some of them will be available for everyone and some will be restricted to people who received certain teachings. The first book published by Sacred Sky and translated by Raven is *Indestructible: The Longevity Practice of Tsewang Rikdzin*. Now, Raven is working on a sort version of the *Sang Chöd* and *Sur Chöd*, the smoke offerings. All the instructions will be in the book, so you can do the offerings at home. If people want to make that part of their daily practice, they can do that. She is also working on translation of a text on preparing for death. And she is writing a commentary, based on her experiences and conversations with lamas, on how to incorporate

those practices in daily life. It is meant to be an open, almost secular practice manual based on sacred texts. The number of books we can bring out depends on how many volunteers can help. Two Sacred Sky Press books have been published recently. *Escape from Darkness: The Spiritual Journey of the Buddha's Daughter, Shenpa Nechung*, is the translation by Sangmo Yangri, Ph.D., of part of an ancient text about Tonpa Shenrap. And *Living Wisdom: Dzogchen Teachings from the 33rd Menri Trizin, His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche*, contains excerpts from His Holiness's teachings at Serenity Ridge over the years.



The best thing about service is when you find that space and there is no pain involved in giving. There is a need, and I see that need, and somehow I am going to manifest those qualities. You don't have to doubt; you don't have to feel the pain of pushing to get something done. Even when it is not always easy, there is always an effortlessness involved in the process. That is a beautiful gift to be given. If you have the energy to do it, and you are not asking me to do it, please do it.

**Interview by Ton Bisscheroux**





# INTRODUCING CYBERSANGHA

There is a new name and website for Rinpoche's webcasts and social media: **CyberSangha**. We inform you about the changes that are going to take place.

Reflecting Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's deep personal commitment to offer free access to his teachings for anyone in the world who might benefit from them, Rinpoche will soon apply a new name to his ongoing program of social media activities: CyberSangha. A new CyberSangha website, to be launched in coming weeks, will serve as a portal to all of Rinpoche's social media activities and online supports.



Buddhism speaks of “three jewels”: the Buddha; the dharma, or Buddhist teachings; and the sangha – the community of meditation practitioners who follow the teachings and put them into practice. The name CyberSangha specifically refers to the international community of individuals who are following Rinpoche's free Facebook Live



teachings and guided meditations and are seeking nourishment from the mutual support of others.

Offered regularly since late 2016, Rinpoche's live broadcasts include not only teaching and guided practices, but also interfaith dialogues, conversations between scientific and spiritual leaders, and Tibetan poetry readings, as well as glimpses of Rinpoche's life and travels. They can be viewed live on [Rinpoche's Facebook page](#). A team of volunteers provides simultaneous translation of the Facebook Live broadcasts into multiple languages, and a Facebook discussion group permits exchanges between members of the CyberSangha. Recordings of each broadcast will be accessible in multiple languages via the new CyberSangha website as well as language-specific YouTube channels.

Stay tuned for more information about the launch of the new CyberSangha website. Until the site goes live, you can learn more about Rinpoche's Facebook Live teachings, review schedule updates, and access translations, archives and the discussion group at this link:

[www.ligminchalearning.com/tenzinwangyal-live](http://www.ligminchalearning.com/tenzinwangyal-live).





# WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN EUROPE

Here is our report of what's been happening in the European sanghas. The 34th Menri Trizin, H.H. Lungtok Dawa Dhargyal Rinpoche, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, Sangmo Yangri and Geshe Sherap Lodoe (teachers at Lishu Institute), visited Europe. Some sanghas invited *Geshes* and other teachers.



**August 14 – 19, 2018:**  
Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught in Wilga, Poland, *Dzogchen Teachings of Tapihritsa*.



**June 5 – 9, 2019:**

His Holiness Lungtok Dawa Dhargyal Rinpoche taught in Wilga, Poland, on *The Longevity Practice of Tsewang Rikdzin*.







**August 10 – 12, 2018:**

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught on *Soul Retrieval* in Helsinki, Finland.



**July 22, 2019:** Sangmo Yangri gave a public talk in Helsinki, Finland, on *Female practitioners in the Tibetan Buddhist Bön tradition*.



**March 29 – 31 2019:**

Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche taught in Helsinki, Finland, on the *Heart Drops of Dharmakaya*.



**July 23 – 28 2019:**

Geshe Sherab Lodoe and Sangmo Yangri gave in Helsinki, Finland, a *Phowa*-retreat.



**September 21 – 23, 2018, and**

**May 31 – June 2, 2019:**

Khenpo Gelek Jinpa taught in Helsinki, Finland, on the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud Gyalwa Chagtri*.



**July 2018 – July 2019:**

Anna-Kaisa Hirvanen taught several courses on *Tsa Lung* and *Trul Khor* in Helsinki, Jyväskylä, Oulu and Tampere, Finland.







**May 8 – 9, 2018:**

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught at Bodhicharya in Berlin, Germany, on *The Impact of Gross and Subtle Energies on the Mind*.



At Bodhicharya in Berlin, Germany, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche met with Dr. Alexander Berzin. The [Berzin Archive](#) is a vast collection of online resources, of use to the Tibetan Studies research in many languages. It is freely available.



**August 20 – 26, 2018:**

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught in Buchenau, Germany, on *Twenty-One Nails*.







**June 2018:**  
Wolfgang Krebs guides a Group in Berlin, Germany.



**January 2019:**  
European Practiceweekend in Buchenau, Germany.



**July 2018:**  
Preparation weekend for the Summer retreat with Wolfgang Krebs in Frankfurt, Germany.



**February 2019:**  
Celebrating *Losar* in Frankfurt, Germany.



**August 31, 2018:**  
Public talk by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in Cologne, Germany.



**March 15 – 20, 2019:**  
*Sherap Chamma en Sipé Gyalmo* retreat with Marcy Vaughn in Pauenhof, Germany.



**September 2018:**  
Geshe Khorden Lhundup in Berlin, Germany.



**April 2019:**  
Ponlob Rinpoche taught in Aham, Germany.







**April 2019:**  
Ponlob Rinpoche taught in Aham, Germany.



**May 3 – 5, 2019:**  
Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught *The Seven Mirrors of Dzogchen* in Berlin, Germany.



**June 2019:**  
His Holiness blessed the stupa in Berlin, Germany.



**June 11 – 12, 2019:**  
His Holiness Lungtok Dawa Dhargyal Rinpoche taught *Sherap Chamma* in Berlin, Germany.







**July 2019:**  
Lishu Teachers near Frankfurt, Germany.



**July 2019:**  
Lishu Teacher Geshe Lodoe performs *Sang Chöd* in Berlin, Germany.



**July 2019:**  
Lishu Teacher Geshe Lodoe in Berlin, Germany.



**July 2019:**  
Lishu Teacher Sangmo Yangri gave a lecture in Berlin, Germany.



**June 2019:**  
His Holiness Lungtok Dawa Dhargyal Rinpoche with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, Geshe Yungdrung Gyatso and Board members of European sanghas in Wilga, Poland.







**May 10 – 12, 2019:**  
Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche  
taught in Vienna, Austria,  
*The Five Wisdoms*.



**May 17 – 19, 2019:**  
Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche  
taught *A-tri* in Paris, France.



**May 24 – 26, 2019:**  
Tenzin Wangyal  
Rinpoche taught  
*A-tri* in Amsterdam,  
the Netherlands.







**September 7 – 9, 2018:**

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught in Budapest, Hungary, *The Practice of the Six Lokas*.



**January 4 – 6, 2019:**

Choe-Khor Tshang Rinpoche taught *Tummo* in Budapest, Hungary.



**April 26 – 28, 2019:**

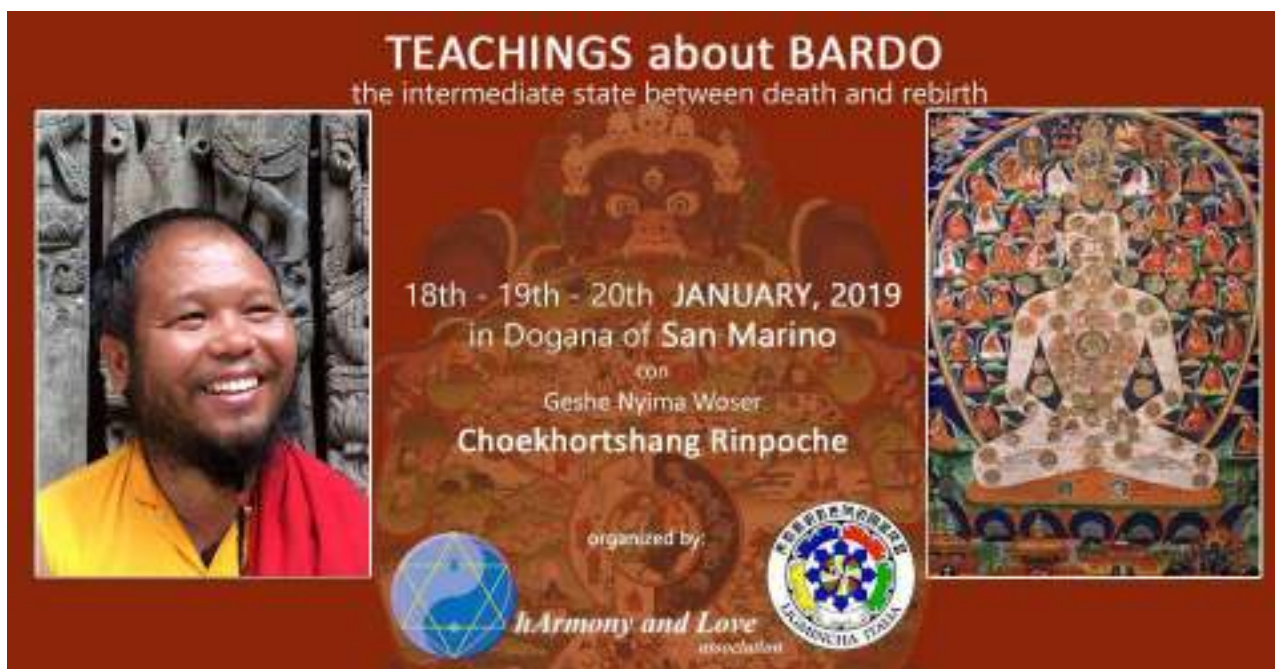
Choe-Khor Tshang Rinpoche taught A-tri Dzogchen teaching in Budapest, Hungary.

**July 2, 2019:**

Lishu Teacher Sangmo Yangri gave a lecture on *Female practitioners of Bon Buddhism* in Budapest, Hungary.







**January 18 – 20, 2019:**  
Choe-Khor Tshang Rinpoche  
taught on *Bardo* in San Marino,  
Italy.



**April 2019:**  
Geshe Lungrig taught *The Four  
Wheels of Bon* combined with  
*Zhine* practice in Bratislava,  
Slovakia.







**April 26 – 28, 2019:**

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught *Dream Yoga* in Cabo de Gata, Almeria, Spain. We spent wonderful days in the wild nature, in the Natural Park of Cabo de Gata, practicing *Dream Yoga* and enjoyed nice weather beside the sea. It was the 10th visit of Rinpoche to Spain in 11 years; the first was in Ronda, Málaga in 2008. All of us found rest and healing in Rinpoche's teachings, sharing meals and practice. We have enjoyed the assistance of members of other Buddhist traditions; we all practiced together like only one sangha. On Saturday-evening we offered Rinpoche a show of our traditional singing and flamenco.





## CONVERSATIONS LIVE



**Honoring the Feminine: How the Warmth of Wisdom Contributes to Social Change. A conversation with prominent female teachers of Buddhism and meditation** — July 26, 2018.



**Teachings, Practices and Heart Advice on the Five Wisdoms from Six Spiritual Traditions of Tibet** — September 6, 2018.



**Ancient Wisdom for Healing the Earth: A Group Conversation with Members of Indigenous Communities** — January 23, 2019.

In conversation with host Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, members of indigenous communities Lorenzo Ccaca and Zenobia Cruz from Peru, Mindahi Crescencio Bastida Muñoz from Mexico, and Colin Campbell from Africa discuss ancient perspectives on this critical topic of our time, share their own unique perspectives, and offer prayers for healing the Earth.



**Songs of Wisdom. A Group Reading of Poetry from the Spiritual Traditions of Tibet** — January 30, 2019.

Host Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and invited guests from six Tibetan spiritual traditions engage in a reading of sacred poetry. Poetry readers include Geshe Tri Yungdrung (Bön), Tulku Yeshe Rinpoche (Nyingma), Khenpo Kunga Trinley (Kagyü), Lopon Ngawang Thokmay (Sakya), Khenpo Ngawang Dorjee (Jonang), Beri Geshe Jigme Wangyal (Gelug). In Tibetan language with limited translation to English and as many as 17 other languages.

**PITH INSTRUCTIONS: PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON THE HEART ESSENCE OF DZOGCHEN**



**Finding Fullness in Emptiness** — July 15, 2018.

**Discovering Light in the Darkness** — July 22, 2018.

**Unification of the Three Spaces** — July 29, 2018.

**The Five Wisdoms: Personal Reflections, Part 1** — September 12, 2018.

**The Five Wisdoms: Personal Reflections, Part 2** — September 26, 2018.

**When Things Change: Releasing the Pain of Grasping** — October 3, 2018.







**Letting Go of Guilt: Freeing Yourself From the Cycle of Self-Punishment** — November 21, 2018.

**How to Use Meditation Practice to Help Others** — December 5, 2018.

**Above the Ego: Honoring the Dimension of the Sacred** — December 12, 2018.

**No Holding Back: The Joy of Offering the Best of Who You Are** — March 21, 2019.

**Precious Gems: Witnessing the Sacred in All You Meet** — April 4, 2019.

**Moving Beyond Fear: The Ultimate Protection Is Within You** — April 18, 2019.

**Deep Rest, Spontaneous Action** (5-Minute Wisdom) — June 6, 2019.

**Deep Rest, Spontaneous Action (Part 2)** — July 7, 2019.

**Sleep That Heals: How Deep Sleep Can Awaken the Consciousness** (5-Minute Wisdom) — June 13, 2019.

**Sleep That Heals: How Deep Sleep Can Awaken the Consciousness (Part 2)** — July 14, 2019.

**Guided Meditation & Thoughts for the Future** — June 23, 2019.



## LOSAR



**LOSAR 2019: An Online Celebration** — February 9, 2019.

## TEACHINGS ON RETREAT



**The Knowledge and Wisdom of Longevity** — November 16, 2018.

## PRAYERS AND MANTRA



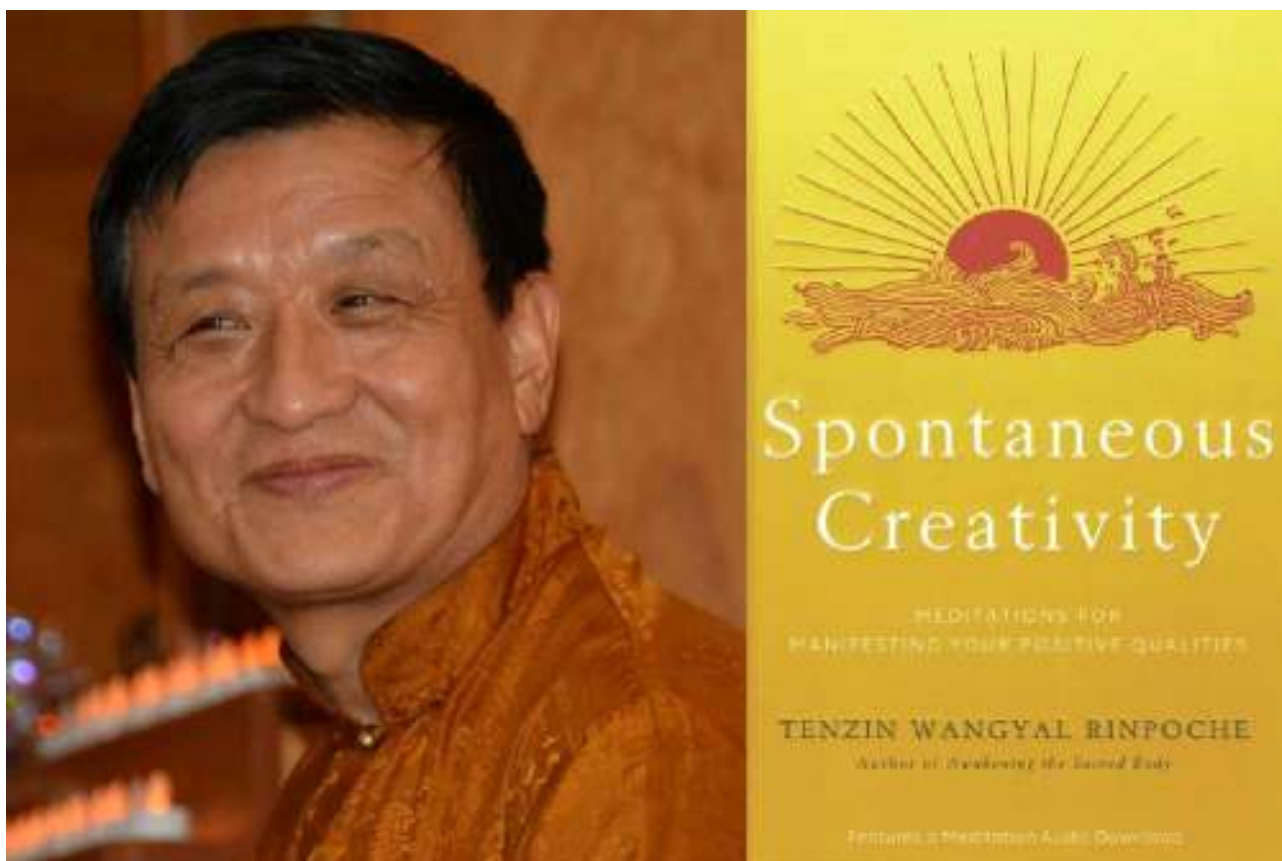
**Mantra of Light (SA LE Ö Mantra)** — March 17, 2018.

**A OM HUNG** — January 1, 2019.

**The Mantra of Clear Light: A OM HUNG A A KAR SA LE Ö A YANG OM DU** / **accompanying images / mantra visualization instructions** — July 21, 2019.



# MEDITATIONS TO MANIFEST YOUR POSITIVE QUALITIES



**Budapest, Hungary  
September 6 – 8, 2019**

Mention creativity, and what comes to mind? For many of us, creativity is the province of someone with a singular gift toiling away in service to their art. From this perspective, creativity is a solitary endeavor — the struggle of the individual to express their distinctive vision to the world.

But what if we looked at creativity through a wider lens, as a dynamic force that animates us and connects us with every being on the planet? From this perspective, creativity is not just a spark igniting the fire of inspiration. It is a way of living spontaneously from the sacred space within us — from the source of infinite potential and positive qualities, such as love, compassion, and joy. Expression in any voice, any form that emerges from this core, has the power to heal us and benefit others. The heart of creativity is being of service.

At this retreat **Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche** will draw

on the ancient wisdom of the Tibetan Bon Buddhist tradition to guide us in developing the ability to show up fully for our lives and clear whatever blocks us from expressing our creative gifts for the greatest good.

## **Information and Registration:**

through email to [ligmincha.mo@gmail.com](mailto:ligmincha.mo@gmail.com)

**Price:** € 60

## **to be transferred to:**

Beneficiary: Ligmincha Magyarország

Bank: MagnetBank

IBAN Account number:

HU40 1620 0151 1853 2614 0000 0000

## **Venue of the teaching**

MOM Cultural Center

H-1124 Budapest, Csörsz u. 18.

Hungary





# ENTERING INTO THE LIGHT

## *Preparing for and supporting others in the great transition*

**A weekend retreat with John Jackson**



### **Tibetan Bardo teachings and after death experiences**

As we and our loved ones enter into the last stages of life many questions arise. What happens after death of the body? How can I prepare? How can I best support my loved ones as they near this great transition?

In this weekend we will look at all these questions from the multiple perspectives of Tibetan Buddhism, Western psychology and personal experience. We will introduce meditation practices you can use to prepare yourself for the great transition, and ways that you can help others resolve their fears, discover their peace, and enter into the light in a beautiful way. This transition offers many wonderful opportunities to let go of old negativities, and discover the light of liberation.



#### **Dharma Teacher**

John Jackson is a meditation teacher and coach with over 40 years of training and practice. He has trained with Tibetan masters in the West and in monasteries in India and Nepal, and was a

professor within the University of Virginia medical school for over 20 years. He left his body on his 55<sup>th</sup> birthday, and entered into the light that many describe in their accounts of near death experiences. John integrates all these perspectives in this unique interactive weekend.



#### **When:**

October 18 – 20

Friday from 19:00 till 21:30 (Public talk)

Saturday from 10:00 till 18:00

Sunday from 9:00 till 16:00

#### **Where:**

Königstein (Schneidhein) im Taunus, Germany

#### **Price:**

190 Euro

#### **Contact and information:**

[rikpa418@yahoo.de](mailto:rikpa418@yahoo.de)





# YUNGDRUN BÖN CALENDAR FOR 2020

"aspiration - faith - trust - devotion"



- are important for the practice -

## February 2020

| 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       |        |

You can download this calendar from: [www.scribd.com/Bon-Calendar-2020](http://www.scribd.com/Bon-Calendar-2020)





## POWA RETREAT, FALL 2018



**The afternoon aftermath of lucid daydream**

**Is ever seen as surreal memory**

**The morning mourning of forgotten nightmare**

**Is never scene of another's meandering**

**The daily dilly dally of consensual conviviality**

**Is seine of no import**

**The abstracted substance of hypnagogic remembering**

**Is frozen fear**

**Of the real**

*Daniel Morimoto*





# DYING WITH CONFIDENCE

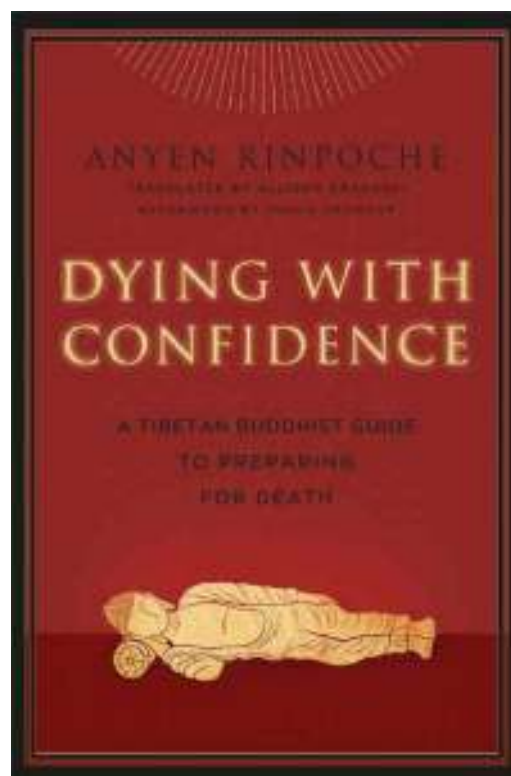
*Dying with Confidence* is a Tibetan Buddhist Guide to Prepare for Death, written by Anyen Rinpoche. He is the fifth in an unbroken lineage of heart sons who received their uncommon lineage of the Longchen Nyingthig directly from the renowned Dzogchen master Patrul Rinpoche.

In this book, Anyen Rinpoche gives practical information beneficial to those wanting to explore the depth of the teachings on dying skillfully. Encouraging readers to honestly look at both life and death, and to contemplate our impermanence deeply, the author shows us how to use the very process of dying to further our goal of enlightenment, compassion, and a wise and fulfilling life in the here-and-now. We reprint the pages 11-14.

***May the wisdom of our teachers' minds be transferred to our minds. May we understand the teachings and put them into practice.***

From the moment we are born, we are carried by four great rivers: birth, sickness, old age, and death. From the time that we enter the mother's womb until the actual moment of dying, there is no escape from this ordinary life into which we are born. No being escapes death. We all must die; we all will die — the only question is when.

The river of birth carries us to old age. No matter what we look like on the outside, we are all going to get old. We should not think that just because we are young, just because we are healthy now, that we have time. And we don't need to wait for the signs of death to appear; the signs of "far-away" death have already manifested for all of us! We have been born — that itself is a sign of death. We must therefore reflect on the fact of death now. If we do not think about it now, it will be difficult to think about it when it is happening — as it inevitably will. Most importantly, it will be impossible to have any kind of mindfulness that death is approaching if we refuse to reflect on it during our life. Through the cultivation of mindfulness now, the forces of habit and practice will help us prac-



tice it at the time of death. Truly, through the power of committed practice, there is nothing that cannot become easy. So if we put effort into reflecting upon death during our lifetime, we will find that this will support our practice and mindfulness at the actual time of death.

As the river of birth carries us to old age, it will also carry us along the river of illness, bringing us even closer to death. Reflect on all the various kinds of illnesses that exist on the planet today. Some are chronic and can make us ill for twenty or thirty years — or a whole lifetime. Some occur suddenly and are incurable. Some have gradual onset, so slow we barely notice until they are already very far advanced. As we get ill and closer to death, the "close" signs of death will begin to manifest. We can all recognize these signs if we train in mindfulness.

Many of you have taken birth in the country of America, where there is access to many material things. What is most needed, though, is access to true Dharma teachings. We may even have the good fortune to encounter the Dharma and to receive precious teachings, but often we lack the diligence to actually practice the teachings we receive.





Teachings on death and dying and on the transference of consciousness are supreme teachings. For ordinary practitioners, phowa is the teaching which is most accessible and which we are most capable of mastering. We should receive these teachings many times over, as often as possible. Doing so will strengthen our connection to that practice, which in turn will help us to be more present at the time of death.

The fact of death is certain. And for this very reason, because it is completely certain, death is something we should be fearless about. If we are not fearless at the moment of death, the only choice is to return to samsara, to re-enter the cycle of birth, suffering, and death, over and over again. We should reflect deeply on this.

In the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, many great lamas predict their own death far in advance. We wonder how they can do this with such certainty, often predicting the exact day they are going to die. One simple answer is that they have gained great experience in the signs of death and have such mindfulness that they can tell exactly when any of the senses begins to degrade. This allows lamas or yogis to abide in the profound teachings and do incredible things like dying in the posture of meditation, shrinking their bodies — a sign of nearly-complete realization — or even dissolving into rainbow body, a sign of complete realization. After their bodies are cremated, other signs appear, like the manifestation of rangsel, or luminous beads. The rangsel is able to manifest because these great yogis were able to abide in their lama's heart teachings at the moment of death.

In the West, old people are often placed in nursing homes to die. They don't want to depend on their children or accept help, and sometimes their children are just too busy to take care of them. If the children are in a position to offer care, their parents should accept it. Then the children can see every day how their parents get older and older; they can see the dying process. Then it becomes natural to think about death.

During our lifetimes, we generally pay a lot of attention to our bodies, but rarely think about what goes with us when we die. We cannot, of

course, take any physical or material aspect of our lives with us when we die. It is only the consciousness that goes with us. It is also only the consciousness that experiences suffering or, more accurately, is able to perceive the experience of suffering. Most importantly, it is the consciousness itself that can be transformed into wisdom during the dying process. The majority of the time we are focused on maintaining our physical body and material environment, when we actually need to place our attention on practice! Realizing this can help us shift our focus and motivate us to practice every day.

An example we can use to understand this is the act of fainting. While the body and consciousness don't actually separate when we faint, we “lose consciousness” and as a result are not aware of what is happening with our bodies. Just like during the experience of the dying process, it is the consciousness that experiences everything, including our fears and our past experiences.

Thus, when we receive teachings on death and dying, or teachings on Dzogchen and Mahamudra, or any other profound Tantric teaching, we should never neglect or forget these teachings. They are essential instructions and we should try to reflect on them every day. If we are able to do that, we will remember them at the time of death and we will be liberated from the suffering of the bardos. If we do not reflect on the teachings, even having someone read the Bardo Thodrol (The Tibetan Book of the Dead or, literally, Great Liberation upon Hearing) to us at the time of death will not be meaningful. It will not stir that memory of something we did habitually during our lives.

Western students like to take a lot of notes at teachings, but I am not sure what happens to those notes after the student goes home. Condense your notes and make them truly your own; compose your own version of the teaching for personal use. Don't make something up, but write what your teacher taught you, in a way that is meaningful especially to you. Read it again and again over time. Then if a friend reads it for you as you are dying it will be easy for you to remember and actualize the essence of these teachings.

**Text selected by Ton Bisscheroux**





# BRINGING THE BON TEACHINGS INTO THE WORLD

When interviewing Alejandro Chaoul in [Limincha Europe Magazine # 21](#) we focused on his role with [Ligmincha Texas](#). In this interview he discusses being a researcher and professor at several schools of Texas Health Science Center in Houston, and his role as Senior Teacher for Ligmincha International and The 3 Doors Academy.

## Bio

*Since 1995, Alejandro Chaoul has been teaching Tibetan meditation and Tibetan yogic practices under the auspices of the Ligmincha Institute in various parts of the US, Latin America and Europe.*

*Dr. Alejandro Chaoul is a Senior Teacher of The 3 Doors Academy, an international organization founded by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche with the goal of transforming lives through meditation. Alejandro has studied in the Tibetan tradition since 1989, and for over 25 years with Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, completing the 7-year training at Ligmincha Institute in 2000.*

*His research and publications focus on mind-body practices in integrative care, examining how these practices can reduce chronic stress, anxiety and sleep disorders and improve quality of life. He is the author of Chod Practice in the Bon Tradition (SnowLion, 2009) and has also published in the area of religion and medicine, medical anthropology and the interface of spirituality and healing. His most recent book is Tibetan Yoga for Health & Well-Being (Hay House, Inc., 2018).*



You can read more on this book on the pages 40-43.



Alejandro Chaoul.

*Alejandro Chaoul is the Founding and Huffington Foundation Endowed Director of the Mind Body Spirit Institute at the Jung Center, and an assistant professor and Director of Education at the Integrative Medicine Program, Department of Palliative, Rehabilitation and Integrative Medicine at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. He conducts research using mind-body techniques with cancer patients, holds group and individual meditation classes and clinic for cancer patients and their support system, and directs the education programs. He is also an associate faculty member at The McGovern Center for Humanities and Ethics, where he teaches medical students in the areas of spirituality, complementary and integrative medicine, and end-of-life care.*

*Alejandro has taught at Rice University, the University of Houston and the Jung Center of Houston and has been applying mind-body practices in health care since 1999 in the Texas Medical Center. In addition, he collaborates in the area of interfaith and contemplative practices at The Rothko Chapel and the Boniuk Center for Religious Tolerance at Rice University.*





### Alejandro, can you tell us about your work?

For the last twenty years I have been working at the Texas Medical Center (TMC), which is the largest medical center in the US. Within the TMC, specifically at MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, I have been doing both clinical research and education. I also have taught at the University of Texas Medical School in Houston. I work a lot with patients and caregivers, as well as with medical students, staff and faculty. For the last 20 years I have been doing research into Tibetan mind-body practices and its applications for people with cancer and their support groups. What we learn through this research we bring back to the classes. *Tsa Lung*, *Trul Khor* and the *Warrior Syllables* are some of the practices we have included in research.



We have been using *Tsa Lung* and *Trul Khor* since 1999 with people with lymphoma. Later we included women with breast cancer and then people with lung cancer and their caregivers. In our first study, published in *Cancer* in 2004, we found that using these practices improved sleep quality and quantity, that people used less sleep medicine, their quality of life improved, and they had less stress and fatigue. In the last study of women with breast cancer we found that those who wanted to maintain these benefits needed to practice at least three times a week (these results were published in *Cancer*, 2016). In a study for people with lung cancer and their caregivers, we found that both patients and caregivers in the Tibetan Yoga program reduced their anxiety and stress. Measures of spirituality went up with the patients as well. (Published in *Psycho-oncology*, 2014)

We have used the *Warrior Syllables* with women who have breast cancer and lost some of their cognitive abilities after their chemotherapy. A *OM HUNG* helped them to recuperate their short-term memory and cognitive functions. (Published in *Psycho-oncology*, 2013)



For many years Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche had ideas about how to bring these practices into the world in ways that are not specifically Buddhist or Bon and I try to present these practices so that they are accessible for different people. It is CPR when you are dealing with an acute response: if you have stress, you take this pill. My intention, on the other hand, is to go beyond that and think of what I offer as something that will help them to flourish in their personal and family life and career.

### Can you explain CPR?

CPR stands for Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation. When the heart stops beating you do CPR. Using the same letters I created a program called **Compassionate Professional Renewal**. It is for healthcare professionals and is offered through the Mind Body Spirit Institute. With some organizations I work at our place, with others in their work environment. We also want to go into schools, communities and maybe even corporations. That is where my work is taking me.

### Where else is the work taking you?

I am working with the School of Nursing on a new study with people that have had a stroke. We do a simple 3 Doors approach, starting with focusing attention (such as a simple *zhiné* concentration on the breath), then going through the three doors of stillness, silence and spaciousness, and finally to the three refuges of spaciousness, awareness and warmth. We have not finished this research, but some people say they have fewer headaches and feel and function better in their daily lives. We look forward to publishing the data in the next year.

Meditation has become an important part of mind-body practices, and importantly, for self-care. About twelve years ago, thanks to one of the medical students, we started a meditation group at UT's medical school. And then we allowed





View audio and video resources online: [www.mdanderson.org/integrativemedcenter](http://www.mdanderson.org/integrativemedcenter)

**How to schedule an appointment:**

- Call Integrative Medicine Center at 713-794-4700 or send a message from myMDA to schedule an appointment.
- Arrive 15 minutes early to check in for group classes.
- Following classes do not require pre-registration: Expressive Arts, PMNO, and Support Groups.

## February 2016

| MONDAY                                                                                                    | TUESDAY                                                                                                            | WEDNESDAY                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | THURSDAY                                                                                                      | FRIDAY                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <b>1</b><br>8:00-12:00 Brief Relaxation Messages<br>2:00-4:00 Expressive Arts: Chinese Ink Art – The Face | <b>2</b><br>9:30-10:30 Tibetan Bon Meditations: Power of the Breath<br>11:15-12:15 Get Moving<br>3:30-4:30 Tai Chi | <b>3</b><br>10:30-11:30 Yoga for Health<br>11:00-12:00 Metastatic Breast Cancer Support Group* (Location: ACB21049) See #1<br>12:00-1:00 Laughter for Health<br>1:00-5:00 Brief Relaxation Messages<br>5:00-7:00 Spine Support Group* | <b>4</b><br>12:00-1:00 Conquerors I've Got Feelings, Too!<br>12:30-1:30 Shape-Up Circuit<br>3:30-4:30 Qi Gong | <b>5</b><br>11:30-12:30 Yoga for Fitness |

Tibetan Bon Meditation is offered at MD Anderson Cancer Center.

other people to join, especially staff and faculty. It is a group that has been going on for a long time. The group has been expanding, since doctors and other non-medical students come to meditation because it helps to reduce their migraine and stress. I also work with translators because as they translate for patients, they experience vicarious or secondary trauma. They become stressed because they have to translate in the first person. This means that even if they don't have cancer they speak as if they are the patient, saying "I have cancer." I also have classes on Meditation and Tea, Meditation and Art, Meditation and Writing and Meditation and Nature. In addition, I put together a class that I call the meditation toolbox.



**I saw you put some meditation instruction videos on the website of MD Anderson.**

People come to MD Anderson from all over the world, not primarily for meditation, but because it is one of the world's top oncology hospitals. When a patient from for example the Netherlands comes, he/she might stay for six weeks for radiation. When going back home the question is:

how to continue practicing? Therefore, we made videos covering *Tsa Lung*, *the Nine Breathings (with explanation and in silence)* and *Tibetan Sound Meditation for Cancer Patients*. They are all in [www.mdanderson.org/patients-family](http://www.mdanderson.org/patients-family). Scroll down the page to *Integrative Medicine Audio & Video*.

There is also an app called [Meditation Studio](#), where I have five meditations. And we have meditations from The 3 Doors Academy on the [website](#) available for everybody.

**What kind of program do you offer to the patients or groups?**

When I see patients the first time, they can come to a class or an individual session. The group classes at MD Anderson are free to anyone touched by cancer. If they come to an individual session, I hear them first and then propose a plan. When I see an organization in our Mind Body Spirit Institute, I show them our programs and say "These are some programs we offer. What are your needs, and what other things do you have in mind?" Then we create a program and a budget, and we see if we need to bring in other specialties. I have been in Houston for over twenty years now, and I know many professionals. Sometimes we co-teach and sometimes I let them do their session in their way. For example, when I think music therapy could be good for a patient or a group, then I suggest doing drumming, or we talk about it how to integrate it.

**In the interview in 2016 you said that you have followed Rinpoche's advice to give teachings also in other places in the community, like Rice**





**University and the Jung Center in Houston. Do you still work there?**

Yes, in particular when it is regarding our Bon teachings or 3 Doors. I still teach continuing studies at Rice University, and sometimes I teach meditation, in the ways I have discussed with Rinpoche, and sometimes I teach with a psychologist who follows Victor Frankl's methodology, seeing how to apply being mindful to things like relationships, work, parenting, etc. At MD Anderson, the University of Texas and the University of Maryland in Baltimore I teach in complementary and integrative medicine, and I also teach about death, dying and the importance of spirituality in medicine for 4<sup>th</sup> year medical students.

In these medical settings we do meditation and provide tools to improve people's life. It is great to have an impact here — in a way it is watering the seeds that Rinpoche planted when he was at Rice University in 1992.



Recently I decreased my time at MD Anderson and started a new institute called the [Mind Body Spirit Institute](#) as part of the Jung Center. The Jung Center is very open to different topics. Based in Jung's open-mindedness and interest in human potential, the Center is open for art, meditation, expressive writing, and many other things. I have been involved with them for about two decades. Last year the executive director of the Jung Center, Sean Fitzpatrick, and I began brainstorming on the idea to create a Mind Body Spirit Institute within it. And thanks to a recent endowment by the Huffington Foundation, my new title is the Huffington Foundation Endowed Director of The Jung Center's Mind Body Spirit Institute.

My first idea was to address the burnout in healthcare providers, both physicians and nurses, as well as others. In the US over 50 % of physicians

have burnout complaints. Also, in the US we don't have the vacation and health security that you have in Europe. Again with Sean Fitzpatrick I offered a program on secondary trauma.

**On the MD Anderson website I saw many publications of yours. Is that mostly research?**

Some of the publications are research articles, other are educational materials for patients and caregivers. And for those in research protocols we create manuals for the different interventions.

For me the most interesting thing is that my research projects at MD Anderson Cancer and at The University of Texas have always been in collaboration with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. He has always been an advisor and I keep him posted about developments and results. In many publications he has become a co-author, and in a few publications we were able to include the Tibetan texts as part of the bibliography.

**I think that it is very important to do research, but often it is published but not read. So, my question is: does something happen with the results of that research? Do colleagues or other hospitals use your methods?**

That is a good question. I talked about it with my senior colleague, Lorenzo Cohen, who has been a researcher for a long time, and in his mind being a researcher means that you do your research, you publish it, people read it and in that way you change the world. But he also realizes, that does not always happen. The question is: where can we move the needle? If you really want to impact, one of the best places is to change policy. In acupuncture some congress members started to feel the effect, they started to push for it, and now we have acupuncture covered in some areas in health insurance.

Recently I was in a conference for the Mind and Life Institute, where one of the speakers was the head of one of the largest medical insurance companies. He himself had an accident and through meditation and yoga he felt so much better, and he started to implementing it for his employees. I stood up and said, "That's fantastic, and I know that our patients are not covered. How come that you feel it is good for your employees, but you're not covering it for your patients?" He said, "Part of the system is that the employer needs to do that."



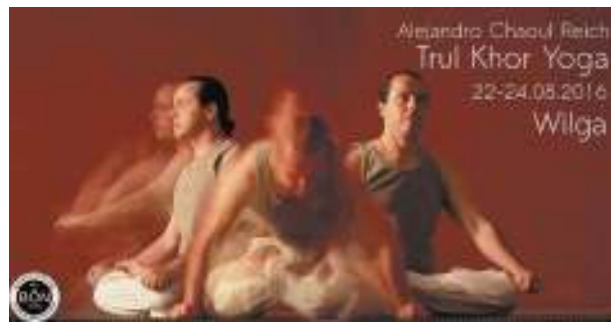


So, much still has to be done, but I do see changes. When I came to the MD Anderson Center twenty years ago to teach the meditation classes, a lot of the doctors and some of the patients asked me, “What are you doing here?” And now it is much more the opposite, and they ask, “Can I refer my patients to you?” When I mention my CPR some say, “I need that, I hope I find the time to join.” There is so much understanding now and there is a need; and they like that there is research validating these methods to help both patients and providers. So, I think it has an effect, and it is not only the research, it is also the patient's testimonies. The patients go back to their oncologist and other doctors, and they say, “I go to these classes and it is so good for me.” That is where the impact is too. But presenting the research in conferences, med schools, etc. has helped too.

At MD Anderson we organize an annual workshop where we invite people from all over the world who are interested in looking at how we started and run our integrative medicine program — both in terms of our successes and our failures. People look up to us, because we are one of the largest Cancer Centers and have been #1 for many years. Because of that we have to do things in a way that the Cancer Center will back us. When we go to the Consortium of Integrative Medicine and Health, we are much more conservative than many others. We are very cautious in our approach and have to do things that are at least evidence-informed. So, research is very important.

**You have been teaching for Ligmincha for many years. How did you become a teacher?**

It was an organic process. I used to go to almost all the retreats with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in Virginia, and then traveling with him, including translating into Spanish for his teachings. It started with Rinpoche asking me to guide a practice after a teaching, and as that continued, he asked me to explain some teachings to new people. Later, Rinpoche suggested that I go to Mexico by myself to teach and lead a retreat there. In 1995 I started translating and in 1997 I taught the first time on my own in Mexico. After that Rinpoche asked me to go to Virginia and Poland. I also became the main person in Ligmincha to teach *Trul Khor*, both during Rinpoche's retreats, as well as *Trul Khor* retreats that I lead, and eventually creating a *Trul Khor* certificate program,



under his supervision. He also asked me to teach the *Ngondro*, in Virginia, Houston and Mexico. There was no protocol then, it depended more on needs in the sangha and time that was available. Also, I gave some trainings for umdzes in the different places I visited, and in Houston.

I have been practicing *Trul Khor* every day since 1993. Since Rinpoche does not teach it, and I specialized in it with Rinpoche's support, I was asked to teach *Trul Khor* in all the different ways. Rinpoche asked me to create a training in it. I have trained people in *Trul Khor*, and it is great to see that Anna-Kaisa Hirvane in Finland, Dariusz Orwat in Poland, Ivonne Igueravide in Mexico and Rob Patzig in the US are now teaching *Trul Khor* too. In early 2019 I taught *A-tri Trul Khor* in France, open for everyone. I will be teaching again next year. My book on this topic was published last year, *Tibetan Yoga for Health & Well-Being*.

**Alejandro will be teaching *Tsa Lung* and *Warrior Syllables* in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, September 13-15 ([Information and registration](#)), and *Tsa Lung* in Bulle, Switzerland, September 20-22 ([Information and registration](#)).**

**And you also teach in The 3 Doors Academy...**

Becoming a teacher in The 3 Doors Academy was more organized. Rinpoche trained around twenty of us, I believe twelve of us actually graduated, and in the end six were selected to teach, and Kallon Basquin was appointed as Director. After the training, Rinpoche put a program together that was more structured for the West.

Teaching in The 3 Doors Academy has been very different from the Ligmincha approach, because of the way we open up personally and the amount of sharing about our own stuff is different. When I came to teach The 3 Doors in Mexico I had already been teaching there for ten to fifteen years, and many of the same people came to The 3 Doors





Academy. Many of them are not just students, they are friends. It was interesting to be in the same room and teaching from a different place.

Teaching with Laura Shekerjian in the Latin American 3 Doors Academy has been great. Laura was my first student from *Trul Khor* who started teaching, and so we've known each other for a long time. We have also taught *Trul Khor* together in Poland.



Laura Shekerjian.

**When I heard that the first week of The 3 Doors Academy was only the *Nine Breathings* and *Tsa Lung*, I thought that it would be boring. I was amazed by the power of it, and it felt like something new. I was so excited about it. And after instructions from Laura, I learned to do it in a more relaxed way. First I would hold my body tight, and then use a lot of force to release it.**

Yes, that is one of the advantages of The 3 Doors Academy. It is not about collecting practices, it is about deepening your practice. If we would offer a week-long Ligmincha retreat to teach the *Nine Breathings* and *Tsa Lung*, we would have 3 people, because most people say, "I know that already." This practice can go so deep, and that is supported by the way we share at The 3 Doors Academies.



**What do you think the difference is between the Ligmincha and 3 Doors pathways?**

In Ligmincha there is a lot more material to teach; there is a didactic and textual aspect. In the US they say this is the "sage on the stage," meaning the teacher is teaching the audience, rather than the more collaborative learning of the style of The 3 Doors. In the Bon tradition we have so many

teachings from so many teachers, and outside of Ligmincha there are many places you can go like Shenten Dargye Ling in France, Menri Monastery in India and Triten Norbutse Monastery in Nepal. That is an incredibly rich way of learning.

The Ligmincha path is a path of deepening one's own practice. So far we have not had a structured path through which the learner becomes a teacher or an instructor, although as I mentioned there had been 'organic' ways of growing into it. We have tried to bring more structure to Ligmincha, but for some reason it has been much harder. In the past people went to Rinpoche and said that they wanted to create a sangha in their country, and Rinpoche would say, "OK, and you're the umdze." We all hope that people will get more trained and get to know each other better. In Ligmincha now we are working on a path and training for categories that we call host, umdze and instructor.

The expectations from the people in Ligmincha are different. Even in the *Trul Khor* training we don't ask them for the same commitment as in The 3 Doors Academy. We don't have mentor groups, even when we offer a training every year. But we may implement something similar in the near future.

In The 3 Doors Academy people commit to a path where they meet regularly for two and a half years. There is more sharing and motivating others to share and open up and use the practice to explore what is going on in their lives. If I may, bringing one's own *s@#\*t*, or pain to the cushion. The continuity we have in The 3 Doors Academy is special, both for the relationship between teacher and student, as well as the relationship of the group. In The 3 Doors Academy I see my mentees every month, but in Ligmincha we don't meet between retreats with a teacher. The 3 Doors is like integrative medicine of ancient wisdom and modern dynamics. In Integrative Medicine the patient is not a passive receiver, but an active ingredient in their own healing. In The 3 Doors Academy you are an active participant of your own learning and healing.

The way of The 3 Doors Academy is in a way narrower, in the amount of teachings included, and more structured in its path. After The 3 Doors Academy we have the presenters' path, and even-





tually we will have a path for teachers. Although The Academy was for learning, not for teaching, we created a way of measuring the learning in a way that we do not do at Ligmincha — although we did have some of it when we had the 7-year program in the 90s. This way we can see if people are ready to enter the Presenters Path.

**As a participant of The 3 Doors Academy I can say that the process I am going through is much deeper than when I went to Ligmincha retreats. After a Ligmincha retreat I felt blessed when I went home, and that faded after a few weeks. In The 3 Doors Academy the healing started with a deep personal crisis.**

That is possible because you come together with a group for a longer period, and then you are able to share from a deeper place, and there is much more trust to let people know what's going on in your life. In addition, you know you'll have the continuity through buddy groups, mentor groups, and individual meetings with your mentor.

**Closing this interview, I would like to ask you to share about your teachers, and how they influenced you?**

They influenced me tremendously. In the Tibetan tradition my first teacher was His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama. Although I had the chance to talk to him one on one, when I coordinated his visits to Argentina in 1992 and in 1999, I never talked in detail with him about my practice.

My first personal teacher was Yeshe Dorje Rinpoche. He was a Ngag-pa [a yogi specialized in unusually difficult and dangerous practices requiring control of vast powers, like weather, and a great *Chö-pa*]. Just by chance I ended up in his monastery, asking for a room. From him I learned the *Ngondro* and one of the *Chöd* practices from the Nyingma tradition, and the lineage of his teacher, Dudjom Rinpoche.

When I came back to Argentina I met some other teachers like Tsoknyi Rinpoche and Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, for whom I also translated to Spanish. Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche told me to meet H.E. Lopon Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, when I was going to New York for the Kalachakra of H.H. Dalai Lama in 1991, and the main teachers of each of the 5 Tibetan traditions, taught before him. Lopon taught for the Bon tradition, and when I met him it was like WOW!!!



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

I continued to see Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and Lopon as much as I could, and a couple of years later I met Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. That meeting was also very striking, during Losar of 1993; and knowing he was a student of Lopon made it all the more special.

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche said he was going to start a seven-year training, and I said “That's great, but I am in Argentina.” However, then as life and karma moves us, I came to the US to study Tibetan language at the University of Virginia. Rinpoche ‘appeared’ in Charlottesville and invited me again for the seven-year training, and told me he would bring Lopon. That retreat was the most impactful retreat for me, in terms of connecting to the lineage. When Lopon and Rinpoche were teaching together it felt like the whole Refuge Tree came alive! There it became very clear that this is my tradition, my lineage, and, I also committed to the seven-year training. I have been very fortunate spending time and being deeply involved both academically, and in the *dharma* with my masters, and going to the monasteries. There I met His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, Khenpo Nyima Wangyal, Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung, Lopon Trinley Nyima and other teachers. Organizing the Ligmincha Summer Retreats in the US, I was very fortunate to spend many hours with the teachers. His Holiness loved to teach me the drum. I also spent two months in Menri Monastery with His Holiness learning *A-tri Trul Khor* and *Tummo*. I always try to keep on learning from the Tibetan teachers. In Houston we have Geshe Denma Gyaltzen as a resident lama, and I teach with him and learn from him.

Thank you!

**Interview by Ton Bisscheroux**





# TIBETAN YOGA FOR HEALTH & WELL-BEING

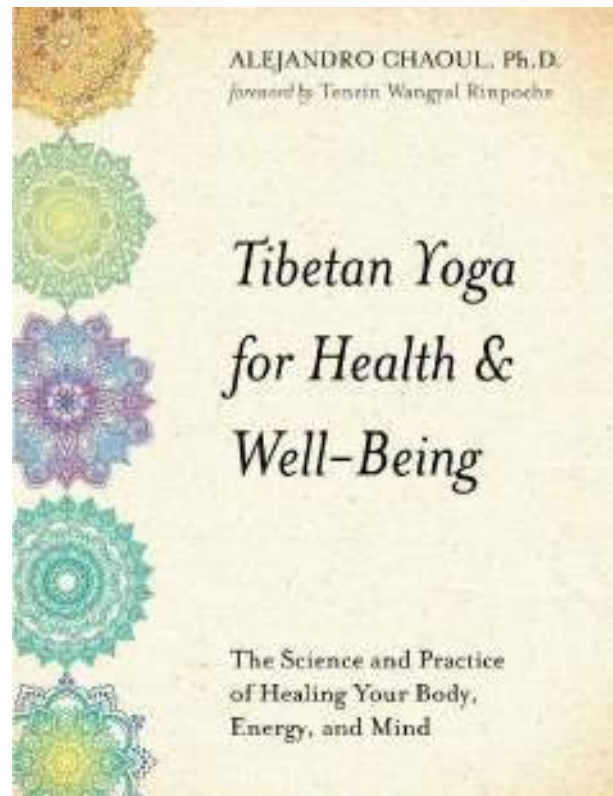
We asked Alejandro Chaoul a few questions about his book *Tibetan Yoga for Health & Well-Being*, that was published last year by Hay House, Inc., and we reprint some pages.

## Can you tell about your recent published book?

It was a wonderful experience to see how the book developed as I interacted with the editor. For example, it was the editor's idea to bring the research and the practice together in my new book. Thanks to that, we also changed the subtitle to *The Science and Practice of Healing Your Body, Energy, and Mind*. I wrote this book so that anyone interested in meditation or yoga could understand it. For example, instead of "Guru Yoga," I write about the importance of intention as one starts one's practice. The first meditation I describe is one I call Connecting to Your Heart. This helps to relax all the "stuff" in your brain and monkey mind, and to come a little more into your heart-mind. I call it Connecting to Your Heart because I was inspired to work with people with cancer when I started volunteering at MD Anderson — my father and Namkai Norbu Rinpoche had been recently diagnosed. I remember going to Namkai Norbu Rinpoche and talking about how to deal with the illness. His counsel was not about relaxing stress, but about connecting.

The main focus in the *Nine Breathings* is also about connecting. I often teach the *Nine Breathings* without visualizing the three channels at the beginning because this helps people connect to the breathing. For many people even changing from one hand to the other or visualizing the colors is complicated. A few years ago, when I was teaching for Ligmincha Texas, somebody came to me and said "You realize that this is a really complicated practice, don't you?" I said "Thank you" and since then, I have taken that remark into account. Sometimes Tibetan teachers do not take much time teaching the *Nine Breathings* because they expect everybody to know them, and that those who don't will catch up. In MD Anderson I now spend about half of an hour class on the *Nine Breathings*.

In the twenty-six years I have been with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche I have seen how he teaches



differently in different places, and I have tried to learn from that. It is not about changing the practice itself. It is about how you teach it differently to different audiences. What is the essence you need to maintain and what are the things that are not needed for some groups of people, at least at the introductory level? And of course, if they want to go deeper, there are opportunities for that too. So, now I start with the breathings, and slowly include the channels.

## How did the book evolve?

Writing this book has been another way of thinking how we teach. For example, many people in the West think it is an open teaching, but for the Tibetans *Tsa Lung Trul Khor* is not so open. Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche was one of the first to teach Trul Khor in the West, and he called it Yantra Yoga. When I teach *Tsa lung*, I mention to people who may not know, how unique it is that we are teaching it in an open way, following Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's teaching and advise. *Trul Khor* also is supposed to be very secret. So, writing this book took me ten years, deciding what book to write. We have been going back and forth with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche about how to do the trainings. Until 2007 we mostly worked with





the *Zhang Zung Nyen Gyud Trul Khor*.

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche asked me to learn the *A-tri Trul Khor* with His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche in 2001, and so I spent a couple of months at Menri Monastery. I was also finishing my dissertation. When Rinpoche was teaching *Tummo* in 2007, he said that the text mentioned the *A-tri Trul Khor*, and he knew I had learnt it with His Holiness. He said that many people find the *Zhang Zung Nyen Gyud Trul Khor* difficult, and we have a population that is not so young. At that Summer Retreat he asked Geshe Tenzin Yangton, Geshe Tenzin Yeshe and me to look at the different movements and condense them to fifteen. And that's what we did. Each one of us brought their own ideas, and Rinpoche decided which we were going to use. There we created what I call the 'Ligmincha sixteen.' There are fifteen main movements and one *Ngondro*. We taught them at the end of the retreat and continued every year and decided that this was going to be taught to the lay people. It was complete, including movements for all five kinds of breath-energies (*rlung, prana*).

An important question was: how could we bring these practices to a lay audience? I asked if we could publish a book. I remember that when Lopon wrote the *Heart Drops of Dharmakaya* he was really worried that it was going to be published in a place where people could just read it without any previous instruction. That has always been on my mind while writing this book. Having a book that is available in this way, we tried to make it simple and hopefully inspiring for people to maybe try something. But, if they really want to learn, it is important they come and learn from a teacher during a retreat. I hope that happens. If you publish a book like this there will always come some resistance, because it is a secret practice.

#### **By making it simple do you water it down?**

No, we are doing it within the tradition, and with Rinpoche's blessings and advise. Working with the tradition has been very important for me. This is a book open for the public; it is not a scholarly book. But if Rinpoche and Lopon would not have said 'yes' I would not have done it. This book is inspired by my teachers, and in communication with them.

**I am sure that many people are happy with the book, because for many years during the Summer Retreat in Buchenau, Germany, we have had the chance to do *Trul Khor* in the morning. We got a summary of the movements, but I never did the movements at home. Somehow it was so complicated for me, asking myself should I start with the right foot or the left foot? Sometimes I was more thinking how to do the practice right than being with what's happening in my body.**

That's a good point. I tried to emphasize where I use the metaphor of the A, because the teaching of the A is all about staying in the natural state of your mind. The right or left foot is relatively unimportant. It is more important that you do it either in state of A or that you get back to that state. Then you learn the other details. I used photos and videos to make the movements clear, but the most important thing is to study with a teacher.

#### **Interview by Ton Bisscheroux**



Alejandro Chaoul.

**Here we reprint the pages xvii-xx and 81-83 from the book:**

#### **What Is Tibetan Yoga?**

*Yoga is a global phenomenon that is practiced today in a variety of places, from gyms, to yoga studios, to temples, to many Western homes. For the most part, these are mind-body practices that have their origin in India, some emphasizing body posture (asana), others breathing practices (pranayama), and still others mind or meditation practices. In the practice of these Indian-based yogas, the practitioner brings the body into a specific posture, allowing the breath to flow and the mind to settle.*





*In the mind-body practices that originated in China, usually called Qigong and T'ai Chi, the practitioner learns to move the body in sync with the breath-energy (qi) and the mind settles into that flow.*



*The Tibetan yogas, Tsa lung and Trul khor (magical movements of breath and channels), are distinctive mind-energy-body practices where the practitioner brings their mind and breath together and, while holding them still, moves the body in a particular way to direct that breath-energy in five distinct ways, then exhales and settles their mind in a radical sense of full awareness. The special quality of awareness arising from these mind — breath-energy — body movements is why they are called magical movements.*

*Written texts describing these magical movements trace back to the 10th century, but they reportedly were transmitted orally long before that.*

*Trul, which is usually translated as “magic” or “magical,” can also take on the meaning of “machine” or “mechanics.” Khor means “wheel,” but also “circular movement” or just “movement.” Therefore, Trul khor can be translated as “magical movement(s)” or “magical wheel,” and sometimes “spinning the machinery with wheels or chakras.” Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung, current abbot of Triten Norbutse Monastery in Nepal, says that trul in the Tibetan yoga context refers to the magic of “the unusual effects that these movements produce in the experience of the practitioner.”*

### **Not Just Mind-Body, but Mind – Breath-Energy – Body**

*Although mainstream Western medicine has not totally recognized or embraced the connection between physical illness and energetic or mental obstacles, there are new paradigms in the*

*emerging field of complementary and integrative medicine (CIM) that do acknowledge it and are more akin to and congruent with Asian systems. In fact, beginning in the 1930s and flourishing especially from the 1970s onward, “more than a thousand studies of meditation have been reported in English-language journals, books, and graduate theses.”*

*Over the last decade and a half I have engaged in researching the possible practical and physical applications of these Tibetan mind-body techniques in a Western medical setting. In particular, I have focused on the potential benefits of Tibetan yoga as part of CIM treatments for cancer patients.*

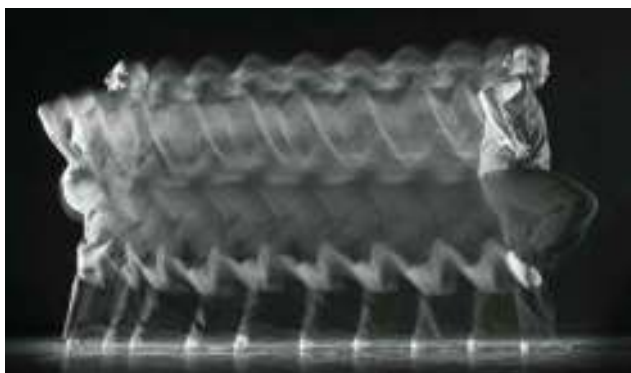
*When I met Lorenzo Cohen, Ph.D., then a behavioral researcher at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston and now director of their Integrative Medicine Program, in 2000, he asked me to design a Tibetan yoga intervention for cancer patients. We formed a team and began conducting randomized, controlled clinical trials to determine the feasibility, acceptability, and initial efficacy of these practices. Our findings have been published in various journals.*



*In Tibetan Buddhist and Bon teachings, one's physical body, breath, and mind are known as the three doors through which one practices and realizes enlightenment. Within the speech or energy realm, a subtle energy body emerges metaphorically and, for some, in actuality. In Tibetan, this “subtle body” is composed of channels (tsa) that help guide the breath-energy (lung — pronounced long — called prana in the Indian yogas and qi in Chinese mind-body practices). This subtle body provides the landscape where the mind and the physical body connect with each other through the five breath-energies.*







(...)

*It is important to keep some sense of awareness throughout the day, which we sometimes call informal practice. Bring awareness to your daily activities with meditation moments, or “meditation pills,” by consciously focusing on your breath for a few moments several times during the day.*

*It may be helpful to use the STOP formula, which I first heard about from Susan Bauer-Wu, who is now the president of Mind & Life Institute:*

**Stop.**

*Take a few deep, conscious breaths.*

*Open your heart and observe how you feel.*

*Proceed — or, if you are not ready to proceed, continue observing and breathing consciously for a time.*

**Throughout the day, you can use STOP in different situations.**

- *Whenever you wash your hands, use the time to wash your mind as well. As you focus on lathering and rinsing, take slow breaths and imagine that you are also cleansing your mind.*
- *While sitting, stretch your arms upward. As you lengthen your back, breathe deeply through your nose, into your belly, and back out through your nose. Lower your arms, place them on your lap, and take a few deep, calm breaths.*
- *When you pull up to a stoplight in the car, do as the Vietnamese master Thich Nhat Hanh says and thank the red light, and then take the opportunity to connect to yourself: Ignore your phone, turn off the radio, and pause to breathe in peace and release anxious thoughts. Of course, you need to do this one with your eyes open.*

*Acknowledging how hectic our lives are and having tools to assist us in our formal and informal practice is what makes us modern yogis. In one of our recent Tibetan yoga studies, we found that you needed to do formal practice more than twice — at least three times a week — to keep the benefits. And, of course, try to keep up with your daily informal practice with the meditation moments, or “meditation pills,” or STOP formula.*



*You can take these meditation pills as if they were aspirin, when your head hurts or when you feel stress, or, even better, as an antibiotic, four times a day, without needing to wait for that stress to be imminent.*

*So, just as you engage formally and informally in your practice during the day, at night, or right before you go to sleep, also take a moment to do a few conscious breaths and use them to wash your mind. Then, bring your attention to your heart center and, with an inner smile, fall asleep. In this way, you can keep your practice during the cycle of day and night.*



**Text selected by Ton Bisscheroux**





## TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE'S 2019 EUROPEAN SEMINARS AND ONLINE TEACHINGS

| When                           | Where                         | What                                                                             | More information                                                               |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Flexible dates and times       | Your computer or other device | On Facebook: Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche LIVE                                        | <a href="http://ligminchalearning.com">ligminchalearning.com</a>               |
| Anytime you like you can start | Your computer or other device | Free Online Courses: Starting a Meditation Practice, Parts 1 & 2                 | <a href="http://ligminchalearning.com">ligminchalearning.com</a>               |
| Anytime you like you can start | Your computer or other device | Free Online Course: Host Training Program                                        | <a href="http://ligminchalearning.com">ligminchalearning.com</a>               |
| August 10 – September 1        | Your computer or other device | Interactive online course: Tibetan Sound Healing                                 | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>                       |
| August 20 – 25                 | Wilga, Poland                 | Retreat: Inner Heat and Bliss, Part 1                                            | <a href="http://ligmincha.org/country-poland">ligmincha.org/country-poland</a> |
| August 23 – September 29       | Your computer or other device | Interactive online course: Treasures of Bön: History, Lineage & Practices        | <a href="http://ligminchalearning.com">ligminchalearning.com</a>               |
| September 6 – 8                | Budapest, Hungary             | Weekend seminar: Spontaneous Creativity                                          | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.hu">www.ligmincha.hu</a>                         |
| September 28 – October 27      | Your computer or other device | Interactive online course: Awakening the Sacred Arts                             | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>                       |
| September 29 – October 4       | Your computer or other device | Online course: The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep                              | <a href="http://www.esalen.org">www.esalen.org</a>                             |
| October 4 – November 17        | Your computer or other device | Interactive online course: The Five Elements, Healing with Form Energy and Light | <a href="http://ligminchalearning.com">ligminchalearning.com</a>               |
| October 20 – November 17       | Your computer or other device | Interactive online course: Tibetan Language Bön Prayers: Session III             | <a href="http://ligminchalearning.com">ligminchalearning.com</a>               |
| November 15 – December 22      | Your computer or other device | Interactive online course: The Three Heart Mantras                               | <a href="http://ligminchalearning.com">ligminchalearning.com</a>               |
| November 16 – December 15      | Your computer or other device | Interactive online course: Tibetan Dream Yoga                                    | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>                       |

You can also view free recorded Internet teachings from your computer or other device, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Access them on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/tenzinwangyalrinpoche), [facebook.com/tenzinwangyalrinpoche](https://facebook.com/tenzinwangyalrinpoche), [www.ligminchalearning.com](http://www.ligminchalearning.com) and [www.oceanofwisdom.org](http://www.oceanofwisdom.org).







# Ligmincha Europe Magazine

**# 30 – Autumn 2019-Spring 2020**



Letters to Students

Ceremony for H.E. Yongdzin Rinpoche

Packed and Ready

Escape from Darkness

The Teachers of 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 Magazine](https://www.facebook.com/LigminchaEuropeMagazine).

**Editor:** Ton Bisscheroux

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# GREETINGS AND NEWS FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers, Dear Practitioners of Bon,

It really feels strange to write that this is the last edition of the Ligmincha Europe Magazine. Ten years ago, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche asked if I wanted to make a newsletter for the European sangha, to enhance communication with sangha members from all the different countries in Europe and to help keep everyone updated about our projects and activities.

Since then, thirty issues have been published, and the European and worldwide sangha have grown closer together. In the beginning being an editor was a lonely job. I met the other editors only online, and there was little feedback from readers. That changed when I went to retreats in Europe and the US, where teachers and sangha members expressed their gratitude for our work.

Regrettably, since Summer 2018 we have not been able to publish the Magazine regularly. Over the years, editors came and went, but the past few years I have been unable to find anyone new. One of the things I have learned is that without the help of others, I can't do it, so here it ends.

We have a wonderful Teacher and Sangha, so I have been reflecting on how to continue with interviews and publishing articles in other ways.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, who gave me his confidence

and saw my ability to do this before I was aware of having the necessary qualities. It was a great privilege to interview the Teachers and Sangha members who shared their experiences. I want to thank the editors, proofreaders and all the people who have contributed during the past ten years to this Magazine. It was a great joy and practice to work with all them.

In this edition we bring you letters from Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche whose plans for a sabbatical changed because of the COVID-19 outbreak; advice from H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche concerning the Corona-virus; and a report from the *Tenshug* ceremony for H.E. Yongdzin Rinpoche.

This issue also contains interviews with Lishu Institute Teachers Geshe Sherab Lodoe and Sangmo Yangri, and with 3 Doors Senior Teacher Laura Shekerjian.

Also, you can read an extract from the book *Escape from Darkness* by Sangmo Yangri, a poem, an article published previously in the *Voice of Clear Light*, and a *Phowa* text, as well as news from Europe and information about the 3 Doors online courses.

In Bon,  
**Ton Bisscheroux, editor**





# A LETTER TO STUDENTS FROM TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE

Following is a letter from Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche from November 29th, 2019, to the Ligmincha International sangha related to his plans for a yearlong sabbatical in 2021.

To All My Students,

I send you my heartfelt greetings. After much reflection, I am writing to share with you an important decision that I have made. As you know, I always encourage people to look deeply into and reflect on their lives. I, too, reflect on my life, family, and spiritual practice. As I turn 60, I find that I want to spend more time with my family and make space for personal retreat. So, starting on January 3, 2021, I will be taking a yearlong sabbatical. This will be a time for me to actively engage with stillness, silence, and spaciousness and explore them in a new way.

From now until the end of 2020, I will continue my usual teaching schedule globally and online. During this time, I encourage all of you to participate as actively as you can. In 2021 my only scheduled teaching activities will be summer retreats at Serenity Ridge in the US and Chamma Ling in Poland. In January 2022 I will resume my regular schedule. While I am away, I will not actively engage in social media. This means that I won't have any scheduled Facebook Live events. When inspired I may occasionally share poems, thoughts, and reflections. I look forward to returning from my sabbatical and sharing its fruit with all of you.

Preserving and sharing this tradition is my life's mission. My goal has always been to help my beloved teachers, spread the teachings, and assist Bön lamas and centers in any ways that I can. Every year the teachings spread, and more people are finding these beautiful practices. I see them bring so much goodness to people's lives everywhere I go. Teaching, writing, connecting, and sharing is what energizes me. It is joyful, spontaneous, nourishing work, and it is indescribably rewarding. It is my calling.

As always, stay connected – now, and during my sabbatical – to the teachings, to one another, to me, and especially to yourselves. [Ligmincha International](#), [The 3 Doors](#), and [CyberSangha.net](#) offer so many ways to connect, practice, and grow. They exist to support you on your path. I hope that you will take full advantage of them.

With much love and many blessings, now and always,



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche





# A LETTER FROM THE LIGMINCHA INTERNATIONAL BOARD

Following is a letter from Ligmincha International's Board from November 29th, 2019, to the Ligmincha International Sangha related to the plans for Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's yearlong sabbatical in 2021.



## Ligmincha International

Dear Sangha,

Rinpoche has maintained an extraordinarily full teaching and travel schedule for more than 30 years. The Board fully supports our Spiritual Director, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, in his wish to take a yearlong sabbatical beginning January 2021. We are glad that he can take this time to focus on his life, family, and personal practice. We know that Rinpoche looks forward to discovering and sharing his insights with all of us in 2022 as much as we await seeing him return.

We are writing to share additional information to assist you and your local, national, or cyber sanghas.

- Rinpoche's sabbatical does not begin for more than a year. There are many opportunities all around the world to practice with and receive teachings from Rinpoche in person before his sabbatical (Rinpoche's global teaching schedule for 2020 is attached).
- Rinpoche's last retreat of 2020 will be at Serenity Ridge. We encourage everyone who can to attend. For those who cannot travel to the center, we intend to make the entire retreat available online.
- During his yearlong sabbatical, Rinpoche will hold summer retreats in both Europe (at Chamma Ling in Wilga, Poland), and the US (at Serenity Ridge, in Virginia). We anticipate these two retreats will be fully attended. Please encourage anyone in your sangha wanting to attend either or both to register as soon as registration opens. These retreats are likely to sell out.
- Our resident lamas, Geshe Denma Gyaltsen, Geshe Yungdrung Gyatso, Lama Kalsang Nyima, and Lama Yungdrung Lodoe are all actively teaching, offering instruction, and performing rituals. They are teaching extensively in Europe, Mexico, Central and South America, and the United States. Our geshe and lamas are excellent teachers, and we encourage everyone to seek opportunities to be with them. Lishu, in India, also remains a place of long-term study during this time, under the guidance of Geshe Thupten Negi, Geshe Sherab Lodoe and Dr. Sangmo Yangri.
- We will be inviting other Bön lamas to teach at Ligmincha centers around the world. These will be wonderful opportunities to extend our connection to the Bön lineage.
- We will expand our live and online practice opportunities in many languages. The Dutch, English, German, Polish, Portuguese, and Spanish communities are already practicing together online in real time. We continue to seek opportunities for group practice online and in person. If your community needs assistance developing online opportunities, please write to our president Rob Patzig or board member Frank Jeri, whose email addresses are below.

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- [CyberSangha.net](https://CyberSangha.net) is and will remain an important place for community, connection, and access to free recordings of Rinpoche's teachings. The CyberSangha team will be actively supporting the global community just as they have since Rinpoche began offering live webcasts.
- Online courses with Rinpoche will remain available and new ones are being developed. These can be found both on [LigminchaLearning.com](https://LigminchaLearning.com) and on [GlideWing.com](https://GlideWing.com). Our intention is to release new courses in advance of his sabbatical.

Our own experience in learning of Rinpoche's intention to take time away from teaching left us all feeling many different things: happiness, sadness, anxiety, surprise, and more. But we are reminded of a story Rinpoche often shares at retreat. He had the great good fortune to live with his teacher, His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche for many years. They no longer have many opportunities to see one another, but their connection is never broken — they are never apart from one another in their hearts and minds. Like them, this coming time is a special opportunity for each of us to experience the connection that comes from abiding in the inner refuge. We are always connected.

Rinpoche's goal, the goal of Ligmincha International's Board, and the goal of our staff over the course of the next year is to ensure that all of us stay connected and can support one another in 2021. We are actively planning for Rinpoche's return in 2022, with a full calendar of online and in-person activities. In the meantime, we are here to serve and support each of you. Please contact any of us if we can be of assistance to you or your sangha.

We ask your support in communicating Rinpoche's announcement and the contents of this letter to your community.

In service,

Rob Patzig, US ([r.patzig@ligmincha.org](mailto:r.patzig@ligmincha.org))  
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## ANOTHER LETTER TO STUDENTS FROM TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE

Following is a letter from Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche to the Ligmincha International Sangha related to the cancellation of his retreats scheduled in a number of European countries this spring. All of these retreats will be rescheduled in 2021. Rinpoche had previously announced plans for a yearlong sabbatical in 2021. Instead, he will be taking six months off in 2020 and six months in 2021. In the mean time the retreat in Buchenau, Germany is also cancelled.

March 02, 2020

Dear Sangha,

After much reflection, and in consultation with leaders in the European Ligmincha communities, I have decided to cancel my upcoming visits to Germany, Austria, France, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Spain and Switzerland. I am committed to rescheduling all of the cancelled events in 2021, and I look forward to being in Europe to teach at Buchenau, Germany and in Wilga, Poland this summer.

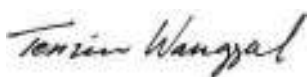
My decision is a response to the COVID-19 virus outbreak. As an organization we are responsible for everyone who comes to our events. Until this situation is better understood and becomes more stable, we do not want to put anyone at risk or unintentionally help spread this disease. So, it is prudent to postpone these teachings and support efforts to contain the virus and prevent further outbreaks.

On my side, I feel that the universe is saying that I should take my sabbatical earlier and in a different way than I had planned. Instead of taking an entire year away from my teaching in 2021, I will take shorter periods for family, personal retreat and creative activity. And I will take these shorter breaks more often. I will take six months of time in 2020, and another six months in 2021.

In my opinion, all the news and reactivity about the virus is part of a collective fear manifesting in our responses to what is happening in the world. Recently there has been so much negativity in society and on social media, between politicians, political parties, religious groups and individuals. There is so much energy spent in defending and attacking, and in being separate or cut off from others. It is as if the world is saying, okay, you need to take a break from being mean to each other. Now we have an opportunity to set aside our differences and work together for a solution to stop the spread of the virus, care for the sick and support the families of its victims. We can use this situation and all that it brings us as an opportunity for personal and collective growth.

I encourage all of you to pray, as I do, for everyone who has been affected by this or any other sickness — those who have died, those who are sick, those quarantined, their families, their loved ones — and for the welfare of all the healthcare workers and first responders.

As always, I send each and every one of you my love and blessings.



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche





# ADVICE FROM H.E. YONGDZIN TENZIN NAMDAK RINPOCHE

On March 29th, 2020 a video was posted online on YouTube with *His Eminence Yongdzin Rinpoche's Advice for Western sangha's* concerning the Corona-virus. Here is an edited transcript.

Hello! I am Tenzin Namdak. I want to speak to all the Shenten and Yungdrung Bon sangha members and to share with you that nowadays there are contagious diseases all over the world. Many people are very worried, and indeed one should worry. But, it is not necessary to let oneself be overwhelmed by the worry. I would like to ask all members to not think too much and don't worry excessively. Before a problem arises, it is not necessary to worry too much. Instead, listen to the advice of knowledgeable and concerned government and medical people. Keep oneself in isolation/social distance, avoid travelling and the many activities that may mean exposing yourself or others to the risk of spreading and/or catching the virus. It is necessary to carefully listen, obey and exercise the advice about prevention of the disease.

Especially for practitioners, I have already many times taught the *Healing practice of Sipa Gyalmo/ Yeshe Walmo*. I hope everyone of you has had the transmission and instruction of this practice for individual protection and prevention of diseases. The mantra of healing is *OM A BHI YA NAG PO BE SÖ SO HA*.



While reciting this mantra you should visualize Yeshe Walmo in the space in front of you, as illustrated in the image. The vase she holds is full of nectar and she pours a stream of nectar into your bowl, which you should have placed in front

of you, filled with clean water. Imagine and feel that your bowl is filled with healing nectar — that

the water in your bowl is infused with healing nectar and blessed by Yeshe Walmo. Reciting the mantra *OM A BHI YA NAG PO BE SÖ SO HA* many times, not only for short periods, but every day for quite a long time, should be done before any disease actually arrives. You should do this yourself and you should also advise others to recite the mantra. Doing these things can prevent the spread of the epidemic. This is said by Sipa Gyalmo herself and by the lineage master from whom I heard this teaching.

Also, some Tibetan medical people have produced a preventive herbal medicine called Nagpo Gujor. This powdered herbal medicine is wrapped in a piece of cloth, as a sachet. This should be kept around your neck and you should smell the herb every morning, and at any other time.

You should write the healing mantra *OM A BHI YA NAG PO BE SÖ SO HA* three times on a piece of any color cloth of about one square foot. Hang it at a high place, open to the sky, such as the rooftop of your house, like prayer flag. This can help to protect the whole area visible to the flag from the disease. You may also wear a protective amulet containing the healing mantra and seal of Sipa Gyalmo. There may be someone who knows or has experience making this who can help you.

All of these actions of hanging flags etc should be done along with recitation of the mantra and visualization of Yeshe Walmo holding a vase of nectar-water, so that the nectar-water in the vase falls into the water in your bowl, thus mixing together your water and the nectar-water of Yeshe Walmo. This blessed water should be used for purification by drinking or washing with it.

Followers who are capable of doing these practices should try them precisely as described. The main thing is to visualize Sipa Gyalmo with devotion and recite the mantra as much as you can. She said that reciting the mantra millions of times is important. The more times you recite the mantra, the better. But you should do it intensively, not only loosely remembering of it and saying the mantra only few times. Doing this is much better than too much worrying. That is what I wanted to say. Thank you!



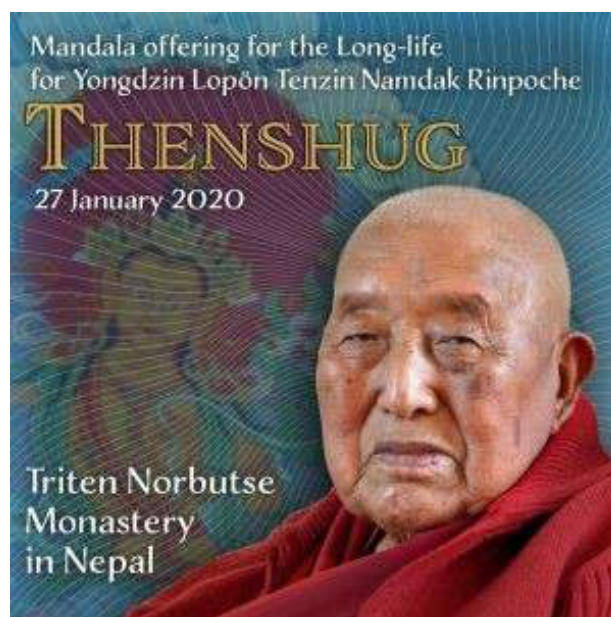


## TENSHUG FOR H.E. YONGDZIN LOPON TENZIN NAMDAK RINPOCHE

From January 22<sup>nd</sup> to January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Tritten Norbutse Monastery in Nepal celebrated the 25th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Yungdrung Bon Academy of Higher Studies, called Shedra. On this auspicious occasion, the Monastery held many important rituals and events. One of them was a *Thenshug*, a Mandala offering for the Long-life for our most senior teacher and lineage holder, His Eminence Yongdzin Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche. Here is a report from Olivia Zsamboki.

Many Western disciples travelled to Kathmandu to participate in the *Thenshug*. For this occasion, all the Bonpo sisters and brothers around the world were invited to contribute to the Mandala offering for the Long-life for Yongdzin Rinpoche, as a way to show our aspiration and devotion, and express our heartfelt wish for him to stay with us at least one-hundred years.

The *Tenshug* ceremony took place at Tritten Norbutse Monastery, in Kathmandu, on January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020. This date is also special since Yongdzin Rinpoche celebrated his 95<sup>th</sup> Birthday in January. On this auspicious occasion, the Monastery performed a Long-Life offering. His Western center, Shenten Dargye Ling in France, invited the worldwide Western Bonpo sangha to participate



through a joint effort and perform one Long-life offering to Lopon at the same time.

We are all connected to Lopon largely because our teacher is and was his student for so long. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's main teacher is Yongdzin Rinpoche, and he lived many years with him.

Through his kindness and ceaseless effort to spread the Yungdrung Bon, we have the precious opportunity to learn the Buddha's teaching and enter to the Path of Liberation. So, this *Tenshug* was a great opportunity for all of us to express our gratitude and care to him.



The shrine at Tritten Norbutse Monastery during the *Thenshug* ceremony.











*Tenshug* literally means “to stay firmly” or “stay everlasting.” This ritual is performed for an important master in order to create the conditions and merit to extend his lifespan. This is also an occasion for the students to express their devotion towards their master who keeps the Buddha’s teaching and spreads it untiringly, and to fulfill all his wishes. During a *Tenshug*, along the prayers, we traditionally offer special objects, such as a Mandala offering plate, a statue, holy scriptures, a stupa, a full set of new monk robe, a cushion for the lama, chakshing – the eight auspicious symbols, the seven precious royal emblems, the five offerings, namgye, torma, rakta, and medicine. Before the offering of the items, a puja that lasts several days is performed.

In order to perform the *Tenshug* ceremony, offering items of high quality were needed. Sanghas and sangha members individually could support and participate through contribution to

the expenses of the ritual. In addition, sangha members could accumulate the Long-Life Mantra for the health of Yongdzin Rinpoche until the ceremony.

Ligmincha International collected more than six million mantras for Lopon, offered to him by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. Besides the mantras, money and other gifts were also offered to Yongdzin Rinpoche and the monastery. Many representatives of Ligmincha sanghas worldwide attended the events.

Since many Western students were not able to travel to Nepal, in January 2020, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Ligmincha International hosted a series of activities online and at our centers around the world.

**Text and photos by Olivia Zsamboki**





# CONNECTING TO THE TEACHERS OF LISHU INSTITUTE

In July and August 2019 two teachers from Lishu Institute, Geshe Sherab Lodoe and Sangmo Yangri, travelled through Europe. During the Summer Retreat in Buchenau, Germany during August, 2019 Florian Bruckmann and Ton Bisscheroux had a conversation with them.

**Florian:** I am really thankful that you came all the way to Europe to connect to us. I think this is the beginning of a good collaboration.

**Sangmo Yangri:** For me it was a massive experience to explore the European world, meeting all the people. By meeting people personally the warmth became stronger.

**Ton:** Geshe-la, can you tell about your trip through Europe?

**Geshe Sherab Lodoe:** Our foremost gratitude goes to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche; we are here because of him. Second, we thank Oliver Wirtz and Florian Bruckmann, who made this visit to Europe possible, and made our trip through Europe



Geshe Sherab Lodoe, Sangmo Yangri, Ton Bisscheroux and Florian Bruckmann.

comfortable. For me it felt like my parents were around me. We appreciate the great support from all the sanghas in Europe.

This was the first time I visited the Ligmincha centers, and I felt connected to all these sanghas. Meeting people in person brought me closer to them. Wherever I taught in these centers I was happy to see that people were interested and had a great longing for these teachings. I don't know if I am right or wrong, but I feel the organizations are scattered, and I think it would be good if all the members of Ligmincha could meet once or twice a year to share their wisdom with each other and talk about development and support, and discuss needs so they can help one another. That would help develop the centers all over the world. I know everybody is busy and has his or her own priorities, so if they can't meet in person, they could use technology, like Skype or Zoom.

**Florian:** I agree with you. In the past Rinpoche was invited to several countries, and then sanghas would be created in those countries. Now we are growing worldwide, together with the other sanghas. Along with Menri Monastery and Lishu Institute we want to develop a strong community. Wherever you go, you feel at home.

**Ton:** I think that two decisive reasons why sanghas are spread all over Europe is that many people don't want to travel too far to practice together and they prefer to practice in their own language.



Sangmo Yangri, Florian Bruckmann, Geshe Sherab Lodoe and Oliver Wirtz in Buchenau, Germany.







**Florian: Geshe-la, how do you like Europe?**

**Geshe Sherab Lodoe:** My first impression was that it is very tight and clean. It is free from plastic. In India we see plastic everywhere. The rivers in Europe all flow neatly and look very clean. The weather is suitable, people have all kind of facilities. My impression of people is that they value and respect time.

When I came from India I had the opinion that Eastern and Western people are different from each other. But meeting the people here I can feel that deep down all the people are the same: everybody seeks happiness, they need compassion, they come to receive the teachings, they practice and support each other. On the outside there may be differences, but at a deeper layer they are all the same.

**Ton: Did you see differences in culture or environment in the different countries here in Europe?**

**Geshe Sherab Lodoe:** Just a little. I belong to Tibet, and there are mountains everywhere, and we live in small communities. In Europe the cities look very similar, no mountains, and the fields are very flat. Looking at the mentality I see a huge difference between the Eastern and Western mentality: the way of talking, thinking, eating. The people I met here are very sensitive.

#### **Bio Geshe Sherab Lodoe:**

**Geshe Sherab Lodoe** was born in 1975 in a Bonpo village called Tsarong, located in the Kham region in Tibet. He comes from a Bonpo family and his father was a tantric practitioner in the Monastery of Wadag Bon Gon, in Tibet.

He began his education with Lama Sherab Lodoe from the Tro Tsang lineage. He then obtained the preliminary teachings from Kalsang Yungdrung, Abbot of Ta Gon Monastery. At age 21 he was ordained as a novice monk by Kalsang Yonten Gyatso from the Amdo region. A year later he went on pilgrimage to the sacred mountain Kongpo Bon Ri and made more than one-hundred circumambulations around the holy mountain. For most people it takes 3 or 4 days to make one circumambulation, but Sherab Lodoe did one circumambulation per day. While doing the circumambulations he heard about Menri Monastery and had an inner calling to go there. He decided to undertake the extremely difficult journey of walking from Tibet to Nepal through the Himalayan region. He reached Nepal and from there he proceeded to India, finally arriving at Menri Monastery in February 1999. That year, on the auspicious fifth day of the Tibetan New Year — which is also the birthday of one of the greatest Bon Masters, Nyamed Sherab Gyalsten, who established Menri Monastery in the 14<sup>th</sup> century — he was given his monk's ordination by His Holiness the 33<sup>rd</sup> Trinzin Lungtok Tenpa Nyima Rinpoche and His Eminence Menri Ponlop Trinley Nyima Rinpoche. One month later he was admitted to the Bon Dialectic School of Menri Monastery. He studied Dzogchen, Tantra, Sutra and all the other ten major and minor sciences of Bon tradition. After fifteen years of intensive studies and practice he received his Geshe degree in 2014. During his studies, he gave lectures to the young monks. In addition, he was elected as the president of the Bon dialectic school at Menri Monastery and was the treasurer for a year. Furthermore, he was appointed by His Holiness Menri Trinzin Lungtok Tenpa Nyima Rinpoche to represent the Bon tradition at conferences involving the main five Tibetan Buddhism schools (Bon, Gelug, Kagyu, Nyingma and Sakya).

In 2018 he volunteered to come and to teach at Lishu Institute, where Dr. Sangmo Yangri was then the only teacher.







### **Bio Sangmo Yangri:**

Dr. Sangmo Yangri is a scholar, teacher, translator and the first Tibetan woman to receive a Ph.D. in Tibetan Bon studies.

She was born in Solan, India in 1980, close to Menri. She has been immersed in the Bon tradition and culture from early childhood as her father was a close friend and disciple of His Holiness Menri Trinzin Lungtok Tenpa Nyima Rinpoche and His Eminence Lopon Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche.

She received her Master of Philosophy Bon philosophy in 2007 at the Central University of Tibetan Studies (CUTS) in Varanasi, India. Her thesis was on *The twelve interdependent originations in the Bon tradition*. She then completed a Master of Philosophy in Buddhist philosophy, writing her M.Phil thesis on *The lineage of Bhikshuni ordination in Bon tradition*. At CUTS the five Tibetan schools are represented; however the other four schools had Ph.D. students, whereas nobody besides Dr. Yangri did such in-depth studies in the Bon tradition. She felt it would serve the preservation of the Bon tradition and inspire other students, especially female students, if she were to do a Ph.D. in the Bon tradition. She completed her Ph.D. in Bon and Buddhist traditions in 2013, with a Ph.D. thesis dealing with the *Analysis of the traditional exposition of the way in which the world came into existence according to Bon tradition and Buddhism*. She received the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund for two years and in 2013 her work was given the Prime Minister (Sikyong) Award by the Tibetan Exile Government in India. She has written and published several articles and has been invited several times as a speaker at the Seminar on

Yungdrung Bon tradition at Menri Monastery, and has participated in several international conferences about Bon and Buddhism. She was interviewed on Voice of America's Tibetan News for her achievements. She edited the great scholar Palden Tsultrim's *A commentary on the Three Ornaments of Poetry* and in 2019 translated and published *Escape from Darkness – The Spiritual Journey of Buddha's daughter Shenza Nechung*.

During 2014 she taught on a voluntary basis at the Ratna Menling nunnery in Dolanji giving guidance to all the Bon philosophy nun students and preparing new study materials for them. In 2015, she was appointed as a teacher at the Lishu Institute by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and has given lectures on the Nine Ways of Bon, the hagiography of Buddha Tonpa Sherab Miwo and on the Tibetan language.

### **Ton: Sangmo, how did you experience Europe?**

**Sangmo:** I have the same outer experience as Geshe-la; the environment is very clean and green. When I talked to people in the different parts of Europe I saw that people deep inside are all the same: they have the same feeling of loneliness and rejection, fear and longing for love and companionship.

I talked with sangha members and their families. In Finland we had a *Phowa* retreat in a school in the countryside. People said that many years ago there was a school in the countryside. When people moved to the city, the school was closed. That is similar in India, where the younger generation moves to the cities for jobs, and older people stay behind. The same issues are everywhere: climate change, global warming and leaving the countryside.

Before I came I expected that European countries would be very cold. My mother had also that impression. She put several warm sweaters in my luggage. When I saw Hollywood movies I always saw people wear warm clothes. But when I came here I hardly wore warm clothes because everywhere it was hot. Global warming is generating a great fear. In India it is normal to experience hot weather. I thought that in Finland it is always cold, but when we did the retreat it was hot.







Teaching in Wilga, Poland.



Visit to the [Liebfrauenkirche](#) in Frankfurt, Germany.

**Florian: Sangmo, why did you choose to study at a University and not in a monastery?**

**Sangmo:** As child I had a close connection with His Holiness the 33<sup>rd</sup> Menri Trizin Rinpoche, His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, with geshe and senior monks. So, I received the great teachings of the Bon tradition in a natural way. I had no intention of becoming a nun, and only monks and nuns can study in the monastery and nunnery. And at the time I started to study, the Geshe course could only be done by monks. Now we also have a Geshe-ma course in the nunnery. So, for me it was not possible to study in this way. In Varanasi I did two master studies and a Ph.D. The university is open to monks, nuns and lay people to study, male and female, Eastern and Western students. They offer high philosophical teachings similar to a monastery. We could study all the higher philosophy studies of the Bon and Buddhist traditions as well as teachings like Sanskrit, Pali, Hindi and English, history and economy, etc.

**Ton: You have the title 'lama.' Can you explain what lama means, and how you got it?**

**Sangmo:** Lama is a combination of two words 'la' and 'ma.' 'La' is a short form of *la-na-med-pa*, which means most supreme or unsurpassable. So, it refers to a person whose wisdom is unsurpassable, most supreme. 'Ma' refers to mother, which represents a great quality of love and compassion. A lama is a teacher who has the quality of wisdom and compassion. In early Tibetan Buddhism this term was not very much used, but later the title lama became more popular. You could call everybody with the qualities of wisdom and compassion a lama. I am not a lama, but it was Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's

great kindness when he suggested that people should address me as lama. We have a 'Ligmincha lama group,' and Rinpoche included me in that.

When you look at it as an academic title it is different. At the university you get the title Doctor or Ph.D. When you have finished the Geshe course in a monastery or nunnery you are called Geshe or Geshe-ma, they are not called lama. Lama has very many meanings on the inner, outer and secret level. Also historically there have been many meanings for the title lama. I could write a whole book on the meaning of lama. I see the word lama as a quality, rather than limited to someone who should have a red rope.

**Florian: Sangmo, can you tell us more about your family?**

**Sangmo:** I have a very loving, compassionate and supportive family. My father died in 2005. He was a great practitioner. He was a former monk of Gur Gyam Monastery. He was a student of Khyung Tul Rinpoche who was a master in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (1897-1955), and was one of the greatest masters in that century. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche is regarded as a reincarnation of that lama [read the article in [Ligmincha Europe Magazine #5](#)].

Before the Chinese came to his place, my father escaped from Tibet in 1959. When he came with his master to India he took on his yaks many Bon scriptures, written in gold and silver. He preserved many old and precious texts. He could have carried personal belongings on the yaks, but for him the Bon texts were more valuable. Later my father offered all these precious texts to Yongdzin Rinpoche.







Sangmo Yangri with her husband and son.

He married my mother, who was 27 years younger. My mother belonged to a good family, and she lost her father at a young age. There is a story that he was poisoned. At age 17 or 18 my mother was brought, by her uncle to Dolanji, the village where Menri Monastery was situated. At that time many people living there had fled from Tibet to India. It was a rough time, so my mother had to be brought into a safe family, otherwise it would have been very difficult for her. My father was asked to marry her, but first he refused because of the gap in the age. When my mother's uncle, who was a great monk, summoned him, he finally accepted the marriage.

My parents had three children: two boys and me. My eldest brother has a business and helps my mother. And my other brother is the principal teacher and abbot of the dialectic school of Menri Monastery. He has been teaching in Menri Monastery for more than fifteen years.

I have been married since 2015, and my husband is very supportive and loving. We have a son, born in 2017. It is because of my strong and supportive family that I can do what I am doing now. Because of them I could travel to Europe. I see my mother as my inspiration and as my best friend. In every phase of my life she encouraged and supported me. She never let me do any work in household and told me to study. She always told me not to

worry about the family. In 2005 she lost her husband and we had a rough situation without a stable income, but she never put any burden on me. There are no words that can express my gratitude towards her.

I had a lot of challenges in my life, but they never discouraged me. And I am so lucky and fortunate with my family. My husband studied at the same university. He dedicated ten years to the Za-Mongyal-Yungdrung-Ling Bon Monastery, founded by Kungtrul Rinpoche, that is close to Lishu Institute. He spent his childhood at the Bon Children's Home in Menri Monastery. He leads a simple life, he never demands anything and never complains. He practices Dharma in a real life and had a clear understanding about all the samsaric ups and downs. For him my mission is bigger than his, so he takes care of our child.

**Florian: You wrote a book about a female Bon practitioner, Shenza Nechung. Can you tell how that project evolved?**

**Sangmo:** When I was at the University I spend a lot of time in the library. While reading the spiritual texts and books I found many life stories about female practitioners, about their achievements and realizations. In the Bon tradition we are more familiar with the life stories of the male practitioners and their achievements, realizations and lineage. There is a lot of wisdom,





and we are grateful for that. And there is a part that is neglected. In the Bon texts you can find many texts about great female practitioners, and in the oral recordings they talk a lot about their achievements. All these life stories were in the minds of people, and it was appreciated, but not put in the light.

At Lishu Institute I met all kinds of Western people, and we often talked about this topic. With the help of Anja Benesch, Anna-Kaisa Hirvanen, Tiana Tefy, Iwona Zawadzka, Rob Patzig, Vicky Walter and Marcy Vaughn, I was able to write the first book about a female practitioner. In 2017 during the ceremony for His Holiness Anja, Anna-Kaisa and I met and talked in the Protectors Temple, and the project of my book *Escape from Darkness – The Spiritual Journey of the Buddha's Daughter Shenpa Nechung* manifested.

Tenpo Shenrap Miwo is the founder of the Yundrung Bon teachings. His story includes his family: he was married and had several sons and two daughters. About his sons there are many books, but about his daughters there is not so much known. Both his daughters were great practitioners. The younger one is more commonly recognized and so I thought it would be good to highlight her life story, and it felt good to begin with her story this female practitioners project. I have a list of other female practitioners and their work, but they are not very well known. My second book will be on the *Bardo* teachings by a female practitioner, who attained a rainbow body.

**Ton: Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche said that in the West we ask a lot of questions, while Tibetans are more devoted — they just listen to teachings and don't ask questions. What is your view?**

**Geshe Sherab Lodoe:** Personally, I really like it when somebody asks a question. I don't appreciate devotion with lack of wisdom. There are practitioners who had a blind devotion and later they suffered because of their ignorance. Devotion plus Wisdom is what I mostly appreciate. I don't appreciate devotion and stupidity. I have also seen Europeans with a lack of devotion, for example when they put a sacred text on the floor. That conduct makes me feel uncomfortable.

**Sangmo Yangri:** I think it is a matter of cultural differences. I don't think people here do it

intentionally, but they do it out of ignorance.

**Florian:** The German sangha wrote about it in the Gompa etiquette, but obviously we did not emphasize this enough. Sometimes people say they are Dzogchen practitioners and that we don't need to adapt to the Tibetan culture. But that is a mistake. Those people misunderstand Dzogchen and don't know much about Sutra and Tantra conduct, or about not engaging in negative deeds or pride. As a Western practitioner I see that some people have no clue about the whole system of teachings, and yet still say "We are Dzogchen practitioners. This is the best, and the rest we don't need."

**Sangmo Yangri:** I agree. If someone has really understood Dzogchen then all these qualities will spontaneously manifest. But some people are stuck in thinking that they 'know' what Dzogchen is.

**Ton: Can you talk about the students coming to Lishu Institute?**

**Sangmo Yangri:** Lishu Institute was founded in 2008 and has been operating since 2015. The program provides learners with an in-depth study and practice of the three main streams of teachings of Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen. We started with a program for three years, with three semesters of ten weeks. We concluded this program in June 2018. The first year we taught the *Nine Ways of Bon*, the second year was on the *Six Methods of the Mother Tantra* and the third year was about the *Four Cycles of the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud Teachings*. In this period we had thirty-six students from ten different countries. One student from France did the whole 3-years cycle. Several students have done one or two years of this cycle. From Hungary we had three participants, who have studied for two years. Now they all are able to support their sangha. The Finnish sangha profits from the long term studies done by Anna-Kaisa Hirvanen at Lishu Institute. We had students from all over Europe, the US and Mexico.

After this cycle we changed the program because we found out this commitment for 10 weeks is difficult for most Western students. Now people can come for two weeks, one month or two months, so more people can benefit from the teachings at Lishu Institute.





**Florian:** We want to send one or two sangha members from Germany who are dedicated and have time. We will do fundraising to make it financially possible for them to go for one to three months. When they come back they can share their experiences.

**Ton: Sangmo, can you tell how you became a teacher at Lishu Institute?**

When I was working on my Ph.D. in 2013, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche asked me if I wanted to teach at Lishu Institute in the future. I was lucky to be asked, because Lishu Institute is a great place for lay practitioners, and for me it is a platform to grow more and more.

**Florian: Can you tell more about the daily program you offer at Lishu Institute?**

A typical schedule of Lishu Institute is: four practice sessions, two teaching periods. *Sang* ritual is performed in the morning, prayers to the protectors in the evening, and at night we perform a *Chöd* practice.

For students there are also possibilities after the retreat to visit Menri Monastery and other nearby monasteries and stupas. In January – February, 2020 we had a *Powa* and *Bardo* retreat from *Mother Tantra*. We had another 4-week retreat in February – March, 2020 with *trekchöd* and *tögal* from the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* teachings.

Lishu is a beautiful place to stay, with nice rooms and a great view. These circumstances support practice. Geshe Thupten Negi will help foreign students in getting the permits needed. You can find the latest updates about the teaching

program on the [Lishu Institute webpage](#) and [Lishu Institute Facebook page](#).

**Ton: When you want to study at Lishu Institute do you have to know the Tibetan language?**

**Sangmo Yangri:** No. In the first year program we taught Tibetan so that people could read the original texts. Now though, Geshe Sherab Lodoe teaches Dzogchen and Tantra in Tibetan and I translate it into English.

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

**Sangmo:** Yesterday, during the info evening here in Buchenau I felt a great connection between the Ligmincha sanghas, The 3 Doors Academy and Lishu Institute. They are different manifestations from one source and all three branches are great paths of the Bon teachings. For me these three branches of the Bon tree, offered by Tenzin Wangyal, are opportunities for all kinds of people according to their needs.

Tonpa Shenrab Miwo has taught nine different ways, according to the differing capacity of practitioners. Lishu Institute is a more traditional approach for Westerners who want to understand the teachings in more depth. The monastic part of the teachings would not work for most Western practitioners.

**Florian: Maybe we can invite you in the future for trainings in Europe.**

**Geshe Sherab Lodoe and Sangmo Yangri:** We would gladly accept your invitation.

**Interview by Florian Bruckmann and Ton Bisscheroux**



Sangmo Yangri talks about Lishu Institute at the info evening in Buchenau.







## Online Courses

### May – June 2020 — Untying the Knots of Limitation

**Laura Shekerjian**

6 prerecorded classes with guided practices,  
2 live online practice and discussion sessions

### May – June 2020 — Embracing Death in the Inner Refuge

**Marcy Vaughn**

6 prerecorded classes with guided practices,  
3 live online practice and discussion sessions

### September 2020 – May 2021 — The 3 Doors Online Compassion Project

**Marcy Vaughn and Gabriel Rocco**

9 month online program

### October – December 2020 — Igniting the Fire of Creativity

**Marcy Vaughn**

6 prerecorded classes with guided practices,  
3 live online practice and discussion sessions

### December 2020 – January 2021 — The Healing Power of Silence

**Gabriel Rocco**

6 prerecorded classes with guided practices

[www.the3doors.org](http://www.the3doors.org)





# WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN EUROPE

Here is our report of what's been happening in the European sanghas. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, Sangmo Yangri and Geshe Sherap Lodoe (teachers at Lishu Institute), visited Europe. Some sanghas invited *Geshes* and other teachers.



**August 13-18, 2019:**

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught during the European Summer Retreat in Buchenau, Germany, on *Twenty-One Nails*.



**August 20-25, 2019:**

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught in Wilga, Poland, on *Inner Heat and Bliss*.







**September 13-15, 2019:**

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught on *Sherap Chamma* in Rome, Italy.



**September 6-8, 2019:**

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught on *Spontaneous Creativity* in Budapest, Hungary.



**January 3-5, 2020:**

Chokhortshang Rinpoche taught the *Practice of Tsewang Rigdzin* in Budapest, Hungary.







**November 8-10, 2019:**  
Sangha weekend with Geshe Choekhortshang Rinpoche, who taught on *The Six Lamps* in Biezenmortel, The Netherlands.



**March 6-11, 2020:**  
Marcy Vaughn guided in the Pauenhof (Germany) the practices of *Sherap Chamma* and *Sipé Gyalmo*.







**January 8-12, 2020:**

*Direct Introduction into the Primordial Wisdom State of Mind according to the Ma Gyud (Mother Tantra) with Drubdra Khenpo Tsultrim Tenzin Rinpoche in Bratislava, Slovakia.*



**February 21-23, 2020:**

Wolfgang Krebs guided the sangha weekend in Hofheim am Taunus, Germany.







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## PRAYERS AND MANTRA

### [The Mantra of Clear Light](#)

July 21, 2019

### [The Mantra of Liberation](#)

July 28, 2019

### [The Mantra of Purification](#)

August 4, 2019



## PITH INSTRUCTIONS: PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON THE HEART ESSENCE OF DZOGCHEN

### [To Forgive Is to Be Forgiven](#)

August 28, 2019

### [To Accept Is to Be Accepted](#)

September 4, 2019

### [Feeding Your Strengths, Not Weaknesses](#)

September 11, 2019

### [Through the Eyes of the Heart](#)

September 18, 2019



## SERVING OTHERS

### [Opening Your Heart with Gratitude — Q & A](#)

October 28, 2019

### [Cultivating Compassion](#)

November 21, 2019

### [Cultivating Compassion for Our Natural World](#)

December 12, 2019

### [Retrieving the Elemental Essences from Nature](#)

December 19, 2019

### [Opening to a Deeper Wisdom](#)

January 16, 2020



## PITH INSTRUCTIONS: PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON THE HEART ESSENCE OF DZOGCHEN

### [Facing Fear, Finding Peace](#)

March 15, 2020

### [Discovering Your Refuge Within](#)

March 19, 2020

### [Making Friends with Your Fear](#)

March 21, 2020

### [Being Playful with Your Fear](#)

March 26, 2020

### [Dancing with Your Fear](#)

March 28, 2020







## DEVOTION TO THE MASTER YONGDZIN RINPOCHE

### Devotion to the Master Yongdzin Rinpoche, and Personal Stories

January 26, 2020

### Mandala Offering and Long-Life Practice for Yongdzin Rinpoche

January 26, 2020



## THE SHERAP CHAMMA PRACTICE

### Full Moon Meditation on Sherap Chamma

February 9, 2020



## CONVERSATIONS LIVE

### Poetry From the Heart: Tibetan Women's Voices

August 11, 2019

### Poetry of Tibet

December 15, 2019

### The Power of Forgiveness

January 4, 2020

### Tibetan Kunye Massage and External Therapies

January 8, 2020

### Meet the Teachers: The 3 Doors

February 26, 2020

### Fear as a Doorway to Liberation, Part 1

Apr 11, 2020

### Fear as a Doorway to Liberation, Part 2

April 25, 2020

## LIVING AND DYING

### Prayers and Rituals for Healing

April 1, 2020

### Bardo Teachings on Living and Dying

Apr 18, 2020



## MUSIC FROM THE HEART

### Music From the Heart, Session 1

March 29, 2020

### Music From the Heart, Session 2

April 26, 2020

### Music From the Heart, Session 3

May 3, 2020

## NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Special News on CyberSangha

October 17, 2019

### Welcome to Our New Website!

October 17, 2019

### Connecting with the Sky and Nature

May 5, 2020



# FULL MOON SERIES 2020 – A LITTLE WORK AND A LOT OF JOY

The first Ligmincha Zoom Marathon was on January 11, 2020, where mantras were recited together for the Long Life of His Eminence Yongdzin Rinpoche. On February 9, 2020 a cycle of Zoom Marathons started on the full Moon of every month with the *Sherap Chamma Meditation and Recitation*.

It started with our first Zoom Marathon in January. Inspired by the commitment of many, the idea was born to recite Mantras together over a 24 hour period for the Long Life of His Eminence Yongdzin Rinpoche, and to present them along with the many other collected Mantras to Yongdzin Rinpoche during the *Thenshug*.

This was such a positive experience that Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche immediately came with a new idea: to do the *Sherap Chamma Meditation and Recitation* every month at full moon.

In a few weeks the Development Team put this wonderful series on its feet, receiving much support from the Ligmincha worldwide sangha. 74 Mantra Hosts from 21 countries in 16 shifts of 90 minutes each participate in this wonderful monthly event. All of them have contributed and continue to contribute to the fact that a little bit of work has become a lot of joy.

In April we calculated a total of nearly 2.500 hours of mantra recitation. More than 1.000 computers and other devices logged in at one time or another, and many of them had more than one person participating.

Rinpoche said: “It was wonderful being able to join a couple of times, together with my family, Tsering and Senghe. I'm looking forward to the next 24-hour practice on June 5.”

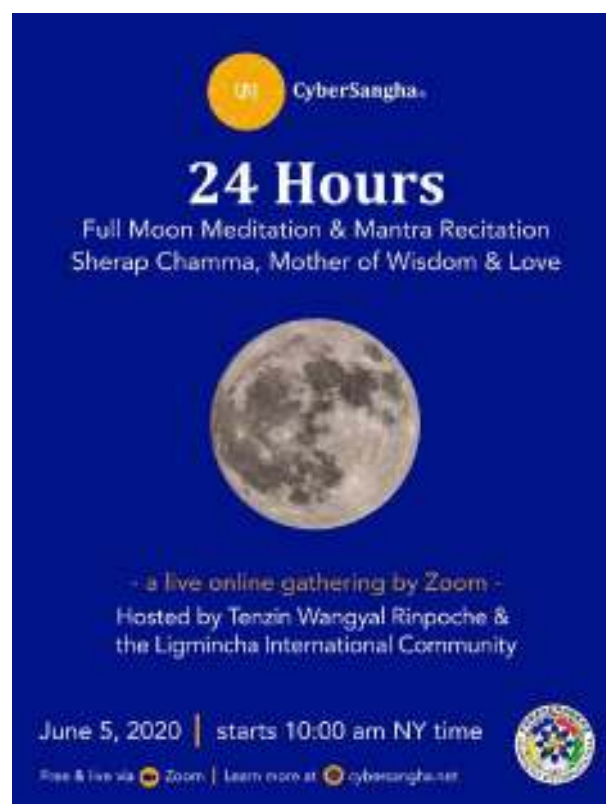
You can read more about the Full Moon Series at [www.cybersangha.net/24-full-moon](http://www.cybersangha.net/24-full-moon).

The dates for 2020 are:

June 5  
July 5  
August 3  
September 2  
October 1  
October 31  
November 30  
December 30

All sessions start at 16.00 h Central European Time (10 am New York Time) and continue for 24 hours, until the next day, 16.00 h Central European Time (10 am New York Time).

We are looking forward to your participation. Please [register](#) in advance for this free Zoom meeting.





# DAILY ONLINE GOMPA

As a response to the COVID-19 virus a daily Online Gompa, where mantras are recited together, is offered since March 16, 2020 for common practice to our Sangha.

As recommended by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, the Ligmincha Sangha is praying for all those who are affected by the coronavirus or any other sickness: the deceased, the sick, those in quarantine, their families, their relatives and for the welfare of all the health care workers and first responders.

Many Bonpo practitioners collect Mantras of the female Protector Yeshe Walmo. Her practice is dedicated to providing strong protection and support in times of illness, epidemics and generally in relation to healing:

ཨོཾ་ཨ་འི་ཡ་ནག་པ་བ་སྒྲ་སོད་སྙཱ་། ཨ

## OM A BHI YA NAG PO BÉ SÖ SOHA

There are various practices and Deities recommended by our Lamas in the Yungdrung Bon tradition at times like these. All these practices are the same in essence. One can practice what one feels a connection to and for which appropriate teachings have been received. Reciting as many mantras as possible and dedicating it for the welfare of beings is very beneficial.

**May all beings benefit!**

On the initiative of Ligmincha Italy and Ligmincha Germany we offer our Sangha a daily Online Gompa as a platform for common practice. This practice is a meeting of practitioners and it is not guided, and several senior students join daily.

We meet daily from 19.00 h to 20.00 h Central

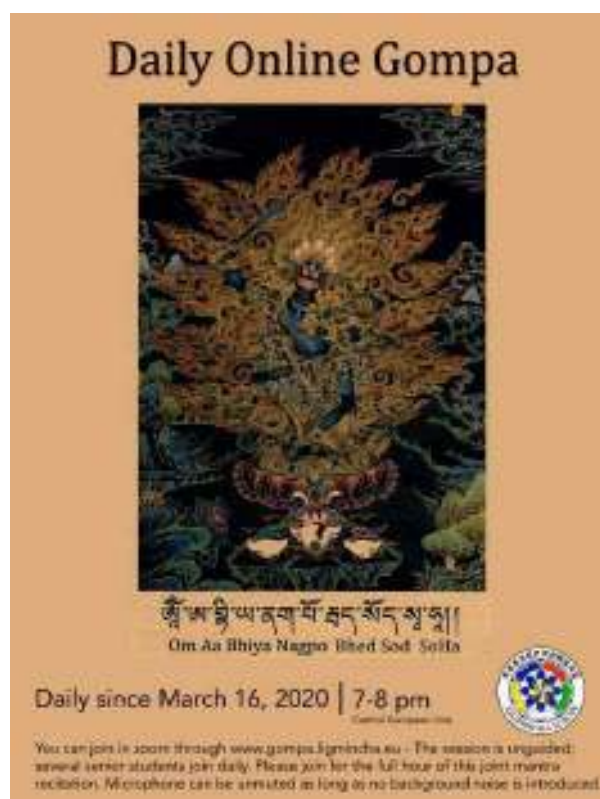
European Time. Our online Gompa is Zoom based. We would like to ask you to enter the room in silence and if possible to participate for the whole hour. You can unmute your microphone so that you can be heard, while being in a silent atmosphere.

**We will start at 19.00 h sharp and proceed the following structure:**

1. *Guru Yoga*
2. *Refuge*
3. *Bodhichitta*
4. *Mantra Recitation of the female Protector Yeshe Walmo*
5. *Dedication*

**Further information:**

- Cost: Free
- Schedule: daily from 19.00-20.00 h Central European Time (1-2 pm New York Time)
- Zoom Meeting ID:  
[www.gompa.ligmincha.eu](http://www.gompa.ligmincha.eu)



**Daily Online Gompa**

ཨོཾ་ཨ་འི་ཡ་ནག་པ་བ་སྒྲ་སོད་སྙཱ་།  
Om Aa Bhiya Nagpo Bé Sö Soha

**Daily since March 16, 2020 | 7-8 pm**  
(Central European Time)

You can join in zoom through [www.gompa.ligmincha.eu](http://www.gompa.ligmincha.eu) - The session is unguided: several senior students join daily. Please join for the full hour of this joint mantra recitation. Microphone can be unmuted as long as no background noise is introduced.





# ONE MOMENT OF INATTENTION

## One moment of inattention and it's gone

*Ton Bisscheroux*





# PACKED AND READY FOR WHATEVER'S NEXT

In the *Summer 2019 Edition of Buddhadharma* an interview on *Phowa* with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche was published. We reprint the article.

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche offers a fresh teaching on *phowa* practice and how navigating the various transitions in our lives, including the very small ones, lays a foundation for navigating the much bigger ones when they come.

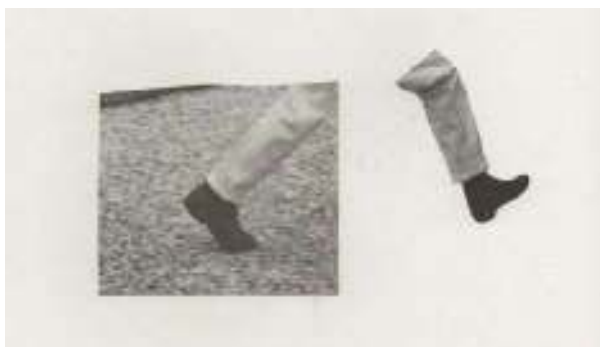
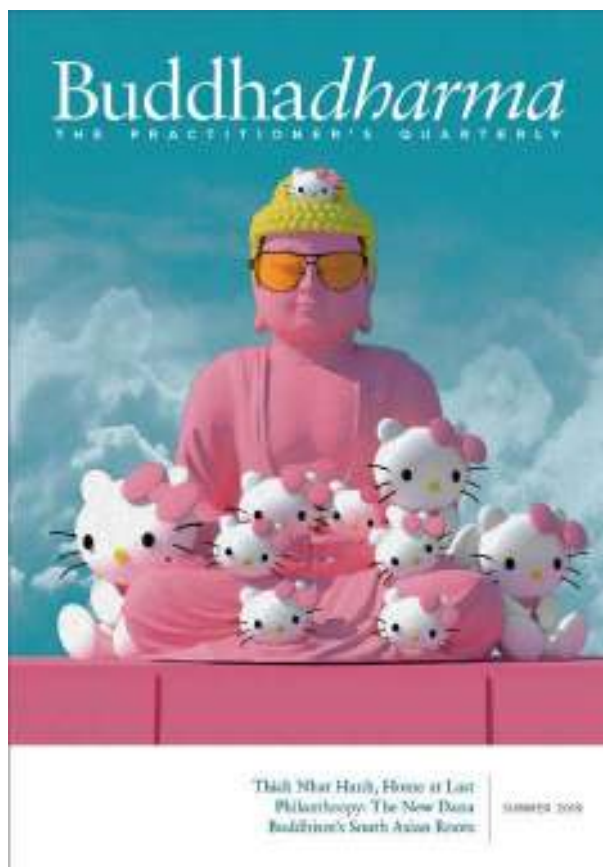


Illustration by Danai Tsouloufa.

In the most basic sense, *phowa*, as practiced in Tibetan Bön Buddhism, centers on the transference of consciousness at the moment of death. These teachings can prepare us to project our consciousness directly into a pure realm at the time of death, increasing our chance for liberation in a single lifetime. The time of our death may feel remote and unconnected from our day-to-day reality, but *phowa* begins now, in this realm of existence. Every day, we undergo a seemingly endless parade of transitions, from the mundane – one day, one week, or one year into the next – to major life transitions that can be much more difficult to adjust to. By recognizing each transition – recognizing that we have a choice, becoming aware, and then letting go of our attachment – we also prepare ourselves for the great transition at the time of death.

My teacher Yongdzin Rinpoche once said to me that the purpose of practicing *phowa* is to “be packed and ready” when the great moment of our passing approaches. Being packed and ready means just as we are, not bringing anything with us. Whether we are crossing to the other side of this life or simply passing from one phase of life to



another, we endeavor to enter empty-handed. Tibetan Bön Buddhist teachings tell us that transitions themselves – even the great transition at the end of this life – are not the cause of suffering; it is our insistence on trying to take things with us that's the problem. We can't take anything, and in trying to do so we disturb our minds. So, our practice is to work with ourselves and that sense of attachment, because we all find something – usually many things – to become attached to.

***We must pay attention and be willing to change.***

When you walked into the room where you are now sitting, at the very moment of entering, how fully did you walk in? How conscious were you as you crossed the threshold? How much of your “stuff” – your stories, plans, replayed conversations, the lingering discomfort in your mind and emotions – did you bring in with you? Every moment of transition is an opportunity to practice awareness and clarity, to learn about ourselves, to see the ways we become stuck, and to let go. Each time we practice this, we can reflect a little more and be open to seeing our habitual patterns. We





must pay attention and be willing to change. And if we find ourselves resisting change, we can pray that we will change: *"I know I need to change. May I change. Give me the strength to change."*



Different transitions challenge our attachments in different ways. Just going from one day to another – Friday into Saturday – is not so hard for most of us. But what about going from one season to another, one year to another, one job to another, one relationship to another? Each of these transitions becomes harder as our attachments and expectations around them increase. Perhaps you are used to being able to get up and run or jog each day. There may come a time when this is no longer possible, and you must forget about jogging. That kind of change can be very difficult to adapt to. Maybe you've always had one kind of relationship with your parents, but now it's become another kind of relationship. Now, instead of gathering for barbecues or parties, maybe you visit them in a hospital or nursing home and hold their hands. It's a change. You are not used to it. It's hard to transition to the new phase of life if you're still attached to the previous one.

Because bigger transitions are more difficult, we must focus on our ability to let go now. If you look at this moment of your life, right now, how many things could you let go of? Think of one thing at this moment that you are attached to, that you're identifying with, that you are holding onto, that causes pain. Perhaps you have a difficult relationship with someone in your life because of a grudge you are holding onto, or perhaps your attachment to the relationship itself is holding you back. Now compare how hard it would be to let go of that attachment with the letting go you will

have to do at the time of your death. Which would you prefer, dying or letting go of that attachment? There's no question, right? You would let go of that attachment. So why not just go ahead and do it?

With awareness, we can see that when we struggle with a transition, it has something to do with an attachment, whether to an identity or to something external. If you let that one thing go, and then another thing and another and another, then all the smaller things you can let go of will help you to be free. Each act of letting go benefits you, making it easier to let go of the harder things that will come along the way. If we do not apply ourselves to these opportunities to let go, if we can't handle the little things that come along, then we are certain to have a harder time with the big things.



Letting go is like cleaning your garage or your closet. How many of us have cleaned our closets and found stuff in there that we were not using? This is a simple opportunity to practice letting go. When you open your closet and see something you put in there five years ago that you haven't used, haven't even touched, go ahead and take hold of it and let that one thing go! Energetically, these small acts of letting go can make a big impact. Even just deleting photos from your phone – a simple act of selecting and then deleting – can lighten our attachments. Do you know someone who has too much stuff, whose house has almost no space for people to move, let





alone any sense of spaciousness? Energetically, that's not good for us. In a monastery, the monks clean a lot. When they clean the gumpa, shine the floors, clean the shrine, it's seen as a purification. Both a shrine and a closet are easier to clean than the chakras. If you cannot clear your central channel, at least open your closet and clear some of those blockages.



There are many ways to enter the next moment. Ceremonially, socially, we do various things that are symbolic. In the Tibetan tradition, we perform a lot of big ceremonies at the end of the year. The end of the year is a time for clearing the old year, so we do purification and rituals. We raise a prayer flag on the first day of the new year, symbolically raising all the forces of elemental energies. In our daily lives, the principle is the same. We can find a way to bring the best out of each new space, new time, new purpose, new mission, new beginning, new phase of life, new moment. It doesn't have to be the end of the year. Every morning can be like this. In the Tibetan tradition, every day we make an offering of the fresh water on the altar. This is an old tradition, and lately I've been feeling a strong connection to it. Bringing something fresh to the shrine, my sense of the day ahead feels very different. That sacredness, that freshness, that sense of connection, of offering, that sense of not forgetting the refuge or source, connecting there to start my day, is very powerful.

Often, at times of transition, we behave without awareness. We behave with condition, with pain, with fear. We feel we don't have a

choice. Just knowing we do have a choice can make all the difference. The choice comes when we can take time to be still, silent, spacious. We practice not doing, not saying, not thinking (not thinking is harder, but at least not doing and not saying).

Then, once we have calmed down, we find a new space from which we can do and say and think, and what we do and what we say might be different from what we originally would have said or done. One thing that we want to be able to see clearly and to say to ourselves is, *"If it's not good, I will not make it worse."* Leave it as it is.

We have so many opportunities to be aware. Think about approaching it this way: I'm going to handle this little transition well so I can handle the next, harder one even better. Each time we make these little transitions and feel free, feel good, the world opens up for us. Moments, places, locations, changes, transitions happen all the time in life. These are all opportunities to cultivate and practice to better support the transition of *phowa* practice at the moment of death. Beyond just preparing us for the big transition at the end of life, bringing this mindset into times of transition can make our lives easier, more productive. In the end, whether doing the *phowa* practice or walking from one room into the next, it's about how clearly we enter, how clearly we go to the next day, how clearly we go to the next thing. Every entrance is interesting if we approach it with clarity.





# HOW DO WE WAKE UP TO WHO WE ARE?

We interviewed Laura Shekerjian, one of the Senior Teachers of The 3 Doors, and an active member of the Ligmincha sangha in Berkeley, California, US. We talked about how the Bon teachings influenced her work as a psychotherapist, as well as the importance of connecting to the body.

## How did you meet Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche?

I met Rinpoche in 1996, when a close friend and fellow therapist invited me to his teachings in Berkeley, California, where I live. At the time, I had a four-year old daughter and was not looking for a practice or a teacher. But my friend, who was very involved with Rinpoche and had edited a few of his earlier books, insisted that I come.

When I met Rinpoche, I felt an immediate connection to the tradition and continued to attend the teachings, even though I really didn't understand much of what he was saying. During one of these weekends, Rinpoche asked who was interested in doing *Ngondro* and for some reason I raised my hand, even though I had no idea what *Ngondro* was. And in this way, little by little I got involved with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and the Bon. I didn't really decide anything; it was just right for me. When my friend left Berkeley in 2000, he asked me to take over the organization for Ligmincha in Northern California and ever since then I organize Rinpoche's weekend teachings, prepare a written transcript of every teaching he offers here, and lead a bi-monthly practice group.

## Which teachers have influenced you in your life and profession?

At different moments in my life, there have been wonderful teachers who guided me. In the Bon, my main teacher for over twenty years has been Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. I am particularly inspired by how he continues to open the teaching to everyone and help people focus more directly on their own experience. I am also amazed at how he continues to deepen his own understanding of how to offer the teachings and express his creativity in so many ways, whether writing books or creating all kinds of venues to bring the Bon to others. I am also grateful to him



### Laura Shekerjian

is a psychotherapist practicing in Berkeley, California, and a long-time practitioner in the Bon tradition. Holding Masters degrees in psychology and Buddhist Studies, for thirty years she has worked in individual, group, and classroom settings to actively engage her clients and students in the process of self-discovery. As a Senior Teacher of the 3 Doors, she has taught in The 3 Doors Academy in Latin America and Europe, and has offered several workshops and online courses.

for creating many opportunities for me to share the teachings as an instructor of Ligmincha and more recently as a teacher in The 3 Doors.

Menri Lopon Rinpoche is another teacher who has impacted me. I am moved by his kindness, his knowledge, and the way he teaches and embodies the tradition. And though I didn't have much personal contact with him, Menri Trizin 33<sup>rd</sup> was also an important teacher over the years. With all of these Bon teachers, for me it was not just the quality and depth of what they offer, but how much I learn by just being in their presence. This





has shaped and continues to shape the way I practice and teach.

**How have the Bon teachings influenced the way you work?**

Most of my clients have no background or interest in Buddhism or Bon, and I try to work with them using their own frame of reference. When I started to work as a psychotherapist, I kept my spiritual practice and my clinical work separate, not knowing quite how to bring them together. In my clinical work, my focus was on helping people see and work through their issues and patterns, while the focus of my spiritual practice was connecting to what we call “the inner refuge” or “essential self.” As I matured both in my clinical work and in my meditation practice, I slowly brought these two parts of my life together. I was supported in this by the way Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche has increasingly encouraged us to bring our personal work into meditation practice. One of the concrete ways his teaching has changed the emphasis of my clinical work is that I not only help my clients recognize how they are caught in habitual patterns, but encourage them to also recognize the parts of themselves that reflect the openness and freedom of the essential self.

Obviously, we need to both recognize and release old patterns as well as strengthen our access to our essential self, but it can be challenging to find the right balance. We don't want to bypass personal issues in an attempt to reside in the openness of a freer self, but we don't want to get stuck in these issues either. So many people see personal development as dealing with one issue after another. And when we don't recognize the purpose of self-transformation — to liberate ourselves from our pain identity — and don't experience who we are in our larger, more essential self, we can lose ourselves in the darkness of psyche and the challenges of external life. That's a hard way to live.

**Can you tell more about the vision Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche teaches that has changed you?**

One thing that I appreciate and have benefited from is the simple focus he offers. I have studied and practiced Buddhism for quite a while now and have been exposed to many beautiful, traditional practices, but the simple focus on the three doors of the stillness of the body, the silence of speech,



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Laura Shekerjian in Berkeley, California in February 2020.

and the spaciousness of the mind, helps me connect my practice more directly to my own life. I also appreciate Rinpoche's emphasis on resting into the space of release. I've realized over the years that I tend to overemphasize “work” and don't spend as much time connecting to what I sometimes call “the arrival.” I've learned that as I work through something, I need to stay with the openness that emerges and allow this openness to bear fruit, rather than going quickly into the next thing that has to be worked with. Rinpoche's continual emphasis on resting and allowing manifestation from the clear, open space of being has helped me see my biases in practice. In this and in other things, I often have the experience of hearing “the same teachings” in a way that is fresh and supportive of my deepening.

**Before you met Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche were there other Buddhist teachers you studied with?**

No, I was not somebody who did a lot of “shopping.” I did a lengthy degree in Buddhist studies, but that was more from an academic perspective. I studied a bit of mindfulness but never really had a personal practice. When I connected with Bon, I was struck by what an incredibly rich tradition it was and realized that it





contained more than enough to guide and inspire me for the rest of my life. Therefore, I had no need to seriously look further since I could spend the rest of my life deepening what these teachings offered me.

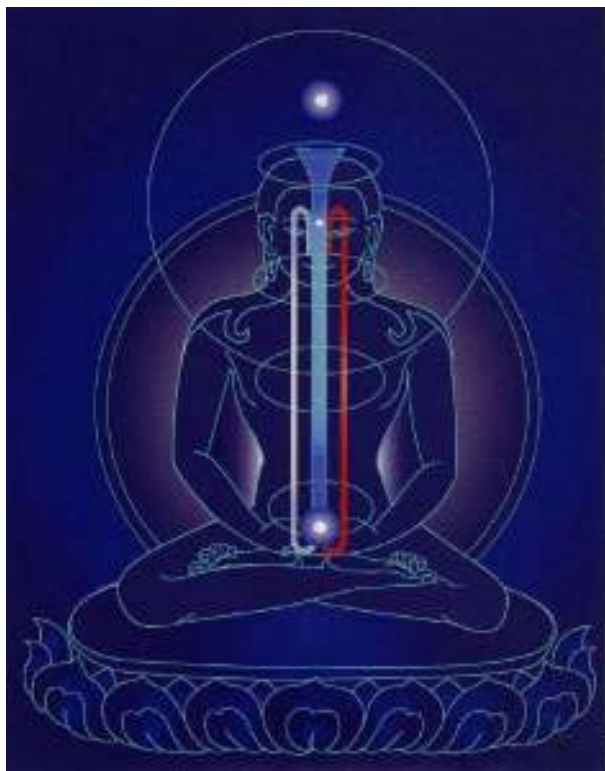
**When you teach, you focus a lot on the body. Was it through your study that you got interested in the body?**

My interest in the body evolved as a result of personal exploration. My overall interest in my studies was to help myself and others wake up to who they were. I began this academically with a degree in philosophy and continued this emphasis in Buddhist Studies. But this all stayed academic. I realized I needed a model and some tools to actually work with people, and so I got my degree in psychology and became licensed to work as psychotherapist. I felt that the West had their own language and wisdom regarding how people wake up to themselves and wanted to explore this with others. My body practices came later. I had already been studying hatha yoga for a number of years and later began doing practices that involved working with the subtle channels, movement, and breath, for example, tai chi, *kum nye* (the yoga taught by Tarthang Tulku in the Nyingma tradition) and *trul khor*, the yoga of the Bon.



In 2004, I began teaching *trul khor* through Ligmincha and recognized that I was not only drawn to how we can use our body to release subtle energetic blockages and open access to our essential self, but how in the process we could learn a lot about how we habitually hold ourselves in the world. I continued this exploration in the university where I was asked to teach in the somatic psychology department and train therapists to use their own kinesthetic experiences in their work with clients.

**Where does your interest in the body come from? For me that has always been the place I**



The three channels and the five chakras.

**don't want to be, because of unpleasant memories that are stored there. You have developed a special language to invite people to become interested. That really supported me in my process.**

I developed this slowly. I became aware that as I learned the various practices, I found myself almost translating the words of the guidance into a language that was more body-based, more kinesthetic. For example, for me the word “feel” is more evocative than the word “observe.” It brings me closer to myself. And I felt a difference between awareness that stayed outside to witness and one that penetrated and joined. So I started to wonder if there might be others who could connect more directly to themselves if the guidance included language that was more kinesthetically based.

In the West, I think being fully in our bodies is not so easy. As you said, part of it is because of the way our entire history is stored there. We also don't generally live our lives in a sensory-based way. I think we literally don't pay much attention to how much comes to us through our senses. Much of what we do is mediated by the intellect, and obviously this has been reinforced intensely by the focus on electronics. When we aren't in the body, we can't really be present. We can't feel







how we are in the moment. And on a deeper level, we can't open into the larger "body" of the essential self because we aren't even connected to this one. In meditation practice, I noticed that we establish our posture and then basically forget about the body as we work only with the mind. Even if we are doing body movements, how many of us are truly connected to our body as we do them? The body, which never lies, gives us constant feedback about our current state. For example, I see some students in meditation, trying to release into openness without being aware that they are frowning or clenching their jaw. This speaks to some experience of chronic tension, some challenge that the meditator isn't conscious of. This tension then participates in the practice. Whether we have a good practice or not, this tension is part of us and needs attention. The tangible presence of the body is a door into what we call the pain identity and at a deeper level becomes a door for the larger "identity" of a more liberated self.

What I am going to teach in the spring and fall in Europe has to do with the grounding quality. What is it to be truly grounded? Without ground, there can't really be expansion. Expansion without ground is spacey and empty of the power of true openness. The vast expanse of being of the first refuge of the body is indestructible because space cannot be affected in any way. To find the true power of this openness, we have to work through the blockages of the body and of the limited identity we carry. This means we have to be willing to

really go into our experience, to fully inhabit what's there so we can release it. This sense of going into something is part of what I explore through body. Most of us don't inhabit our whole body. In particular, it can be challenging for many of us to come down into the lower chakras. All the mental activity and the focus on electronics and "doing" brings the energy up. The lower chakras are not only where a lot of personal pain is stored but are the doorway into full manifestation or expression of who we are. So to ground we have to be present to ourselves and in ourselves. And so many of us just aren't.

**For many years, while I was doing my practice I was completely out of my body. I did the exercises as they were instructed, but didn't connect to my body. For a long time, it was just impossible. What effect does it have on the practice when you are not present in your body?**

It is to your credit that you recognized something important about your relationship to your body. Practice is meant to help us recognize where we are, what our starting point is. In this sense, all practice is useful, regardless of what we are able or not able to do. We can only develop from where we authentically are. This is not to say we can't have experiences that are outside our usual limitations. Of course, that is possible. But to work through the patterns that habitually block us, we need to really connect with how they are manifesting. The experience of not connecting to the body is itself an experience. We need to come into relationship with that, without judgment, and







keep opening to all of what that is. We don't want to try to make ourselves be somewhere or do something that isn't aligned with where we truly are. That kind of effort comes from the pain identity and has nothing to do with the true flow of our evolution.

**As long as I was in my mind, I had no notion of the possibility of living more fully in my body. In The 3 Doors Academy I realized that I used the door of the mind – the spaciousness – to create a safe space, and experienced that I was not grounded, not connected to anything.**

Many of us are drawn to one door more than the others and as you say, sometimes we get lost there. Some people are connected to body in a dull way, where they just are asleep in themselves. They don't have the vitality and clarity of consciousness. Others get captivated by the movements of energy and have no spaciousness or clear awareness. In our practice, we want to ultimately connect with all the three doors, clear their obstacles, and discover the qualities of the inner refuge that each supports.

#### **Can you tell more about the work you do?**

Part of the work I've done is train new therapists to sit with people by staying in touch with their own experience in the moment and what comes up in them in response to how their clients interact with them. I call this relational awareness, and it includes deep listening, not getting caught in our own experience, and not taking things personally. I think in many ways this kind of focus is very compatible with what we do in The 3 Doors.

In my clinical practice, I work with individuals and couples. I like the couple focus in particular because there is someone on the couch next to you holding your toes to the fire and preventing you from presenting yourself in a way that hides the flaws. We all have images we uphold and we all hide a lot of who we are. The immediacy of confronting this in the presence of someone who is very close to you (and I'm presuming a good relationship here!) can be very powerful. The mentor and peer relationships in The 3 Doors can also have this quality.

In general, what I like about being a psychotherapist and a teacher in The 3 Doors is the opportunity to accompany someone on their journey in a very deep and intimate process. People approach this in different ways: some do it deeply and others more superficially. But regardless of the depth or duration of their journey it is incredibly satisfying to help someone take steps into something freer and larger than their usual sense of self. As I mentioned earlier, in this as well as all the teaching I do, I am guided by the same question: How do we wake up to who we are?

#### **At some point Rinpoche invited you for The 3 Doors Academy.**

Yes. Ten years ago, he invited me and others to participate in a project that was incredibly inspirational but very unformed. In the beginning, none of us had any idea how it would evolve. Even through the first few retreats I taught I had no idea exactly how this differed from teaching or offering practice in other contexts. As we began to







explore and express Rinpoche's vision of bringing the wisdom of this tradition to everyone — not just those who felt connected to Buddhism or Bon — we began to see the power of creating a format and a community that supported individuals to bring the practices directly into the aspects of their life that needed them. I give a lot of credit to Rinpoche and Kallon Basquin and so many others for shepherding The 3 Doors into the dynamic, creative, and impactful organization that it has become.

### **How do you experience the difference between The 3 Doors Academy and the Bon teachings by Rinpoche?**

As far as the teachings go, there is no difference. In everything he offers, Rinpoche encourages people to work with themselves using the wisdom of traditional practice. What The 3 Doors provides are opportunities for people to come together to practice this deeply and methodically. It also provides the mentorship and collective support for people to sit together and share their experiences in an ongoing way. This includes the possibility of working one-to-one with a teacher, sharing and deepening in a small group, and participating in the larger group of the Academy or the larger sangha as a whole.

The other difference has to do with who can participate. You don't need to have a particular interest in Bon or Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's teachings to be able to benefit from The 3 Doors. I know 3 Doors students who had not studied with Rinpoche, went to Serenity Ridge in Virginia, and just couldn't relate to such a traditional setting with all the thangkas and altars and things like that. It was not their doorway. So, I think it is very important to have ways different kinds of people can connect with these teachings, and clearly, one of Rinpoche's great skills is creating these doorways.

### **Can you tell about developments in The 3 Doors?**

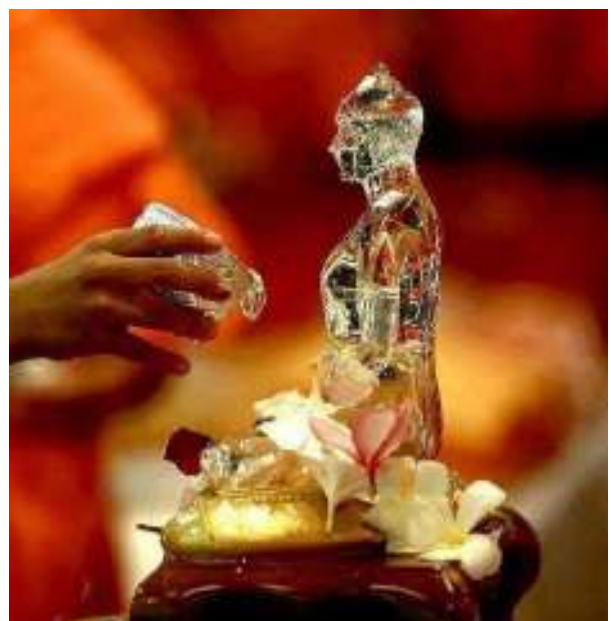
The 3 Doors continues to offer different kinds of courses, some online and others in weekend workshops. Many of our courses are open to

everyone. This year, the monthly meditations led by the Senior Teachers will alternate between graduates only and anyone who wants to sit together and practice. This includes graduates from The 3 Doors Academy, people who participated in a workshop or online course, and newcomers who are just curious about the teachers or the practices. Some of our online courses are prerecorded to make them more accessible to people who can't attend live sessions. With respect to Europe in particular, as you probably already know, the EU community invites Senior Teachers to offer workshops several times a year in different countries in Europe. We hope in this way to provide a continuity of practice for people who have already attended our events and also to provide an opportunity for others to participate and learn. We also intend to train more 3 Doors teachers so that the practices can eventually be offered in many other languages.

### **Interview by Ton Bisscheroux**

Laura's workshops in Europe planned in spring 2020 have been cancelled because of the corona virus, and will be rescheduled in 2021. If the world situation with the virus allows, the fall workshops will proceed as planned.

For Laura's online courses check:  
[www.the3doors.org](http://www.the3doors.org)





# ESCAPE FROM DARKNESS

*Escape From Darkness* by Sangmo Yangri is the biography of Shenza Nechung, Buddha Tonpa Shenrap Miwo's youngest daughter. In the Bon tradition, there are numerous female lay and nun practitioners who attained high spiritual states. Their stories are included in Bon texts and also are a part of local folklore. These stories, however, have not been extricated from the texts or recorded from the folklore. This book is an attempt to fill a void that has been left for centuries.

The book starts with the Blessing of His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, the Appreciation of His Eminence Menri Lopon Trinley Nyima Rinpoche and the Gratitude of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. The commentary by Sangmo Yangri, and the reflections from Tsering Wangmo Khymsar and Marcy Vaughn makes the book come more alive in the present time. We reprint the pages 47-50.

## COMMENTARY

by Sangmo Yangri, Ph.D.

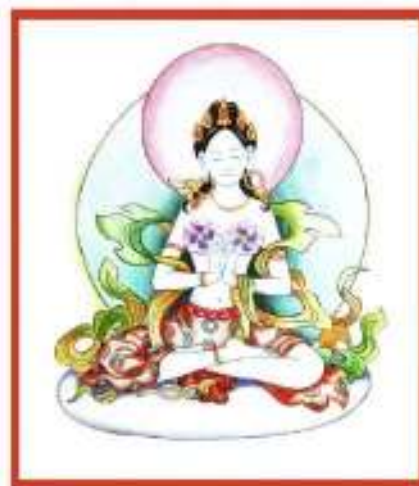
The life story of Shenza Nechung, an excerpt from the biography of Buddha Tonpa Shenrap Miwo (*Do Zermik*), is a complete teaching in itself on how we become trapped by afflictive emotions and how we can attain liberation from them. This means that if we diligently follow the guidance in this text, the door to buddhahood is open to us, as well.

This biography also shows us that already from the time of Buddha Tonpa Shenrap Miwo, every single being – regardless of gender – has the ability to receive, study, and practice the Bön teaching and ultimately to realize buddhahood.

Nevertheless, Shenza Nechung's life story also reflects our own ignorance, both at the individual level and as a society. For example, one of Buddha Tonpa Shenrap's followers, Azha Sangwa Dhodü, talked about women as “obsessive and passion-

## ESCAPE FROM DARKNESS

THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY OF THE BUDDHA'S  
DAUGHTER SHENZA NECHUNG



Translated by Sangmo Yangri, Ph.D.

You can order *Escape From Darkness* in the [Ligmincha online store](#) or at [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com).

ately attached to sensual pleasure.” And later, when asked by the queen to go and request the help of Buddha Tonpa Shenrap Miwo, he blamed Shenza Nechung and the queen for making him interrupt his practice. How many of us have not looked down on someone else or, when gaining some experience in our practice, developed pride about it?

If we read this as only a historical account of some faraway culture believing in demons, then it will be merely a bedtime story. If we read it directing our mind not outwardly but inwardly, then the journey of Shenza Nechung can be a tremendous inspiration on our own path.

Although the description of all the characters and places, especially the demon Khyappa Lakring, are extremely detailed so that we might have a solid visual image of a demon and his iron palace, the demon actually is a symbol of our five afflictions and lives nowhere else than in our mind. As the queen Poza Tangmo, the mother Shenza Nechung, said when addressing to her daughter, “Listen to





me, my daughter. Whether one goes to higher or lower realms depends on one's mind. An afflicted mind is like a demon."

The journey of Shenza Nechung, from the moment she was misled by the demons until her realization, is our own journey. First, being completely deluded, she embraced the demon's world, even stating that she would not listen to Buddha Tonpa Shenrap Miwo himself. The afflictive emotions in this case are like the iron palace with one hundred sealed doors. Then she experienced suffering – her own and that of her children. Realizing the source of all suffering, and having great renunciation of samsara, she turned towards the Yungdrung Bön teaching to gain liberation.

confession.

- Devotion – crucial whether we practice sutra, tantra, or dzogchen.

### **Remorse and Confession**

The great suffering and difficulty Shenza Nechung experienced in bringing up her children, which included the killing of innumerable animals, brought her deep regret. Later, when she was released from the captivity of the demon, she performed a great austerity practice. Severing her breasts and giving them to her children, she uttered these prayers: "My two demon children, born to me as my karmic debt, who devour a hundred animals each morning and evening, now, through the great blessings of Tonpa Shenrap and through my great austerity practice of severing



Buddha Tonpa Shenrap Miwo.

When she was offered the choice, Shenza Nechung chose to do a practice of the five kinds of offering. She then performed it with strong, unwavering devotion and obtained liberation. Nowadays, we have the immeasurable fortune to have access to the high tantric and dzogchen teachings. We might be tempted to neglect "simpler" teachings and practices such as making offerings. Such attitude will only mislead us.

### **Developing Remorse and Compassion**

In the life of Shenza Nechung, two important points emerge:

- Having genuine remorse and making a great

and offering my breasts, may your hunger be completely satisfied! May all the animals be freed from their servitude of satisfying the hunger of you children!"

Shenza Nechung was then prepared to set off on the path of purification. Generating confession for her misdeeds, she sought help from Tonpa Shenrap Miwo, requesting him to reveal a great method for purifying her misdeeds. Tonpa Shenrap's blessing, her unshakable faith and devotion in his teachings, and her great diligence in practice brought about her liberation from the suffering of samsara.





In the Yungdrung Bön tradition, genuine remorse must be endowed with the qualities of four powers:

- *Ngar jé gyö pi top*: The power of generating deep regret for all misdeeds that have been accumulated from countless lifetimes and regret for all misdeeds of the three times – past, present, and future – that have been done through generating negative thoughts toward others.
- *Chir mi je pi damche top*: The power of commitment to not repeat misdeeds from this moment onward.
- *Nyenpo gewe top*: The power of accumulating virtuous deeds of body, speech, and mind as an antidote.
- *Pangpo ten gyi top*: The power of witness; one generates these qualities – regret, commitment to not repeat, and virtuous deeds – in front of a great witness such as one's own root master or the three jewels of buddha, dharma, and sangha.

### Devotion

Whatever practices we do, devotion is the foremost foundation for them. In the Yungdrung Bön tradition, there are four causal aspect for generating devotion in the mindstream of a human being:

- A genuine master
- Enlightened teachings
- Misfortune
- Ailments

In the life story of Shenza Nechung, misfortune becomes a reminder for her to follow the path of dharma, and then generating great devotion to the Buddha and his teaching opened the gate of dharma to her. In the Perfection of Wisdom sutra in the Yungdrung Bön tradition, the four types of devotion are described:

- *Kyo ngal mé pi dé pa*: Generating devotion devoid of weariness and sadness, similar to a child following its mother with full dedication and without any second thoughts.
- *Thang lhö mé pi dé pa*: Generating steady devotion, like the string of a bow in wintertime, neither too tight nor too loose.
- *Gyun thak ring we dé pa*: Generating a continuous flow of devotion in the practice of dharma, like the continuous flow of a stream or river.
- *Chir mi dhok pi dé pa*: Generating firm devotion



Sangmo Yangri.

in accomplishing dharma practice without pulling away, just as the dead cannot return to their previous form.

When one practices and generates these qualities of devotion, then devotion opens the gate to the dharma teachings. Devotion helps us cut through the path of samsara. Devotion leads us on the path of enlightenment.

Devotion helps us understand the essential meaning of the Buddha's words. And devotion helps us realize the illusory nature of phenomena.

Shenza Nechung's life story demonstrates the importance and the result of making the five aspects of offering with full devotion, and how such devotion can lead to liberation.

In a nutshell, only when all aspects of spiritual practice come together in our practice and become integrated in every aspect of our life can we attain liberation from worldly pleasures and attachment.

**Text selected by Ton Bisscheroux**





# ON FINDING YOURSELF IN THE NATURE OF MIND

We reprint an edited excerpt from oral teachings given by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, that was published in *The Voice of Clear Light*, April 2007.

In order to directly experience the nature of mind, during dzogchen practice we try to create certain conditions within the body, speech and mind. We use postures or movements of the physical body, practices of the breath, and the concentration and focus of awareness of the mind.

It is not as if the nature of mind is a separate object, a separate place where you as a subject can take a bus, train or a plane to. It is not like that – there is no place to go, no place to search for the nature of mind. Nor is the nature of mind a form with a particular shape or color that you can experience. If you are searching for your nature in those ways, you will not find anything. That is guaranteed. We are so conditioned to always be expecting to see some THING. It is very, very difficult for us to rid ourselves of the mind of ours that has expectations.

If you go out to find a job, you go with the expectation of finding one that pays well, say. That expectation helps guide your search toward finding the right job for you. In looking for the nature of mind, though, it makes no sense to look with the expectation that you will see something, because there is nothing to see.



Now you may be thinking, “There’s nothing to see? Well, that’s a little discouraging.” Maybe you are curious about what this means. You are beginning to realize that you cannot experience the nature of mind in the same way you can experience your dreams, your thoughts, your feelings, or any kind of form. The nature of mind will not be seen in any of those ways. It is possible that during meditation, sometimes you will see various colors or shapes that are signs or qualities of some experience of, or connection to, the nature of mind, but even these are not the nature of mind.

The introduction to the nature of mind is essentially about creating the right causes and conditions – that’s really what it is. In the same way that by placing a mirror in different locations you find that your view changes, so too by putting your body in the right position, your breath in the right position, and your mind in the right position, you are able to simply find your self in that place. But when you find your self in that place, it is not that you are seeing something, it is only that you are being. The moment you think that you are seeing your nature, you are actually not. You see, one of the subtlest obstacles to resting in the nature of mind is not being able to get rid of the seer, the one who sees. Until you get rid of the observer, the perceiver, the subject, the nature remains hidden.

So, you don’t create or force the experience of the nature of mind; rather, you can put the proper conditions together for finding your self there. It would be a good idea to look at all that we experience in our lives in that same way – understanding that we can’t always achieve the results we want by forcing them, but we can instead try to set up the proper conditions for those results to arise naturally. Often we ignore the advantages of setting up the proper conditions and just struggle to force the result into manifestation.

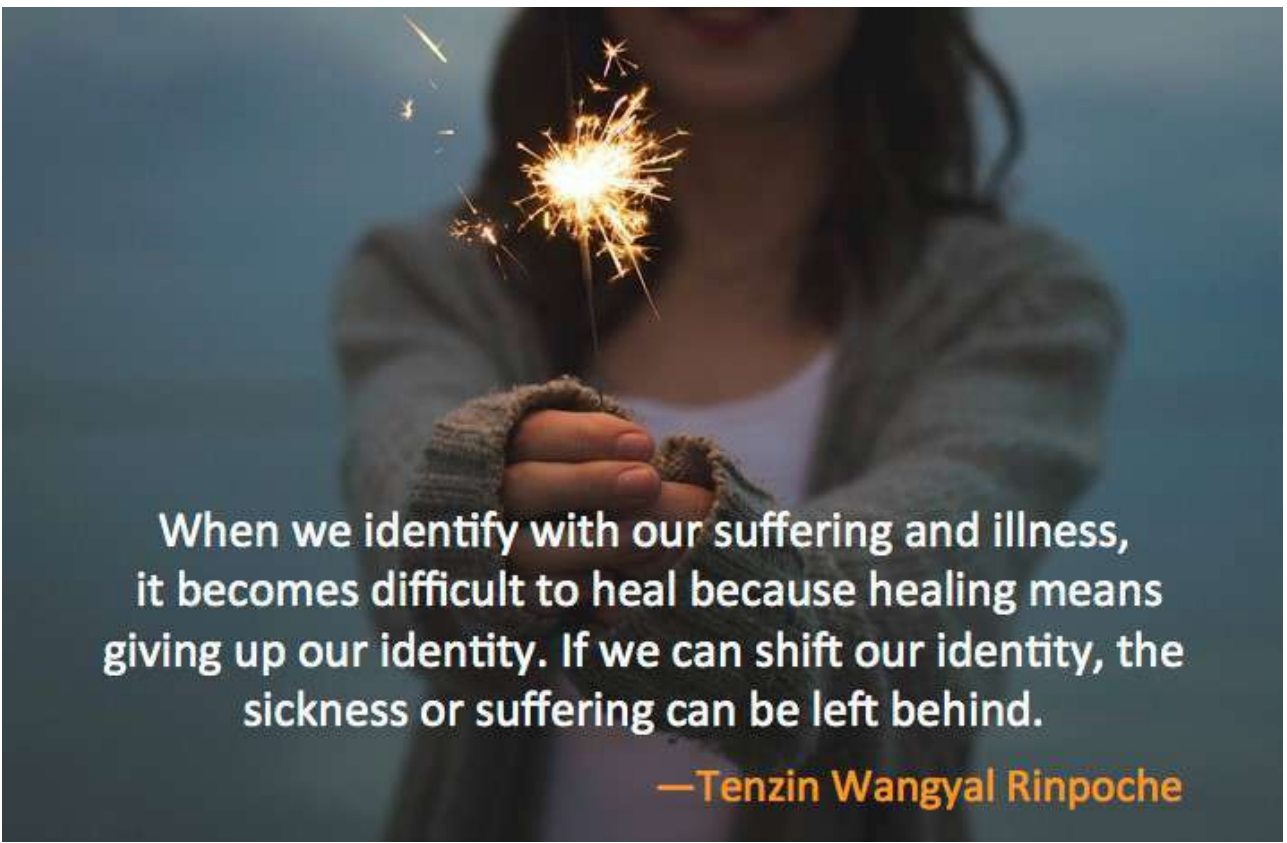




For example, you want to be happy. So what do you do sometimes? You just try to force yourself to be happy, even though in a relative sense you are simply in the wrong place to support being happy. Let's say you are somebody who has a knack for electronics, who is fascinated working all day long on computers and has so much knowledge about how they work, and yet you may not be able to cook even a cup of tea for yourself. Now, if you were put into the position of being a chef at a restaurant, then that would definitely be the wrong place for you to be happy. So, you don't realize you are in the wrong place, the wrong time, the wrong situation, and all you know is that you want to be happy. The location makes you suffer, the situation makes you suffer, the timing makes you suffer, and yet you simply push yourself to be happy. You just cook furiously, and the customers continually are dissatisfied, and eventually the restaurant has to go out of business. That forcing of the situation would obviously be the wrong approach. What should you do instead? Focus your effort on changing the place, changing the timing, changing the circumstances to make them the right ones for being happy. If you do find the right conditions, then you'll be naturally happy. You create the causes for natural happiness rather than futilely struggling to force the result.

Many times in our lives we get stuck simply because we don't know we are trying to force a result that is not supported by our circumstances. We may only be repeating to ourselves, "I want to be happy, I want to be happy, I want to be happy." The added tension created by trying to force your happiness actually tends to worsen your situation. It actually creates the opposite effect, digging you deeper into that unfortunate situation. Do you see how that kind of narrow, result-oriented focus can be a kind of a secret obstacle for us at times?

This is especially true regarding the practices of the nature of mind. So, what is the introduction to the nature of mind? You understand that it is not the same as my saying "Look at this cup" (Rinpoche holds up a teacup). Rather, there are exercises, practices and techniques that all create a space where there is a greater chance to have experience. None of those techniques you learn are the nature of mind. None of those practices are the nature of mind. They are a very skillful means. In one important sense the only time you will have an experience of the nature of mind is when you are not practicing. But you must begin with the practice and then during the session you forget the practice. How can you forget the practice? When you come to the place



When we identify with our suffering and illness,  
it becomes difficult to heal because healing means  
giving up our identity. If we can shift our identity, the  
sickness or suffering can be left behind.

—Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche





where there is nothing at all you could call effort, that is the moment when you find yourself in the nature of mind: free from your thoughts, feelings, emotions and conditions, abiding in the space of infinite potential, in which there is a cause for the perfection of every experience that could arise. There is a sense of nothing lacking, because everything is perfected. The sense of longing, lacking, missing, not having enough – none of those experiences are there. On the contrary, there is the sense of being complete, perfected, whole; and you find your self.

So, regarding the introduction to the nature of mind, the important point here is not to get too attached to the techniques or methods, but to work with them so you can create the right position of the body, the right breathing, the right focus of the mind. If you are able to bring together the right conditions of body, energy and mind, then there is no way not to experience your nature. As we always say, there is no power or force that could possibly stop the result when all the causes and conditions are together. The same is true with regard to being happy. If all the causes and conditions for your being happy are together there, you will naturally be happy, and there is no force at all that can stop you from being happy and make you suffer. Likewise, if those causes and conditions are not there, if the causes and conditions are the wrong ones, then there is no force that can make you feel good. That is why the whole notion of cause and effect, or the law of karma, is so important in the dharma.

So, we must develop those causes and conditions that support the experience of the nature of mind without being too attached to the tech-

niques or practices. This does not mean you don't learn how to do the practices precisely; you do learn them – very precisely. However, it's just like an old man who walks from one place to another with the help of a walking stick: His goal is to arrive at the new location, not simply to become attached to the walking stick, right? We also know that if the old man tries to walk there without the stick, for sure he will not reach his goal. Therefore, when walking to the new location he makes sure he has a firm grasp of the sturdy stick that supports him. Once he reaches his destination, the walking stick is no longer important to him. The practices, the techniques, are exactly like that. The methods are exactly like that. They never lose their potential to be of benefit when the need arises, but just don't get attached to them. Is that clear?

**Text selected by Ton Bisscheroux**





## TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE'S 2020 EUROPEAN SEMINARS AND ONLINE TEACHINGS

| When                           | Where                         | What                                                                       | More information                                                 |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
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| June 20 – July 3               | Your computer or other device | Online Retreat: The Seven Mirrors of Dzogchen                              | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a>         |
| June 20 – July 26              | Your computer or other device | Interactive online course: The Three Heart Mantras                         | <a href="http://ligminchalearning.com">ligminchalearning.com</a> |
| June 27 – July 26              | Your computer or other device | Interactive online course: Tibetan Dream Yoga                              | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>         |
| July 18 – September 6          | Your computer or other device | Interactive online course: Transforming Our Emotions Through The Six Lokas | <a href="http://ligminchalearning.com">ligminchalearning.com</a> |
| August 10 – 16                 | Wilga, Poland                 | Retreat: Tummo: Part 2                                                     | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.pl">www.ligmincha.pl</a>           |
| August 22 – September 20       | Your computer or other device | Interactive online course: Sherap Chamma: Mother Of Wisdom And Love        | <a href="http://ligminchalearning.com">ligminchalearning.com</a> |

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