

Announcements Issue

Volume 16, Number 2 / April 2016



Letter from the Editors

Being of Service



DZA, enlightened action

Dear Friends,

We have so many wonderful articles in this issue to share with you! First, we have an interview with Sangmo Yangri, teacher and administrator at Lishu Institute in Dehradun, India, about Lishu's offerings, including details about next year's program (beginning in September and open to all). Included is a glimpse of life at Lishu through some of the students' writings and pictures. Get a taste of how unique Lishu is and how you might consider in-depth study at this beautiful institution in northern India.

Have you tuned in to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's latest free monthly webcasts on "Transforming Your World Through Service"? In the initial webcast on this series, Rinpoche described his hope for all of us, in being of service in the world:

So this is my own intention to help, and I think that at the end of the day – after we practice, we meditate, after we do this activity and that, and we work and make our living – at the end of the day, I think there's always this sense in everybody that *I want to be helpful to others*. I do think it's there as a core principle that we all have, a really deep, deep treasure and I think that we need to see that, and acknowledge that, and cultivate that to change the world. And I don't mean changing the

whole

world, but rather, changing our own little world, and then

that

will affect the bigger world for sure. That is my hope.

You can tune in April 2 (tomorrow!) for a webcast on the topic of “Enlightened Leadership,” to be broadcast live from the Spring Retreat at Serenity Ridge; and just a week later on April 9, tune in from your computer to the next webcast in the six-month series on “Transforming Your World Through Service, Part 3: Generating Compassion.” If you’ve missed the first two webcasts from this series on the topic of service, you can always [watch the recordings](#).

Also featured in this issue: a beautiful poem by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. Translated from Tibetan, the poem also inspired a lovely, moving video. Thank you to all those who contributed to its creation, and especially to Rinpoche for *his* creativity! We also have another amazing YouTube video about the new plans for the next building at Serenity Ridge and the need for financial support. Watch the video as Rinpoche and John Massie, who did the architectural design and worked closely with Rinpoche, describe the plans for Serenity’s future. John has been on the Serenity Ridge Council, volunteering as Retreat Center Developer since the land for Ligmincha’s Serenity Ridge was found and purchased in 1998. Thank you John for your wonderful service and tireless dedication in helping to manifest Rinpoche’s dreams for a beautiful retreat center at Serenity Ridge!

Announcing a special new FREE online workshop for beginners starting April 16! This two-week workshop on Zhine (calm abiding), is made possible by Rinpoche through GlideWing. See the article below for details. Residents are needed for the Serenity Ridge Resident Program. Please consider how you might be of service in this way. Find out about solitary and group retreats in the feature on Ligmincha’s Chamma Ling retreat center in Colorado. Fast approaching is the special weekend retreat at Serenity Ridge May 21–22 with Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche – we have all the details below. Have you made plans for summer yet? This summer’s two-week annual retreat at Serenity Ridge begins June 19 on Sleep Yoga – a powerful tool for awakening; early registration ends May 18. Read an article based on a conversation between longtime student Santiago Villaveces-Izquierdo and Rinpoche over the past year, on the distinctions and complementarity of traditional teaching and The 3 Doors approach. The 3 Doors announce new academies beginning in the fall, as well as a Creativity retreat in Italy this June. Check out Rinpoche’s teaching schedule for the remainder of 2016. Lastly, as always, the VOCL translations in Spanish and Portuguese are brought to you by volunteers in service to the sangha!

In loving service,

Aline and Jeff



Applications Accepted for Second Year Program at Lishu Institute

An Interview with Sangmo Yangri, Ph.D., Teacher at Lishu



Lishu Institute near Dehradun, India, will begin the second year of its three-year residential program in Tibetan Bon Buddhism on September 12, 2016. The year will focus on the Ma Gyud teachings, one of the major tantric cycles in the Bon tradition. All are welcome to apply for the second year of teachings. We interviewed Sangmo Yangri, Lishu teacher and administrator, for an update about this year's program and plans for the second year.

Q: *Sangmo, can you tell us briefly about your connection to Bon and to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche?*

A: I grew up near the Menri monastery in Dolanji (India) and my father was a close friend of His Eminence Yongdzin Rinpoche, so since early childhood I have been immersed in the Bon tradition and culture. The same way, I have known Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche since childhood. Later I studied and got my Ph.D. at the University of Varanasi in Bon and Buddhist Philosophy. [She is the first Tibetan woman to receive this Ph.D.] Tenzin Rinpoche connected me to Lishu

the first time in 2008, and in 2011, during the second gathering at Lishu, he introduced me to the participants (about 100 people) as a future teacher at Lishu. Then he asked me to join Lishu after the completion of my Ph.D. in 2013.



Sangmo Yangri (right) teaches a class at Lishu

Q: *What have you been doing since you arrived at Lishu?*

A: I have been teaching at Lishu since spring 2015, when I taught a six-week intensive Tibetan language course. When the three-year program started in September, I was in charge of all the teachings during the first trimester; namely the first and second sutric vehicles of the Nine Ways of Bon, the first three chapters of the Hagiography of Buddha Tonpa Shenrab, Tibetan language and Bon prayers. During this second trimester, in addition to the lectures (hagiography, Tibetan language), I translated the teachings of Geshe Sherab Lodoe, who joined us from Menri Monastery to teach the third and fourth sutric vehicles. I also am a liaison with Menri and nearby monasteries and a member of the Lishu management, which includes participating in the examination and selection of applicants.

Q: *Can you please introduce us to the plan for the second year of the program?*

A: *Ma Gyud Sangye Gyud Sum* is a teaching coming directly from Dharmakaya Kuntu Zangpo, the primordial Buddha. The second year, which starts September 12, addresses the six great methods of the Path of the Ma Gyud cycle:

- **First trimester** (September 12–November 18, 2016): Tummo and Dream Yoga.
- **Second trimester** (January 9– March 17, 2017): Nyen Sa Lam Khyer (related to Chod practice) and Phen Pa Lam Khyer (related to Phowa practice).
- **Third trimester** (April 3– June 9, 2017): Sleep yoga and Bardo Lam Khyer.

In addition, we will continue the hagiography of Buddha Tonpa Sherab and the Tibetan language. The year will have a strong emphasis on practice. Geshe Sherab Lodoe will teach the Ma Gyud. I will teach Hagiography and Tibetan Language, and I will translate Geshe-la's teachings.



Geshe Sherab Lodoe teaches in the meditation hall

Q: *What other staff are there at Lishu?*

A: Geshe Thupten Negi is the president of Lishu and takes care of the general administration. We also have a cook and someone to clean the common areas. His Eminence Ponlop Trinley Nyima Rinpoche came during the first trimester to give a teaching on Sherab Chamma and will come again, probably this fall, to give the empowerment. We will invite teachers from Menri Monastery to come to Lishu and teach on specific topics, as needed.

Q: *What does a typical day at Lishu look like?*

A: During the second trimester this year, the day begins at 7 a.m. with tsa lung (Tibetan yoga) and meditation practice, followed by Sherab Chamma and Yeshe Walmo prayers. We have breakfast at 8 a.m. Classes are held from 9 a.m. to noon, with teachings on the greater vehicles of the 9 Ways and the hagiography of Tonpa Shenrab. Following lunch and a short break, Tibetan language classes are held in the afternoons—grammar and reading on Monday and Tuesday, Bon prayers on Wednesday and Thursday, and Tibetan speaking class on Friday. Mealtimes and tea breaks are opportunities to share and discuss. The students have free time on weekends and can use this time to relax and/or to study and practice. Lishu is located in a quiet area in the countryside, with a small village within easy walking distance, but it is possible to go Dehradun or other nearby cities like Rishikesh.



Lishu students gather with His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche during a visit to Menri Monastery

Q: *Are there visitors to Lishu, and do students visit other places?*

A: We have regular visits of monks from Menri and Za Mongyal Monasteries. We've had other

visitors for short periods, including two journalists from a Buddhist magazine from Delhi. We had the great fortune to host Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche last September. Then the Lishu sangha went with Rinpoche to Menri Monastery. The young Tulku Pondse Jigme Tenzin (Jorge Rene Valles Sandoval) was among the students.



Tulku Pondse Jigme Tenzin (left) is greeted by a disciple of his previous incarnation, Lopon Sangye Tenzin

When we were at Menri, one 87-year-old man, who was the disciple of his previous incarnation (the great Bon master Lopon Sangye Tenzin), was very eager to meet the young Tulku and pay respect to him by offering the traditional *khata* (ceremonial scarf). It was very moving for all the students to see the devotion radiating from this man.

The students have visited Menri Monastery and Za Mongyal Monasteries (both Bon) and also other monasteries such as Mindrolling (a Nyingma monastery in nearby Dehradun) and the Sakya monastery.

Q: *Can anyone apply for the second year of study, whether or not they attended the first year program?*

A: Yes. The whole three-year program is designed in a modular and flexible way. Therefore, it is not mandatory to attend the first year to be able to apply for the second year. Although there will be a strong emphasis on the practice from the second year onward, Tibetan language will continue to be part of the program. The students who have been attending the teachings in

Lishu so far have very different backgrounds. Some have followed Bon and/or teachings for decades, some are pretty new. So we have already had to adapt to different levels. The Ma Gyud cycle in the second year and the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud in the third year are pretty independent.

***Q:** What type of applicants are you looking for?*

A: We are looking for motivated and determined people to study and practice. New students should have the will to adapt to a new environment. One important requirement is to speak English fluently. Other than that, the admission committee will address each application individually. We invite people who would like to apply to contact us and ask any questions they might have.

***Q:** How do you see the Lishu environment as being beneficial for learning and practice?*

A: Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's vision for Lishu was a place where Westerners could dedicate themselves to long-term study. It's now embodied, and it is really meant to foster in-depth study and practice. Lishu is located in quiet area, so the facilities enable the students to concentrate on their study and practice. Furthermore, they have closer connection to the Bon tradition by interacting with Bon monasteries.

This is still the first year for the program at Lishu, so many things still need to be built up. For example, we have a project to establish a library, and to improve and develop the gompa. In addition, we need some basic materials such as a printer/copy machine, generator... so any support is most welcome!

[Donations can be made to Lishu through the Ligmincha International donations page](#) ; please specify donation for "Lishu." To donate equipment please email director@lishu.org

[Learn more about the second year program of Lishu](#)

[Apply for the second year program](#)



A Glimpse of Life at Lishu Two Students' Experiences

Anna-Kaisa Hirvanen, from Finland, is one in the first group of students to start a three-year Bon studies program at Lishu Institute near Dehradun, India. Anna-Kaisa is a founding member of Ligmincha Finland and its first Chair of the Board. She began a blog about Lishu a year ago in March 2015. Here is an excerpt from one of her recent posts, titled "Unbroken Lineage of Wisdom," from March 2016.



Lishu students January 2016 including Anna-Kaisa (center)

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 kinds 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 thinking and acting in the Western countries. Things do not work in the same way as in the West, in fact, quite 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 are in Tibetan, with translation to English. Together with the formal Tibetan language studies this gives the chance to learn more of the 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 study group and teachers

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.



Auspicious area for raising prayerflags near Menri Monastery

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 Ponlop Thinley Nyima Rinpoche was giving the initiation to all the monks, nuns and lay people. During his teaching he asked us to fulfill only one commitment for this initiation this time, which usually has many commitments to fulfill. That is to pray and accumulate long life mantras for His Holiness's health. At the end of the initiation, the white scarves 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.

[Read more of Anna-Kaisa's Lishu blog](#)
[Long life mantra accumulations for his holiness](#)

Another Lishu student briefly describes her experience at Lishu:



Upcoming Webcasts with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

April 2 and April 9

Coming up soon are two free, live webcasts with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche that should be of interest to all. The April 2 webcast, on the topic of “Enlightened Leadership,” will be broadcast live from the Spring Retreat at Serenity Ridge. The April 9 webcast, on the topic of “Generating Compassion,” is the third in a six-part series on service.

Join us from your computer on **Saturday, April 2, 2016, 3–4:30 p.m.** Eastern Time U.S. (New York time) for “Enlightened Leadership.” As we awaken to our true nature, each one of us can become an agent of change that benefits ourselves, others and society. Through this teaching and guided meditation with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, discover the inner sacred space that is the source of genuine compassion and enlightened action. Broadcast live from the annual Spring Retreat at Serenity Ridge (not a public talk, but webcast is open to all).

[Register for April 2 webcast](#)

Just a week later, on Saturday, **April 9, 2016, 3–4:30 p.m.** Eastern Time U.S. (New York time), join us for the next free webcast, third in the six-part series on "Transforming Your World Through Service, Part 3: "Generating Compassion." To be of true service to others, you need both wisdom and compassion—if one of these two is lacking, your efforts will have far less

effect. In this free live webcast with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, you will learn how to tap into the source of genuine compassion, discover how to serve others by becoming more attuned to their needs, understand the difference between joyful effort and the pain of self-sacrifice, and engage in a meditation practice for cultivating compassion.

[Learn more/register for April 9 webcast](#)



This Is It

A Poem by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

*Translation from the original Tibetan by Steven Goodman, Karma Shastri and Polly Turner.
Music by Nyamed Soladep and Gazom Lhamo. Video and editing by Salvador Espinosa.*

[View the video](#)

This Is It

This is it. Gaze at it.
Past pains, future hopes
Like clouds in the sky, they come and go.
This is the changeless state of everything.

This is it. Gaze at it.
There is nothing that does not arise from it.
There is nothing that does not abide in it.
There is nothing that is not liberated in it.

This is it. Gaze at it.
Perceptions fade, like cloud mists.
Feelings fade, like rainbows.
This, like the sky, won't change.

This is it. Gaze at it.
Desire won't bring it closer,
Anger won't push it farther away.
It is neither close nor far.

This is it. Gaze at it.
Try to search for it, you won't find it.
Try to leave it, you won't lose it.
It naturally primordially abides.

Go ahead and doubt this,
Still you'll be the lucky one
Because you'll really be closer
And soon enough
The meaning of this will dawn – for sure!

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche
January 3, 2016
Albany, California



Plans for New Building at Serenity Ridge
[View YouTube Video](#)

Soon construction will begin on a new building at Serenity Ridge Retreat Center in Nelson County, Virginia, home to Ligmincha International. In this video, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and John Massie, who architected the design and worked closely with Rinpoche, share their vision for this building. Dedication of this newest addition to the Serenity Ridge Retreat Center will be held at the upcoming summer retreat in June.

The land development fund needs your help to make this a reality! Please consider a tax-deductible donation to further the efforts of Ligmincha International.



[View Video](#)
[Learn more](#)



Focusing and Calming Your Mind with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

Free Two-Week Online Workshop for Beginners Starts April 16

For the past six years Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche has been providing meditation instruction through his popular GlideWing.com online workshops. Now, for the first time he will offer a two-week workshop free of charge. The course will take place from April 16 through May 1. All that's needed to participate is a high-speed Internet connection.

“Meditation for Beginners: Focusing and Calming Your Mind” is tailored for beginning meditators but will be beneficial for anyone – including experienced practitioners – who needs support in stabilizing their thoughts and their mind. The course gives comprehensive instruction in the zhine, or “calm abiding,” practice, which has its source in the ancient Bon Buddhist tradition of Tibet. Through this practice you will learn to quiet and calm the mind by focusing attention on a

single object. Three forms of zhiné are taught: focusing on a visual support; focusing on sound; and focusing on the “Three Precious Pills” – stillness of the body, silence of the speech and spaciousness of the mind.

A short meditation practice each day can bring many benefits, including enhancements to physical, emotional and psychological well-being. More specifically, the practices of this workshop can help you to:

- Improve your focus in all areas of your life.
- Clear negative emotions, unblock creativity, enhance your productivity and improve your mood.
- Find more sense of peace, quietude and inner calmness.
- Become more connected and grounded in all experiences of body, speech and mind.
- Stabilize clarity of mind and cultivate awareness.
- Come closer to your true self.

Rinpoche instructs and guides the practice through a series of videos that can be watched at home on your own schedule. A discussion forum lends a sense of community and permits you to share experiences, ask questions and engage in mutual support. A course moderator will ensure that forum discussions are appropriate and supportive.

[Learn more/register](#)



New GlideWing Workshop Begins April 30

Tibetan Meditation — Achieving Great Bliss Through Open Awareness

A new GlideWing online workshop with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, “Tibetan Meditation: Achieving Great Bliss Through Pure Awareness,” will be held April 30–May 22, 2015. This ancient Tibetan meditation practice teaches you to enter the state of pure awareness that leads to peace, joy, and ultimately, to full self-realization. More Learn and practice from your own home, at your own schedule, with personal guidance from Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche,

founder and spiritual director of Ligmincha Institute.

These teachings are a direct introduction to the nature of mind. Not only will you learn how to heal your day-to-day life, make it lighter and more joyful, but through the profound simplicity of this practice, you can recognize and connect with your innermost essence, the nature of your mind. Personal support and guidance is provided by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

[Learn more and view introductory video](#)
[Register](#)



Resident Program Positions Available at Serenity Ridge **Deepen Your Practice and Be of Service**



A limited number of resident program positions are now available at Serenity Ridge Retreat Center, founded by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and headquarters of Ligmincha International. Apply now if you are interested!

The resident program offers individuals a chance to deepen their practice while working 29 hours per week for Serenity Ridge Retreat Center. These positions are in the areas of housekeeping, maintenance, groundskeeping, program support and, on occasion, office support.

These positions offer a range of benefits, including:

- With the teacher's approval, attendance at Serenity Ridge retreats that are open to the public, or Serenity Ridge programs for which the resident has met prerequisites and received permission from the teacher.
- A biweekly, 10-minute period of individual instruction in the further development of the resident's practice by the Resident Lama, whenever his schedule permits.
- Use of the Garuda House Shrine room, unless this space is reserved for other purposes.
- Free meals during retreats and basic meal ingredients provided at other times for residents to prepare their own meals in our main kitchen.

If you are interested in a two- to six-month residency, please [apply here](#) .

If you have additional questions, please contact the Serenity Ridge operations manager at sr.operations@ligmincha.org



Chamma Ling Colorado

Supportive, Beautiful Environment for Group and Solitary Retreats





H.E. Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche Coming to Serenity Ridge!
May 21–22 Teachings on Pith Instructions of the Khandros



Registration Now Open for Summer Retreat at Serenity Ridge

June 19–July 2: Sleep of Clear Light

Join Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche for this special Summer Retreat focusing on sleep yoga. Participants are welcome to attend one or both weeks. A powerful tool for awakening, sleep yoga is more than a practice of the night. It helps us to integrate all moments — waking, sleeping, meditation and even death — with the clear light of awareness.

From *The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep* by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche:

“Dream and sleep yogas are methods to recognize the clear light and abide in it through all the moments of life: waking, meditating, dreaming, sleeping, and death. Essentially, the teachings are designed to help us to recognize the nature of mind, to understand and overcome the obstacles in our practice, and to abide fully in rigpa. We can utilize the same methods to remain in joy, to find peace in the midst of the turmoil of the world, to live well, and to appreciate each vivid moment of our human existence.”

During this retreat, Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will teach and guide us in the clear-light sleep practices of the Mother Tantra, one of the most important cycles of teachings in the Tibetan Bon Buddhist tradition.

An important support for dzogchen practice, the sleep yoga practices bring more clarity to all

experience. One performs them during normal daytime activities, during meditation practice, during preparation for sleep, and as one falls asleep. The primary goal of sleep practice is to open the door to the luminous, open awareness that is the true nature of the mind. Ultimately, the purpose is to help the practitioner attain final liberation at the time of death.

Newcomers are welcome. All will find this retreat to be a powerful support for beginning or deepening spiritual practice and for enriching their daily lives.

The early registration discount ends May 18 so reserve your spot now!

[Learn more/register](#)



Conversations Between Student and Teacher

Complementarity of Traditional Teaching and The 3 Doors Approach



Santiago Villaveces-Izquierdo from Colombia, a longtime student of Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, interviewed Rinpoche several times over Skype last year. Their conversation focused primarily on the complementarity of a traditional approach to the teachings and The 3 Doors. The first half of the interview, condensed and edited by VOCL editors for the format of this

newsletter, is presented below. Part 2 will be published in the June issue of the VOCL. Read the full article in the upcoming Spring issue of Ligmincha Europe Magazine.

Santiago Villaveces-Izquierdo: After more than two decades of following the Yungdrung Bon tradition and after recently completing a three-year training through The 3 Doors Academy designed by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, my teacher for more than 24 years, I have realized very deep shifts within myself. A different way of being in the midst of the ups and downs of daily life has emerged together with a deep feeling of freedom, expansiveness and connection. At the same time I have begun to realize that the teachings have come much more alive in myself, not as intellectual constructs but as embodied and experienced realizations. In sharing this wonderful adventure of discovery and healing, I found myself engaged in a series of heartfelt conversations with Rinpoche during 2015.

For the last several years Rinpoche has been engaged in creating a novel system that blends the strengths of an 18,000-year-old tradition with the openness and candidness of acknowledging our own personal obstacles and afflictions. Our conversation started off with a distinction between Ligmincha and The 3 Doors Academy that Rinpoche was keen on making. Ligmincha Institute (now Ligmincha International) was established in the mid-1990s for the preservation of the ancient teachings and practices of the Yungdrung Bon tradition of Tibet and has since grown to a worldwide network of centers and sanghas. The 3 Doors is a secular training based on three of these ancient practices that allows participants to work through physical, energetic and mental obstacles that deter us from reaching self-realization.

We also touched upon two fundamental pillars of spiritual work: reconnecting to the inner refuge, that is, reconnecting through our conscious awareness with our own true nature; and developing the inner skills of hosting all our experiences by allowing them into our expansive nature rather than grasping and identifying ourselves with them.

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche: It is important for people to understand the basic differences between Ligmincha and The 3 Doors Academy. First of all, the purpose of the latter is not preserving the tradition but allowing individuals who have no association with Buddhism, Bon or Tibetan culture to have access and benefit from some of these teachings. This of course does not mean that people who are following a traditional Buddhist path would not benefit from the methods and approaches used in The 3 Doors, as has already been proven by more than 100 practitioners who have graduated from the academy.

Another difference is in the way The 3 Doors is structured. People who enter the academy work as a group for a period of three consecutive years within a setup that provides more intimate support systems that are otherwise absent in a sangha or dharma center: closeness to the teacher or mentor, closeness among practitioners, a deep level of commitment toward each other and toward the practices, and a continuous communication among all as a basis for growth and support. For all these reasons The 3 Doors is also extremely beneficial for all those practitioners who are following the tradition of Yungdrung Bon and who are connected to any of our worldwide centers.

I feel it is also important to mention that all of us who are following a tradition such as the Yungdrung Bon have pledged a commitment to develop a meaningful sense of compassion. This means acting in practical ways to allow people who have no interest in following this tradition to benefit from the dharma. I care about all human beings, not only those who follow my tradition. If one has a sectarian view one does not truly understand *bodhicitta*, the spontaneous wish to attain enlightenment motivated by great compassion for all sentient beings. For sectarians *bodhicitta* is just a mental abstraction about helping other sentient beings.

For me The 3 Doors Academy is very important because it is a means to include people who otherwise would not have access to the teachings simply because Buddhism or Yungdrung Bon have no appeal to them. And I wanted to offer this opportunity within a strong system of support and commitment.

So you see, there is no conflict or contradiction between Ligmincha and The 3 Doors Academy. One might have preferences, people can choose one over the other, but you cannot judge based on what you like or dislike. You cannot say The 3 Doors is not right because it does not follow the tradition. This is not only a wrong judgment but also a lack of understanding of *bodhicitta*. I am encouraging all my students to follow the approaches of both Ligmincha and The 3 Doors. This is very important.

SVI: First, in terms of the audience, Ligmincha and The 3 Doors are conceived as distinct means to reach different audiences. Second, beyond the issue of distinct audiences lies a deeper difference: The 3 Doors provides a more integral support system to the person who is working with the practices. Third and deepest is that in the personal development of a practitioner both Ligmincha and The 3 Doors are complementary to each other. Can you elaborate more on this complementarity?

TWR: Yes, I say they are complementary because in the tradition there is a very deep elaboration and understanding of the dark side or the shadow of our own personality: practices exist to tame your ego, cultivate compassion and purify afflictions. All these form the core essence of the teachings. But while this is the case, these teachings very seldom become personal in people's lives. Many teach about the need to tame the ego and purify afflictions, but this does not become something personal for a practitioner, teacher and dharma group.

SVI: Rinpoche, if you allow me I would like to talk through my experience as a 3 Doors Academy graduate and follower and practitioner of the Yungdrung Bon. When one does not integrate one's own personal issues and obstacles in one's own practice but rather engages in very deep and beautiful practices, one falls into delusion. I have felt this very strongly in my own growth throughout the years. After attending many summer retreats at Ligmincha, I recall the feelings that emerged when the three weeks of teachings and practices came to an end. I recall many of us recognizing these feelings, dreading them and even joking about them: the fall after the high. One loses those experiences and is once again back into the miseries and sufferings of normal daily life. The teachings are not embodied in oneself; they are not integrated with one's own suffering or with the challenges one is facing in daily existence. The beauty in the approach of the The 3 Doors is that it allows you the possibility of actually embodying the teachings and understanding, through your own transformation, that the three root poisons are not this abstraction that makes sense within a very comprehensive philosophical canon, but are something that is actually inside yourself, alive and playing out and manifesting in multiple ways in your life all the time.

TWR: Yes absolutely!

SVI: So the way of breaking with this delusion is by integrating the teachings into your daily life by accessing the concrete possibilities that arise while working through your own obstacles.

TWR: What the dharma and the teachings say when making reference to our afflictions and three root poisons is that they are actually happening at every single moment: in the way you are viewing, responding and interacting with the world. All of one's own afflictions are right there, producing deeply rooted challenges, deeply rooted patterns in our relationships with each other and our surroundings. All of it is there! But often people who practice dharma seldom touch the concreteness of their own afflictions. They end up finding no relationship between the teachings and their own daily life. There is an immense gap. What The 3 Doors emphasizes is bridging that gap, actualizing that connection.

SVI: Would you say that embodying the teachings and truly understanding the nature of mind begins with the transformations in your daily life? In other words, if you do not work with your shadow systematically – using tools like the ones proposed by The 3 Doors, for example, it is quite impossible to embody the teachings and understand the nature of mind.

TWR: Absolutely! There is no doubt of this. That is why so many people that are practicing for so many years, even if they have higher and higher positions within any social structure (religious or otherwise), and are very knowledgeable and have read a lot, attended more retreats and do more practices, do not necessarily embody change and transformation. These qualifications do not necessarily mean that they have a clue about the nature of mind.

SVI: So if you want to embark on the path of discovering the nature of mind, you have to begin with what you have in your own life right now – with your own mud that is right there in front of you at that present moment.

TWR: That is the only place. The “I” (pain identity) that has been created by all the shadows, that is the place to begin. But the smart ego can totally dismiss this and do something in parallel for years and years (i.e. working with the teachings without engaging with the shadow). And that is the biggest damage that the smart ego can make. My concern is that there are people who follow me, who follow the dharma, that do not see any value in The 3 Doors. It is important for this people to hear what I am saying here. The 3 Doors is good for you as well as for others who do not follow the dharma, and you should be open enough to understand this. The ways teachings are taught traditionally and in The 3 Doors are complementary to one another; one is not the replacement of the other.

SVI: Would you say that they are not only complementary but actually the methods proposed by The 3 Doors in working through one's own afflictions are actually the starting point to engage with the teachings?

TWR: Yes. If you do not understand it that way, there is no genuine way of entering into the dharma. A true way of entering into the Dharma would be through methods like The 3 Doors.

SVI: So the key message here is highlighting the importance of The 3 Doors, in particular emphasizing that if you do not touch anything of your shadow there is no way you can actually understand and come to realizations of what the teachings are all about.

TWR: That's what I have been saying for years.

SVI: When one doesn't engage with the shadow, the teachings become experiences that are not embodied in yourself, or when you embodied them you do so when you have unique circumstances – as in a retreat – and in such cases they cannot be sustained or accessed in your daily life.

TWR: Yes, I have been emphasizing this all the time. Many people who have a deep knowledge of the teachings have a hard time hearing this. They are somehow closed to it despite the fact that all the texts have specific lines emphasizing this approach.



Apply to New 3 Doors Academies in the U.S. and Europe Creativity Retreat in Italy Also Scheduled

The 3 Doors has good news to share: applications are being accepted for two new academies to begin in United States and Europe this year. The 3 Doors also invites you to a special retreat on creativity in Italy this June.

Apply to Academies



THE 3 DOORS



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's Teaching Schedule

Links by Date and Location

On the [Ligmincha International website](#) you can always find Rinpoche's teaching schedule by date through the end of the year, and by location.

[Rinpoche's teaching schedule by date](#)

[Rinpoche's teaching schedule by location](#)



Spanish and Portuguese Translations of VOCL

Links to February Issue Now Available

[Read VOCL in Spanish](#)

[Read VOCL in Portuguese](#)



Upcoming Retreats

Serenity Ridge Retreat Center

The retreats listed below will take place at Serenity Ridge Retreat Center, Ligmincha International headquarters located in Nelson County, Virginia. To register or for more information, click on the links below, email us or call 434-263-6304.

May 21–22, 2016

Special Weekend Retreat: Pith Instructions of Dzogchen Yetri Thasel

with H.E. Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche

[Learn more/register](#)

June 3–5, 2016

Tibetan Wellness Retreat

with Alejandro Chaoul-Riech, Ph.D. and Rob Patzig, President, Ligmincha International

[Learn more/register](#)

June 19–July 2, 2016

Summer Retreat: Sleep of Clear Light: The Sleep Yoga Practice from the Bon Mother Tantra

with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche Attend one or both weeks.

[Learn more/register](#)

October 12–16, 2016

Fall Retreat 2016: The Practice of Chod from the Bon Mother Tantra

with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

[Learn more](#)

November 3–6, 2016

Trul Khor Training: Tibetan Bon Yoga, Part 1

with Alejandro Chaoul-Reich, Ph.D.

[Learn more](#)

December 27, 2016–January 1, 2017

The Experiential Transmission of Zhang Zhung, Part 3: The Practice of The Path

with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

Prerequisite: Previous completion of Part 2 of the Experiential Transmission of Zhang Zhung series.

More information to come.

To register for any of the above retreats, or for more information about teachings in the Bon Buddhist tradition of Tibet, please email the registration@ligmincha.org, call 434-218-1290 or visit the [Serenity](#)

[Ridge website.](#)