

## Teaching Issue

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### The Value of Trust

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**An Edited Excerpt From Oral Teachings Given by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche,  
December 2009**

I know many of you have been on a spiritual journey for a long time, and many are just entering into one. It is clear that there are many different ways we can take this journey, and at times it can be easy, at others difficult. But whatever form your journey takes, if there's some sense of trust there, some sense of "It's there and I'm going to stick with it and continue," then I think there is a light there. That aspect of trust in our spiritual journey is something we all need.



If we want to learn, nourish ourselves and grow, we need to be aware that there is this treasure here in the teachings and that we have access to it. It is such a richness in our midst, with benefits not just for this lifetime but also for many lifetimes to come. From time to time it's good to really recognize the value of these teachings. That feeling that you can access the teachings wherever you are in the world is so comforting, it makes life very rich. With so much changing in

the world and so many things happening within our lives, we can see clearly that there is something very, very valuable in what we are being given access to. In my personal experience, whenever I connect to the truth of this richness, I can't help thinking what an enormous gift it is. We have to make it a continual practice to remember this richness and not get lost in the little problems of life.

At times, the daily challenges that arise can make us feel disconnected from our journey and our meditation practice. This can be true even when it is simply peace of mind that we seek from our practice. But as long as you trust that there is a support there, that there is always an antidote to suffering, then no matter how difficult things are, engaging in practice can bring an immediate, positive shift. Your circumstances do not necessarily change, but rather *you* change. You see? It's not always a question of things changing around you.

Sometimes things are difficult and may continue to be difficult — for example, you could have an extended illness — but if you change, then you find that things are not so hard. That is the victory of self-realization. You do not necessarily avoid problems, but you are able to go beyond them. You do not necessarily avoid human suffering and conflict, but you are able to go beyond them. You do not avoid sickness, but you are able to go beyond sickness. You do not avoid death, but you are able to go beyond death.

These powerful spiritual practices give us the power and strength to do that. Sometimes of course you are able to change the situation, but other times you are not, and instead you go beyond it. Trusting in that ability is very, very important.



## A Special Graduation Ceremony at Serenity Ridge

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### The Three Doors Academy's First Graduates

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's aspiration to bring the wisdom and potency of Bon Buddhist practices to the West has most recently expressed itself in the Three Doors Programs. Kallon Basquin, executive director of the Three Doors, eloquently calls it Rinpoche's "heart drop," the

distillation of his heart message to all of us. During Ligmincha's 2011 summer retreat, the first group of students who completed this in-depth training — the first fruit of this program — had the extraordinary privilege of attending a graduation ceremony presided over by Tenzin Rinpoche and His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, spiritual head of the Bon tradition.



Kallon spoke for all 12 graduates as he movingly expressed his appreciation for what had been offered to them.

"This has been a long time coming," Kallon said. "I remember when [Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche] asked me to come practice with him. What an opportunity! How often does a student have the chance to learn how to be a human being? Rinpoche offered us a path to meet ourselves nakedly, to break our hearts open. This path is beyond all Buddhist concepts and beyond all our longing to be somewhere other than where we are. He gave us a way to come home to

ourselves. It was an open invitation to us and now to all of you to go beyond everything and just be alive. This vision is for all those who have a calling to go deep into their own souls.”

Tenzin Rinpoche talked about his pure and open intention to bring the transformative potential of these profound teachings to all sentient beings. He recognized that the forms and rituals of traditional practice can be obstacles for many and has worked hard to create the opportunity for anyone to work deeply with themselves and benefit from the wisdom of these practices. In the Three Doors, he has achieved the perfect balance between making the teachings accessible to others while maintaining the pure link with the tradition.

That direct transmission from the tradition into this program and all those who work within it was made apparent by His Holiness’s presence and his words. He encouraged us to commit to what we have begun and not let the many distractions of everyday life pull us away from the deepening of our own awareness and our commitment to share this with others. He stated that he was very pleased by what had been accomplished here and wished us well in our efforts to move this into the world. After the ceremony, he asked for copies of the graduation certificates to be put into the archives at Menri Monastery in India. In this way, the Three Doors Program and all its present and future graduates were given a place within the living heart of this ever-flowing tradition.

As the assembled students who attended the summer retreat sang the beautiful refuge prayers written by Tenzin Rinpoche, the 12 graduates rose to receive the transmission of blessings of body, speech, and mind from His Holiness, who touched a statue of Taphritsa to their foreheads, a text of the *Six Lamps* to their throats, and a crystal to their hearts.

At the end of the ceremony the graduates stood and expressed their own pure intention to be suitable vessels for what had been given them: “Having received the blessings of body, speech, and mind through the great wisdom and compassion of our teachers, may we have the strength to benefit many others.”

— *Laura Shekerjian*

To learn more about the Three Doors Programs and Academy visit [www.the3doors.org](http://www.the3doors.org)



## Sangha Sharing

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## Poems of Expression

*During the recent Summer Retreat at Serenity Ridge, retreatants were invited to share their creative and spontaneous expressions during a celebration following the fundraising auction on June 30. The evening included music, dance, acting, comedy, poetry, as well as performances by children. Here are two poems shared during that magical evening:*

### Are You Bonpo?

Are you a Bonpo?

A logical question

A simple question

A weighty question

Who is the I that answers?

Hosting

Hosting the I's

Waters of Baptism

Wine of Kiddush

Mala for Sera Mey

Son of Christians

Husband and Father of Jews

Teacher of Religion

Director of Religious Life

Smile of Rinpoche

Illumination of Tapihritsa

Hosting, softening, awareness  
Who is the I?

Stillness  
I take refuge.

Silence  
I take refuge.

Spaciousness  
I take refuge.

E Ma Ho

— *Bob Clark*

\* \* \*

### **Paying Attention**

“Host the pain in your body,” he said,  
“after you connect with the stillness that’s not in your head.”

“Look out the window,” my ego replied,  
“the sky is so blue – it sure is nice outside.”

Faith in the teachings kept me still,  
Until ego started enjoying the peace – after 50 years, it has great skill.

But so does the teacher  
As he reminds me to rest while paying attention to the creature.

This is followed by the unfortunate reminder to “host the pain,”  
And unease triggers ego to start its drill and stillness begins to wane.

Again, faith steps in, and allows awareness to open,  
To my amazement the pain is a mountain of which I have never spoken.

How could it stay hidden for so very long?  
Now it's feeling bigger and denser – I wish someone would ring the gong!

Like a star near the end of its time, will I become a black hole?  
- Ever vigilant, there goes ego threatening my soul.

But I let that voice float away and continue to host that damnable pain,  
Only to find that I prefer the stillness to the insane.

As I grasp for the quiet, it disappears, and in that moment am lost in fear.  
Just as suddenly, I know that stillness is always there and in that relief, I shed a tear.

Ever so slowly I look at the terrifying beast  
So large from years of an interminable feast.

“Hug it,” he says, “and let it dissolve,”  
But instead, my heart breaks and cuts my resolve.

How many years spent in fear?  
And how many others are similarly unclear?

The stillness is what dissipates,  
And without thought, compassion practice magically takes its place.

Now, sadness follows like a ghost,  
Along with joy of knowing it will dissolve when I have the presence to let stillness play host.

— *Caroline Bell*



## Ligmincha's New Land

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**A Slideshow of Photographs From Rangeley, Maine**



In late July, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught a special weekend retreat in Rangeley, Maine. Ligmincha Institute is very honored to have received 10 acres of land in Rangeley via a recent, generous donation. The weekend event began as Rinpoche led a ritual blessing of the new land, including the raising of prayer flags, and it continued at [the Rangeley Inn](#) with Rinpoche's teachings on "Healing Through Love and Wisdom" ([the practice of Sherap Chamma](#)).

[The town of Rangeley](#), bordering Rangeley Lake, is a popular vacation destination in both the summer and winter months, and with this generous donation Ligmincha is now able to bring retreats to the northeastern United States. The beautiful property, which hosts trees and meadows, is approximately 2.5 hours by car from Portland, Maine; 8.5 hours from New York City; and 4.5 hours from Montreal.

Elizabeth Jackson took these beautiful photographs of the event, which we share with you now. Click on a photograph to start the slideshow.













## Coming to Your Computer

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### Two Live Webcasts, Two Online Workshops This October

October is a busy month at Serenity Ridge, including the [annual fall retreat with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche](#) and [dzogchen teachings with H.E. Menri Lopon Trinley Nyima Rinpoche](#)

. If you can't be with us in body, then be sure to join us on the Internet for these upcoming teachings with

**Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche**

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## Online Course Begins Oct. 15

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### Introduction to the Five Elements: Healing With Form, Energy and Light

This seven-week online course serves as an excellent introduction to Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's teachings on the Five Natural Elements. If you plan to attend this fall's Elements retreat in person with Rinpoche, it's also an excellent means for maintaining and deepening what you gain during that retreat.



## Bring Your Life Into Bloom

### Exploring the Creative Process With Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

Start planning now for a very special five-day retreat with dzogchen master Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. The dates are April 11-15, 2012. *Open to all!* This retreat is for anyone who seeks to usher a vision into reality — whether it be creative problem solving, personal growth, or an artistic venture. Join us for this unique opportunity to free yourself from creative obstacles, nurture your capacity for joyful self-expression, and make positive changes in your life. And bring along your journal, paint brushes, or dancing shoes. More details coming soon.



## New Study Group in Australia

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## Bon Buddhist Practice Down Under

*Ligmincha Institute is happy to announce the formation of a new Ligmincha Australia Study Group, the first such gathering Down Under. Margot Duncan shared this information with us.* ☐



Brisbane is Australia's third largest city. We used to be a big country town but with everyone shifting up here from Australia's other two largest cities (Melbourne and Sydney), we have become quite the innovative place to live. Set on the beautiful Brisbane River in a subtropical climate, Brisbane has a population of just over 2 million people. Seven of those people came to the inaugural Ligmincha Australia Study Group on Saturday, August 27, 2011. The eighth member of our study group Skyped in from Adelaide (Australia's 5th largest city), over 1,500 flight kilometers away.

Our study focus was the practice of the [Five Warrior Syllables](#) . Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's wonderful book

[tan Sound Healing](#)

was our key resource. We used the

[June 2011 webcast "Tapping into the Source of Creativity"](#)

to experience this practice with Rinpoche's guidance. Although it was all very new to most participants, there was a deep sense of inner connection and a lively discussion about the relevance of practice to daily life.

[Tibe](#)



Participants will keep in touch online to encourage each other with practicing until we meet again in about a month. In the meantime, Rinpoche's live broadcasts provide us with such a great archive of teachings. We are really grateful to be able to access these in our own time.

Thank you to everyone at Ligmincha for welcoming us into the worldwide Sangha, and may I give a special thanks to Bob Anger in California for his generous support in helping me to get started.

Best wishes to everyone in their practicing,

Margot Duncan



## Upcoming Retreats

### Ligmincha's Serenity Ridge Retreat Center

The retreats described below will take place at Serenity Ridge, Ligmincha Institute's retreat center in Nelson County, Va. To register or for more information, click on the links below, or contact us at [registration@ligmincha.org](mailto:registration@ligmincha.org) or 434-263-6304.

**Oct. 5 - 9, 2011**

**Connecting With the Living Universe: The Healing Power of the Five Natural Elements  
Annual Fall Retreat With Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche**

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. Please join us for this special opportunity to learn how to connect, revitalize and commune with our living universe in ways that heal ourselves and our world.

[Learn more or register >](#)

**Oct. 18 - 23, 2011**

**The Experiential Transmission of Zhang Zhung, Part 3**

**Dzogchen Teachings With H.E. Menri Lopon Trinley Nyima Rinpoche**

We are honored by this special opportunity to receive dzogchen teachings from [His Eminence Menri Lopon Trinley Nyima Rinpoche](#),

the head instructor of Menri Monastery in Dolanji, India.

*Prerequisite:* Participants must have received the teachings for Parts 1 and 2 of the [Experiential Transmission of Zhang Zhung](#)

in order to attend these teachings.

[Learn more or register >](#)

**Nov. 3 - 6, 2011**

**Tibetan Yoga: Magical Movements for Your Awakened Body**

**A Tsa Lung Trul Khor Retreat with Alejandro Chaoul-Reich**

Whether you are a newcomer or have already received this training, we warmly encourage you to attend this retreat. There is no prerequisite for attending.

[Learn more or register >](#)

**Dec. 27, 2011 - Jan. 1, 2012**

**The Experiential Transmission of Zhang Zhung, Part 4**

**Annual Winter Dzogchen Retreat With Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche**

*Prerequisite:* Participants must have received the teachings for Parts 1 and 2 of the [Experiential Transmission of Zhang Zhung](#)

in order to attend these Part 4 teachings.

[Learn more or register >](#)

**April 11-15, 2012**

**Bring Your Life Into Bloom**

**Exploring the Creative Process With Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche**

Join us for a unique opportunity to free yourself from creative obstacles, nurture your capacity for joyful self-expression, and make positive changes in your life. *More details to come soon.*

**To register for any of the above retreats,** or for more information about teachings in the Bon Buddhist tradition of Tibet, please contact us at [registration@ligmincha.org](mailto:registration@ligmincha.org) or 434-263-6304, or go to:

<https://www.ligmincha.org/retreats/retreats.html>