

# Announcements Issue

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## Letter from the Editors Support of All Kinds

Dear Friends,

Lots of news and inspiration to share in this issue! First, we want to remind you that two major retreats are coming up soon at Serenity Ridge. Not only is there the annual [Winter Retreat](#), which begins a special five-year dzogchen series, from Dec. 27, 2014–Jan. 1, 2015, but Serenity Ridge is also offering a [Ngondro or Individual Practice Retreat](#) from Jan. 2–18, 2014, with three different session lengths available.

Thanks to many contributors, we bring you these articles:

- A letter from Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.
- A letter from the Ligmincha International Board's chairman.
- A free yearlong series of special webcasts by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche on the topic of Soul Retrieval.
- A need for translators for upcoming webcasts.
- Big news at Lishu Institute with the first residential retreats to happen in early spring 2015.
  
- The 3 Doors first Latin American graduates share their joy and experience of The 3 Doors program.
- Rinpoche talks about the differences between Lishu and The 3 Doors.
- Board Chair Rob Patzig shares his recent visit to Austria.
- Upcoming online workshops available through Ligmincha Learning and GlideWing websites.
- Rinpoche's schedule by date and location for 2015.
- Mexico's resident lamas and their artwork in Mexico's two stupas.
- Spanish and Portuguese translations of VOCL.
- A recent online radio interview with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche on dream yoga.

- And last, but not least, don't miss *Ligmincha Europe Magazine's* Autumn issue, a gorgeous collection of articles and images!

On a personal note, we chose the subtitle of this letter, **Support of All Kinds**, to refer to the many wonderful supports that Rinpoche has established through his tireless work for the benefit of all, as seen in this issue's articles. For us, it also refers to the support of all kinds that the VOCL editors receive; that becomes clear every time we put together an issue. This support is always a huge boost of energy to us. It is this support that helps make the Voice of Clear Light happen and so, once again, thanks everyone! Enjoy!

In Bon,  
Aline and Jeff Fisher



## **A Letter from Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche** **Many Positive Changes This Year and in 2015**



Dear Sangha and Friends,

I send you my greetings. As many of you know, many positive changes have occurred this year for Ligmincha International. From my heart I wish to thank each of you who have participated in some way either directly or indirectly.

We now have in place an expanded [board for Ligmincha International](#) . I know they are working hard to create the important organizational structures that are needed to move us forward. We also held our first meeting of the Ligmincha International Mandala Council, composed of representatives from sanghas that have formed legal entities. I feel so happy to see the warmth among sangha members and the collaboration that is happening. By getting together at these meetings we hope to learn what is needed to better support our sanghas around the world.

For the year ahead of us in 2015 we have many wonderful projects taking place around the world. At Serenity Ridge Retreat Center, headquarters of Ligmincha International, we are planning to construct a new building that will house a commercial kitchen, dining room, offices, bookstore and multipurpose room. In Europe, we are looking for land for a retreat center. Ligmincha Berlin has opened a new and beautiful center in Berlin. Ligmincha Poland will be celebrating its 20th anniversary, as will Ligmincha Texas in the U.S. We have four resident lamas in three countries—Geshe Tenzin Yangton in Virginia at Serenity Ridge, Lama Kalsang Nyima and Lama Yungdrung Lodoe at Ligmincha Mexico, and Geshe Lhundup Gyaltzen at Ligmincha France. We are presently engaged in the application process for Geshe Yungdrung Gyatso to become the resident lama for Ligmincha Poland, and for Geshe Denma Gyaltzen to become the resident lama for Ligmincha Texas in the U.S.

This year we've had live webcasts from my home in California, from Serenity Ridge, the summer retreat in Buchenau, and from Malaga and Valle de Bravo. Thanks to the collaboration of our sanghas and many translators, 2015 will be the first year we will have a series of dedicated monthly webcasts on the topic of Soul Retrieval—on the second Saturday of each month. These free, live webcasts will be translated into many languages around the world. During the year there will be both one-and-a-half-hour and full-day practice retreats. Also new for 2015, we will be having two practice retreats in the spring at Lishu Institute in India, and will begin a three-year curriculum there in the fall. All over the world we are hosting expanded opportunities for practice and retreats.

I send my appreciation to all of you who have helped with your time, effort and financial contributions. We have accomplished a lot. As we move into 2015, we have a lot of work to do to continue our mission to have the Bon teachings preserved and available into the future.

I send you all my best wishes for the year ahead. May the teachings ripen in your hearts and minds, may your practice become more joyful and stable, and may you share the fruits of your practice with those around you, bringing warmth to your relationships, work and personal interests.

With my blessings,  
Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche



## **Manifesting Tenzin Rinpoche's Vision**

### **A Letter from the Chair of Ligmincha International Board**



Dear Sangha,

As you read in Rinpoche's letter to us, this has been a year full of growth and transformation for Ligmincha. The most significant of our activities and plans Rinpoche has already written about. I would like to take this opportunity to describe a few other things that are going on, and to describe ways in which you can help.

First, the [Ligmincha International Board](#) has proven itself to be a wonderful group of people with diverse skills and backgrounds. It is a pleasure to come together to work on behalf of the community and Rinpoche. We open our meetings with guru yoga and a brief period of abiding, and we close with the dedication of merit. Within that space we do our best to consider all points of view regarding the items on the agenda and to come to a group consensus.

The primary activities of the board to date have been conceptual. We have adopted bylaws for the international organization, which are available on the website. And we are developing a template for bylaws and a charter for all Ligmincha organizations worldwide. We also are looking at ways of organizing different sets of activities with a goal of providing more practice materials and publications, more access to the teachings online and more collaboration internationally. Our work should become more concrete over time.

Of great importance, the Mandala Council, a group of sangha representatives from around the world, met this past October during the retreat with Rinpoche in Maria Alm, Austria, in person and by telephone. This is the group tasked with identifying areas in which we can work and help one another worldwide. From this first meeting, four activities are under way.

First of all, Rinpoche and the resident lamas are planning how we can share the same practices and activities for the coming celebration of Losar. The Mandala Council awaits their instructions and will communicate them to the rest of us.

The Council also is creating two surveys. One will go to each regional council's board or governing committee and is intended to provide a profile of each sangha in terms of size, frequency of meetings, practices, etc. The second survey will be sent out to practitioners and is intended to help us better understand our demographics, how we connect to the practices and what kinds of support we have or would like to have.

Finally, the Council is asking each sangha to create a catalog of all of Rinpoche's teachings, translations, transcripts, etc. that they have. We will use this to begin creating a library of all of Rinpoche's work to date for future study and distribution. This study, along with the surveys, will also help us to understand what sorts of materials we should work to provide next.

There are four ways in which everyone is able to help manifest Rinpoche's vision for us and

Ligmincha.

1. **Commit to your practice.** Our ultimate goal is to benefit sentient beings. This only happens through our dedication and effort. Practice, study, come to retreat and listen to the cyber-teachings. Our commitment is the ultimate measure of our success.

2. **Pray for the successful manifestation of Rinpoche's vision.**

3. **Donate your time and skills to your local sangha.** Everyone has the ability to be of service. Sweep the floor, bring food or tea for after a practice, join a committee, become the treasurer. The opportunities are nearly endless. If you don't know how you can help, just ask someone on your leadership committee or council.

4. **[Provide financial support.](#)** Serenity Ridge only covers about 65 to 70 percent of its operating costs through retreats, accommodations and rentals. And Ligmincha International is 100 percent dependent on charitable gifts for its activities as of today. We cannot function without the financial support of practitioners. Please consider making a year-end gift, especially an unrestricted gift to our general operating fund. A brochure will be coming out soon with details on how you can contribute financially to Ligmincha and Serenity Ridge.

Respectfully,  
Rob Patzig  
Ligmincha International Board Chair



## **The True Source of Healing**

**A Free, Yearlong Course in the Tibetan Practice of Soul Retrieval**



## Translators Needed

### Volunteer Opportunities for Upcoming Live Webcasts

We are in need of volunteers who can assist online in providing real-time translation of the ongoing live webcasts of Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. In particular, right now there is a need for volunteers who can translate into Italian, Chinese and Japanese, among other languages.

We also need more backup volunteers who can help to share the responsibility for translating. So far, we have volunteers who are translating into Spanish, French, German, Russian, Polish, Turkish, Hungarian, Czech, Finnish, Danish and Portuguese. In addition, technical assistance is sometimes needed for webcasts in the Berkeley, California, area.

If you are or know of someone who has the capability and interest to fill any of these roles, please email Lourdes Hinojosa at [webcast@ligmincha.org](mailto:webcast@ligmincha.org).



## **Upcoming Webcast with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche on Dec. 28 Guided Meditation from the Experiential Transmission Teachings, Part 1**

The next free live webcast with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche is on Dec. 28, 2014 (Sunday), 3–4:30 p.m. Eastern time: "Guided Meditation from the Experiential Transmission Teachings, Part 1." Broadcast live from the [Winter Retreat](#) at Ligmincha Institute at Serenity Ridge, Nelson County, Virginia (not a public talk, but webcast is open to all).

Participate here by visiting the [live-broadcast page](#) on the Ligmincha Institute website.

[Here is a link](#) to the most recent webcast from Nov. 8 with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche on "Sharing Your Inner Peace and Joy for the Welfare of Others." Rinpoche begins with a guided meditation practice to help you connect with the source of inner peace and joy; the teaching itself starts at minute 18:58.

You can also [click here](#) to view any other webcasts you may have missed.



## **Lishu Institute Opens in March with Two Residential Retreats□ Retreats Offer Opportunity to Deepen One's Practice**



[Link to website and register](#)

## The Latin American Academy Graduates! Participants Share Their Experiences



The 3 Doors family is proud to report the completion of another big step toward Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's vision for our international community. The first Latin American Academy graduated in September 2014! We are pleased to introduce our new sisters and brothers and welcome them into our ongoing programs and activities.

Please celebrate with the graduates as they express their boundless enthusiasm for their community, their teachers and The 3 Doors practices.

Laura Calderon writes, "Under a deep blue sky and the magical mountains of Tepoztlán, the 26th of September, 2014, arrived. The 30 students from the Latin American 3 Doors Academy gathered to celebrate one of the most important events of our lives, our graduation ceremony and the end of a journey. During this journey we shared our joys and pains, revealed our vulnerability and discarded everything we did not need. In this way we overcame our fear and deepened our confidence to be who we really are. All of this was possible because of the strength of our inner refuge, developed through the wonderful practices of this training program.

"As the time of our graduation approached, we found ourselves breathing the joy that filled the air. From the beginning of this final retreat we felt a strengthened bond within our group, and this allowed a profound connection among us. In the words of Patricia Vigil, 'a collective space was generated that allowed us to see into each other's eyes and embrace one another from the heart, healing us individually as well as collectively.' "

The ceremony reflected our inner state of spontaneous joy, and our shared respect and cooperation. From here, we received our dear root teacher, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, who offered this beautiful invitation to take our hearts into the world: 'This is just the beginning of a commitment that takes us to the liberation of ourselves for the benefit of others.' During the two-and-a half-year journey, we were guided by our beloved mentors, Laura Shekerjian and Alejandro Chauol, who listened and supported us with warm hearts through all difficult moments, and our ever-present warrior, Kallon Basquin, who with his clear vision was a sustaining force."

### **Comments from the Graduates:**

"The luminous ceremony of 'The Candles' and the liberation of butterflies as a symbol of transformation, were very significant to me and lie deep in my heart as a commitment to honor all The 3 Doors practitioners." – Efrain Diaz

"The celebration was unforgettable. There were incredible flowers and pre-Hispanic music that brought together the vibration of the elements to surround and purify us. The chanting touched

the fibers of our hearts, and we all vibrated in unison. Afterwards came the delicious meal, Cuban music and butterflies." – Laura Calderon

"It was a festivity that came from the refuge, full of warmth, love and joy. We lived wonderful, magical moments. I will remember it as one of the most beautiful days in my life." – Marisol Bernal

"The loving company of everyone present made our graduation day an unforgettable one in which each of us could honor the fruits of these incredible two-and-a-half years. I experienced a refuge of peace that extends to all my brothers and sisters. I have a feeling of openness in my heart and an enthusiasm to continue in The 3 Doors. I am forever thankful." – Rosario Arellano

## Next Steps

Now that 3 Doors Academies have graduated in the United States, Europe and Latin America—with a second United States group to graduate next spring—we are happy to announce new academies in the United States, Europe and Latin America. Please apply! Transform your life through these simple and powerful meditation methods of body, speech and mind that facilitate inner transformation and ripen the authentic expression of your unique gifts.

[Applications are now open](#) for the next U.S. Academy, which will begin in April 2015, and for the next European Academy, which will begin in June 2015.

The next Latin American Academy has just been announced for 2016; the application process will begin in 2015.



## □ Rinpoche's Update on Lishu and The 3 Doors Programs Two Different Approaches to Bon

*During the Summer Retreat 2014 in Buchenau, Germany, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche gave an update on the progress of Lishu Institute and also said a few words about Ligmincha and The 3 Doors program. (This article was first printed in [Ligmincha Europe Magazine, Autumn 2014](#) )*

I would like to update you on the progress of Lishu Institute and also say a few words about The 3 Doors program.

As many of you know, I have been teaching for over 20 years in the West. And I have learned so much, perhaps even more than I taught. In the process of teaching I have realized that we are all different and have different needs. During the flight over here, I reflected that perhaps Tibetan lamas need to ask a simple question when teaching Westerners: Are their students coming to learn Bon and Buddhism or are they seeking help from Bon and Buddhism? These are two different things.

I have discovered that the majority of people don't come to me in order to become a Buddhist or Bonpo. They come seeking help, and primarily the help that they couldn't find in their own cultures or from the traditions in which they were raised. So they are seeking guidance.

To those seeking this kind of help, you don't try to lay out the whole philosophy of Buddhism. It took me a long time to realize this, and finally I have. But it has been a challenge to balance these two very different interests. As a teacher in the West I went back and forth and used different approaches. The way I have been teaching here in Buchenau this week is a kind of middle way.

Lishu addresses the interest at one extreme and The 3 Doors the other. I use the word extreme in a positive way here. The differing approaches of educating students through Lishu or through The 3 Doors are equally valid. Each is important for different people.

For the group of students drawn to study the teachings in depth, Lishu has been created. And this is very important, even if this group might be very small. And a group such as those gathered here at this retreat might be a medium-sized group, and this is also important. The 3 Doors might possibly be an even larger group, and it's equally important.

Through Lishu we will train Westerners who are seriously interested in learning the dharma, and willing to dedicate their life pursuing this. In the past, many people went to India and spent a considerable amount of time studying there, like Jeffrey Hopkins and Robert Thurman. This became their life's work. They went to a university and completed Ph.D. work in Buddhist Studies or Tibetology and they continue to practice and study. It is a lifetime pursuit. With Lishu we are creating a place where people will be able to go and spend years learning in as close as possible a way to the way I learned in the monastery. I don't think it's possible to do it in exactly the same way, but as close as possible.

It has long been one of my dreams to have a place where people can go and study for a long time. That's what we have been working on for a number of years now. So basically people will live at Lishu and learn the texts. As it has been evolving, we have changed the program from five years to three years and from three years to the possibility now of doing it year by year. So we are trying to become a little more flexible.

I could not see the possibility of doing this in the West, but the possibility of doing this in the East looked promising. However, in India everything moves at a different speed than in the West, so it took much longer than we had anticipated. So far we have established the Association, bought the land, raised the money, built the buildings, and now we are looking into the details of the kitchen. And the good news is that we are very close to beginning the program! We will soon be ready, so I want everybody to know this. We want people to come there, to study there and to support Lishu financially. A description of all these possibilities is available on the [Lishu website](#) .

Another vision of mine is The 3 Doors. This program is experientially based and focuses on the essence of the teachings. It does not so much emphasize learning from the texts as it does gaining experience with the practices that bring direct benefit. Visit [The 3 Doors Website](#) .

In the last three or four years we've probably trained over 100 people around the world in The 3 Doors Academy program. Those who have completed the two-and-a-half-year Academy have expressed much enthusiasm, and I trust this enthusiasm will continue and will expand to many different places throughout the world.

Both The 3 Doors and Ligmincha are like a family. In a way, The 3 Doors was born from

Ligmincha and is now growing in its own way. It has a slightly different purpose as an organization. But always we support each other to grow. While there is much more to say about Lishu and The 3 Doors, I just wanted to highlight the progress of these organizations. I invite you to go their websites for more information. If you are open or if you are curious, you can always Google it!

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## **Gathering with the European Sangha in Austria**

**Rob Patzig Writes About His Visit and Retreat with European Sangha**



I was privileged to be able to travel to Maria Alm, Austria, this year for Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's October 14–19 teaching of the fifth and final year of an intensive series of Tibetan Bon Buddhist dzogchen teachings from "The Experiential Transmission of the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyu."

This was my first meaningful trip to Austria or to Europe (my only prior trip was to Germany, and for less than 72 hours), and also my first trip to a community of practitioners other than at Serenity Ridge. It could not have been more perfect. The moment I arrived I felt myself among friends and family. The European sangha members are deeply committed to the practices, to the teachings and the lineage of the Bon masters. I felt deeply honored to sit and listen and practice with them, especially since we were sharing the final teachings in such a special transmission.

The Experiential Transmission (which Rinpoche will begin again this year at Serenity Ridge during Winter Retreat) is a profound cycle of teachings that lead us from the most basic of practices, like how to sit in the five-point posture, to recognition of the natural state. In between are instructions for ngondro, breathing practices, recognizing inner refuge, sun and sky gazing, instructions for a dark retreat and more. These instructions need to be presented by a qualified teacher, like Tenzin Rinpoche. The text alone is not sufficient.

At the beginning of this cycle of teachings, there were more than 200 attendees. In the fifth year we numbered just over 120, coming from 10 different countries. Other obligations, financial means, health and death prevented about 80 people from completing the teaching cycle. This

fact was an excellent teaching for the rest of us that we must practice today, while we are here, with serviceable minds and bodies and with a teacher to guide us. We never know what will come tomorrow or when our lives will end: we mustn't waste our time!

Maria Alm is unbelievably beautiful. "Storybook" was a word that kept coming to mind. Ringed all around by mountains much, much bigger than we have in Virginia and at a higher elevation, with whole ridges high above the tree line. We were graced with great weather, as has been the case every year there for this cycle of teachings. As my words will not do the region justice, here is a picture taken just minutes away from the retreat center:



Unlike at Serenity Ridge, where the evenings become quiet soon after dinner, in Maria Alm there was an active social life. People gathered together in the central dining room/bar after evening practice and talked until late into the evening. One of my favorite moments was when sitting with a small group, including two people who had attended Rinpoche's first teaching in Austria more than 20 years ago. I asked them what he had taught then. "Exactly what he is teaching now," was the reply. It is good to know the teachings do not change, even as we hope that through them we can change.



Another highlight of the trip was an outdoor practice. We hiked about 45 minutes from the center to a 1,000+ year old oak tree and practiced sun gazing. The tree was like nothing I have ever seen. It had a presence and a stillness that for me embodied the inner refuge. It was big enough that nearly all of us were able to sit under its branches.

The retreat was successful not only because so many people had committed to the cycle of teachings, but because there was so much support and so many volunteers worked to ensure that everything necessary was done. From staffing the bookstore, to decorating for the last night's banquet, to maintaining the altar, to collecting fees, to leading trul khor (Tibetan yoga) and other practices, a spirit of generosity pervaded every part of this retreat.



I encourage anyone who has occasion to travel to Europe to look at the schedules and programs of the different sanghas there and to build practice into your visit. You will be very glad that you did. And, if you can come to Serenity Ridge this December, please join us for the beginning of a new cycle of the "Experiential Transmission." The teachings begin with the ngondro, the foundational or preliminary practices. These practices are, to paraphrase Rinpoche, the soil in which our practice takes root and produces fruit. I hope to see many of you there.

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## Tenzin Rinpoche's Schedule by Date and Location Online Full Year Planned for 2015

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's worldwide schedule for 2015 is now available on the Ligmincha International website. You can view schedule by date and by location. Additional items will be added during the year if Rinpoche's schedule changes.

[View Schedule by Date](#)

[View Schedule by Location](#)

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## Next Ligmincha Learning Course Begins Feb. 6 'The Three Heart Mantras'

Ligmincha Learning's next five-week online course begins Feb. 6: "The Three Heart Mantras."

The Three Heart Mantras are used in many different meditations in the Bon tradition, and play a major role in the [foundational practices of ngondro](#). They are said to be the essence of enlightenment in sound and energy, and as we sing or chant the mantras our awareness is transformed to be in union with the Buddhas. They are used for purification, protection and as primary practices toward self realization.

[Learn more and register](#)



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## GlideWing Online Workshops with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche View Schedule for 2015

Begin the New Year with this three-week online workshop: 'Awakening the Sacred Body: The Tibetan Yogas of Breath and Movement' offered Jan. 10–Feb. 4, 2015.

Mark your calendar for the upcoming GlideWing online workshops with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. All workshops feature personal support and guidance from Rinpoche.

- **Jan. 10–Feb. 1, 2015:** [Awakening the Sacred Body: The Tibetan Yogas of Breath and Movement](#)
- **March 7–April 5, 2015:** [Tibetan Dream Yoga](#)
- **May 9–31, 2015:** [Tibetan Meditation: Achieving Great Bliss Through Pure Awareness](#)
- **July 11–Aug. 9, 2015:** [Awakening the Sacred Arts: Discovering Your Creative Potential](#)
- **Sept. 19–Oct. 11, 2015:** [Tibetan Sound Healing](#)

[View entire schedule of Internet teachings](#)



## **Mexico's Resident Lamas Share Their Art** **View Photos of Paintings in Two Mexico Stupas**



*Stupa Chamma Ling Torreón*

The work of the two resident lamas for Ligmincha Mexico—Lama Kalsang Nyima and Lama Yungdrung Lodoe—speaks for itself.

Visit either of the two Bon Buddhist stupas in Mexico and you will find them filled with the mandalas, murals and other work of these two master artists.

Lama Kalsang painted and decorated the interior of the first bon stupa ever built in the West,

Chamma Ling Torreón, Coahuila, with beautiful images of Tapihritsa, the Eight Auspicious Symbols and the mandala of Shenlha Okar. That stupa was consecrated in February 2006.

Under the supervision of Lama Kalsang and Lama Yungdrung, art and decoration is still ongoing for the second Bon stupa, Chamma Ling Valle de Bravo (Great Stupa for World Peace), consecrated in 2010. Lama Yungdrung began working in 2011 to develop the beautiful Ma Gyu (Bon Mother Tantra) mandala for the great stupa. Lama Kalsang has painted the art for the entrance to the stupa and will be developing other work.



*Stupa Valle de Bravo* □ □ □ □ □ Stupas are symbolic representations of the mind and the stages to the path of enlightenment. They are built according to universal principles and represent the power of wisdom from ancient lineages. Like the stupas themselves, the mandalas within them are not just paintings—they are powerful images that embody multiple dimensions.

Participants at Serenity Ridge's annual Summer Retreat in Virginia were able to experience some of the power of the Mexico lamas' work and learn more about their lives during a talk and slide presentation given one evening.

In addition to their beautiful art, both lamas travel throughout Mexico visiting the country's 17

centers and giving spiritual teachings. They also have conducted classes for those who are interested in learning the art of thangka painting.

[View Lama Kalsang Nyima's work](#)

[View Lama Yungdrung Lodoe's work](#)

## Lama Kalsang Nyima



Lama Kalsang Nyima is a master of sacred geometry—universal patterns that mirror the fundamental laws of the universe. More than that, when he paints a mandala, he does not only put brush to canvas or walls, based on the ancient Bon texts of Tibet; his work incorporates three dimensions, including the dimensions of mental consciousness and pure awareness.

This level of knowledge and awareness made Lama Kalsang the perfect person to create the art for the first Bon stupa in the Western world, Chamma Ling Torreón, Coahuila. It also may be why many students know him as Lhari-la, sometimes referred to as "painter of God" or, as Lama Kalsang more modestly says, "like professor."

Lama Kalsang is happy to be part of his family lineage, which connect together Bon, through his father's Dong lineage, and Buddhism, through his mother's Nyel lineage. He was born in 1970 in the village of Tad, in the province of Dolpo, Nepal. Dolpo is culturally Tibetan and home to 14 Bonpo monasteries and many great Bonpo masters.

At age 9, Lama Kalsang became a monk at Samling Monastery, the oldest and most important monastery in Dolpo, where his grandfather, Lama Lhagyep Rinpoche, was head teacher. For 12 years Lama Kalsang trained intensively at Samling in the many methods of sutra and tantra and completed many long personal retreats. These included a traditional three-year closed retreat.



At age 21, Lama Kalsang decided to move from Dolpo to Kathmandu to study with H.E. Yongdzin Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, the most senior teacher in the Bon tradition. Because of the remoteness of Dolpo and the lack of transportation, it took him a month to walk from Dolpo to Kathmandu. There, he began four years of studies at Triten Norbutse Monastery under the close guidance of Yongdzin Rinpoche. In addition to studying traditional Bon teachings and dzogchen teachings, he also learned techniques of traditional thangka painting.

Lama Kalsang deepened these skills during five years of training at Tulku Ugyen Rinpoche's monastery in nearby Boudhanath under the master Chokyong Gonpo. After completing this course he returned to Triten Norbutse where Yongdzin Rinpoche asked him to help paint the entire cycle of Bonpo tantric mandalas; these images were later published in the book *Mandalas of the Bon Religion*.

In 2000, Yungdrung Lama, abbot of the Bonpo monastery in Sikkim, invited Lama Kalsang to teach in a school for Bonpo children at his monastery. For six years, he taught education and also music, chanting, rituals, painting and tormas making. His experience as a thangka painter led him to an invitation to teach an advanced course for painters sponsored by a large museum in central India. The next year the museum invited him back to paint three entire rooms with Bonpo images.

Over the years Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche paid many visits to Lama Kalsang's monastery in Sikkim and they came to know each other well. When Rinpoche invited him to come to the West, Lama Kalsang accepted.

His first task was to paint the series of images for the interior of the first Bon stupa in the West, in Torreon, Mexico. This included a huge 40-foot mandala of Shenlha Okar. All of the work was painted freehand. Lama Kalsang worked tirelessly, day after day without any breaks, for seven months to complete the work. Following this, he took four months to finish the mandala of Tapihritsa.

"Painting helps the mind become calm," he says. "There is a very deep, deep connection. You are fully present in the painting, the movement of the brush, the beauty of the colors, the drawing, measurement and proportion. Your mind is completely here, no more past and no more future."

Before beginning to paint Lama Kalsang would begin by connecting with inner refuge, then do mantra repetition. Each of Bon Buddhism's 360 different mandalas has a deity associated with it, a quality and meaning connected with it, and a mantra. The mandala of Shenlha Okar embodies compassion and clarity. Its mantra is AH OM HUNG A A KAR SA LÉ Ö A YANG OM DU.

Lama Kalsang explains that preparing a mandala includes more than the actual painting itself. It includes working in three dimensions. The first dimension is the work itself—the sacred geometry, based on specific design, proportions and colors set forth in ancient Bon texts and taking into account the five elements, directions and qualities. It includes the gathering of materials and the actual painting of the mandala itself. Then comes the second dimension—the conceptual mandala, where one meditates, visualizing the mandala in space using mental consciousness. The third dimension is the nonconceptual mandala, in which there is no visualization and no thinking—"like ultimate reality, pure awareness," he says.

Following his work in Torreon, Lama Kalsang went, at Tenzin Rinpoche's request, to Chihuahua, Mexico to tutor young Tulku Jorge Rene. Beginning in 2007, visited Serenity Ridge Retreat Center, headquarters of Ligmincha International, a number of times, and served as resident lama at Serenity Ridge and at Chamma Ling in Colorado. Lama Kalsang returned to Mexico in 2010 to help prepare for the consecration of the Great Stupa for World Peace in Chamma Ling, Valle de Bravo—a project that Yongdzin Rinpoche asked his disciple, Tenzin

Wangyal Rinpoche, to undertake. Although Tenzin Rinpoche asked him to stay at Serenity Ridge, Lama Kalsang felt a connection with the Mexican people, and after discussion, Rinpoche asked him to become resident lama for Mexico.

Lama Kalsang has done some work on the stupa in Valle de Bravo, including intricate painting of the exterior doorway, and work will continue on the interior of the stupa. Over the past several years, the Mexico sangha has grown and flourished, so he spends much time traveling to different sanghas to give teachings on meditation. He also has given sacred geometry workshops, last summer teaching one class in drawing and proportion and a second class on color.

"I am very happy to be a family member of all the sangha members," he says—not only sangha in Mexico but of all of Ligmincha. "To everyone, my greetings and my love and my prayers."

[View Lama Kalsang Nyima's work](#)

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## Lama Yungdrung Lodoe



In January 2011, Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche asked Lama Yungdrung Lodoe to come to Mexico to paint mandalas for the Great Bon Stupa for World Peace at Chamma Ling Valle de Bravo. Since that time, he has lived in Valle de Bravo, working on projects for the stupa and giving teachings to sangha members both in Valle de Bravo and in other locations in Mexico.

Lama Yungdrung's journey began in Tenchen, Tibet, where he was born in 1978. His father comes from the Lang lineage, which included the king of Tibet from 1349. His mother is part of the Black Garuda lineage, said to come down from Kuntu Zangpo, the primordial Buddha.

At age 8, Lama Yungdrung went to a sacred mountain with Master Tsukpu Rinpoche to practice ngondro, chod and zhine. Starting at age 9, he entered Tondol Ritod Monastery in Chumpo, Tibet. There, he received training and teachings on rituals, practices and ceremonies for three years. Lama Yungdrung also studied Tibetan art for three years at the home village of Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche.

How did he become interested in art? "Yongdzin Rinpoche's cousin was my classmate at Tummo teaching, and I found out his father was a great master painter," Lama Yungdrung recalls. "I wanted to learn more. We requested permission so I could take classes, and it was granted."



So Yongdzin Rinpoche's uncle, Master Sireng Yelmpel—painter for the king—taught the young monk the art of Bon thangka painting, which includes a complete study of Bon teachings. Lama Yungdrung was his most outstanding student, taking top place in an art competition above the other students in his class. He also studied calligraphy and mandala painting with master Arre Tenzin for six months in Retod Gompa Monastery in Tibet. He learned the art of sculpting in metal and bronze from the great master sculptor Nganzu Sunam, and how to make gowns and clothing with master Tashi Gagatha.

In the monastery, Lama Yungdrung studied with his root lama, Namla Rinpoche, who previously lived in Yir Gompa Monastery, which was destroyed by the Chinese. Lama Yungdrung traveled to Tibet for three years to help rebuild the monastery. "But later on the Chinese did not allow it anymore," he says. Afterwards, he journeyed to the sacred mountain Puyear Kangri (Ice Mountain), which is 5,000 meters above sea level. For more than three years, he did chod practice and ate only potatoes and Tibetan medicine.

All of this happened before the young monk had turned 18! At age 18, Lama Yungdrung left Tibet for India, where he studied the history of Tibet at the Dalai Lama's school in Dharamsala for five years—two years of regular study and five years of studying Tibetan and modern art. There, he also won top awards in yearly competitions.

When it was time to work on the art and decoration for the Great Bon Stupa in Valle de Bravo, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche called on Lama Yungdrung to develop the mandala of the great stupa. So in January 2011 Lama Yungdrung traveled to Mexico and started his work there.

First, he began the great Ma Gyu (Bon Mother Tantra) mandala, which is more than eight feet high. Working along with his friend, Geshe Nyima, the mandala took six months to complete. After that, it took another year for Lama Yungdrung to complete the painting of Sherap Chamma (the Wisdom Loving Mother deity) for the stupa.

During his time in Mexico, he has created other Tibetan art, including the Shakyamuni Buddha, a wrathful lama protector and, at the request of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, a nonsectarian logo of the six Buddhist schools. He also has created Indian art and other kinds of non-Buddhist art, primarily portraits.

Lama Yungdrung also actively travels throughout Mexico, visiting different sanghas to give teachings and offering workshops in areas including the art of painting.

[View Lama Yungdrung Lodoe's work](#)



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## **Online Radio Interview on Dream Yoga** **Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche Answers a Range of Questions**

Listen to a Nov. 6 interview with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche on the topic of dream yoga. Rinpoche was interviewed by Beyond 50 Radio on the topic of dream yoga. In the interview, he answers a range of questions, from the purpose and value of dream yoga to suggestions to help practitioners recognize and experience lucidity in the dream state.

[Link to the streaming recording](#)

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## **Autumn Issue of *Ligmincha Europe Magazine*** **Read This Great Source of Inspiration and News**

The new issue of *Ligmincha Europe Magazine* is now available. The magazine offers a broad scope of sangha news in Europe and worldwide.

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## Upcoming Retreats

### Serenity Ridge Retreat Center

The retreats listed below will take place at Serenity Ridge Retreat Center, headquarters of Ligmincha International, located in Nelson County, Virginia. 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.

#### **Dec. 13, 2014**

Healing with the Medicine Buddha

*with Geshe Nyima Kunchap and Geshe Tenzin Yangton*

A special half-day ritual to eliminate suffering, bring healing and purify negative karma.

[Learn more and register](#)

#### **Dec. 27, 2014–Jan. 1, 2015**

Winter Retreat – The Experiential Transmission of Zhang Zhung, Part 1: Ngondro

*with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche*

This is the first in a five-part series—to be held over the next five years—of special Tibetan Bon Buddhist dzogchen teachings based on the ancient Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyu texts. Part 1:

Ngondro is a prerequisite for further study of the Experiential Transmission series.

[Learn more and register](#)

#### **Jan. 2–18, 2015**

Ngondro Practice Retreat

*with Geshe Tenzin Yangton*

or Individual Practice Retreat

[Learn more and register](#)

#### **April 3–5, 2015**

Spring Retreat – The True Source of Healing: How the Ancient Tibetan Practice of Soul Retrieval Can Transform and Enrich Your Life

*with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche*

Registration begins Jan. 20, 2015.

[Learn more](#)

**June 21–July 4, 2015**

Summer Retreat – Dream Yoga  
*with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche*

Attend one or both weeks.

Registration begins in late January 2015.

[Read more about retreats](#)

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 visit the [Ridge website](#) [Serenity](#)