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Volume 23, Number 1/ February 2023



Letter from the Editors

Being Closer to Your True Self

Dear Friends,

We hope the New Year is treating you well! In this teaching excerpt, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche shows us how to use our thought-filled, story-making, serious minds and emotions, which are always quite good at stealing the show, as a means for coming back home to the spacious awareness that is the source. Our gratitude, Rinpoche, for this timeless wisdom that is beyond words. E MA HO.



Happy Losar! Celebrate the Tibetan New Year on February 21. It's the year of the water rabbit; the rabbit symbolizes longevity, peace and prosperity. This is an auspicious time for renewal and celebration for Tibetans and dharma practitioners around the world. It is a time for saying goodbye to the old year and letting go of negativities and harmful habits and tendencies, a time for cleaning the home, preparing special foods, hanging prayer flags and offering prayers. And a time for inviting all good and auspicious things to come! May all beings be happy! Ligmincha will be offering online practices for Losar at different times on February 19 through 21 to accommodate different regions. Be sure to check the [Ligmincha website](#) or [Facebook page](#) for Losar events!

Lots more in this issue:

- Upcoming Serenity Ridge Spring Retreat, The Heart Drops of Kuntu Zangpo, will be held in person and on Zoom April 13-16, 2023.
- Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's 2023 schedule.
- Two simultaneous retreats at Serenity Ridge and on Zoom, February 16-19, Sherap Chamma with Marcy Vaughn and Abiding in Refuge with Gabriel Rocco.
- Mark your calendar! Special Serenity Ridge Summer Retreat June 24-July 1 & July 2-8 on Tummo, Part 3, with honored guest H.H. the 34th Menri Trizin.
- Several upcoming Ligmincha Learning online courses.
- Upcoming CyberSangha events.
- Thank you to Serenity Ridge operations manager Gram Slaton.
- Help support Ligmincha's umdzes (practice group leaders).
- Learn about The 3 Doors new European Academy and Pre-Academy and meet one of The 3 Doors teachers.
- Read Ton Bisscheroux's interview about the Chamma Ling Poland retreat center's good news.
- GlideWing online workshop, Discovering Your Inner Wisdom Through Practices of Waking and Sleeping, begins February 11.
- NEW feature, one of many favorite articles from the archive of VOCL newsletters.
- Student and Teacher, a question about pain identity and cutting through pride.
- Spanish translation for the December VOCL.

In Bon,
Aline and Jeff Fisher



Finding Freedom of Mind in the Tumult of Mental Activity

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Bookstore & Tibet Shop

Ligmincha's online store is **currently offline** because of staffing issues.

We hope it will return soon.

In the meantime, visit the Bookstore & Tibet Shop when you come to Serenity Ridge Retreat Center. Most books published through Sacred Sky Press, Ligmincha International's publishing arm which supports books on Bon teachings and translations of texts, are available through [lulu.com](#).

About Voice of Clear Light

Voice of Clear Light is a free email publication of Ligmincha International. Your suggestions and contributions to *Voice of Clear Light* are welcome. To contact us, send an email to: voiceofclearlight@ligmincha.org

For more information about Ligmincha International, the teachings of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, or retreats at Serenity Ridge or our other regional centers, please contact us at:

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An Excerpt from Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's Teachings, Winter 2022



This mind of ours is active all of the time. And it is in that activity of mind, the thoughts, emotions, memories and sense perceptions, where we lose ourself. So the idea is to look at the activity of your consciousness, your mind, because this is where you exit, this is where you lose the point. And this is where we've been continuing to lose the point throughout all of human history. The teachings show that through all of this craziness of mind, we have a chance to go back to the source, to the mother, to the base, and to rest in that infinite space, that infinite awareness or infinite

light. The teachings show us how, with practice, we can go back to that place.

We have a lot of opportunity in our everyday life for self-reflecting and contemplating. In the winter and particularly during the holidays, there is a lot of loneliness and sadness. I can imagine. This is due in part to certain social patterns that in the end are not helping us to become more full or to suffer less. Looking at these thoughts and memories, we reflect and investigate where they are coming from. *Okay it's winter, not much sun, it's cold, not much light, I'm feeling down. Plus things are not exactly going my way, which make these feelings worse. So therefore, I'm feeling bad.*

Now I observe and search inside, looking for where these feelings and memories are coming from, and then where they go and what they look like. Why do these teachings encourage us to do that? Because we think that our current state is serious. *I'm feeling down! There's something fundamentally wrong with me. What's wrong with me? Maybe it's the lack of sun, maybe it's my neighbors are not good, the stock markets are not going the right way, my family is not nice to me!* Whatever. You are using all of your mind against yourself and your experience in that moment. And that leads you to feel that *this is serious*.

However, the teachings are pointing out that it is really not serious. When you search for where this *feeling down* is coming from, then what do you find? Well, you find that it's not really coming from any particular place. We do know that there is a strong relationship between the body and mind. And when the mind is guiding the body, that's the better relationship to have, rather than when the body is dictating the mind, because the mind can empower! The mind can break the rules! No matter what the body is feeling, mind can break those rules, change the body and go beyond it. Mind can do that, and mind does that, because mind has that power.

Through searching, the answer that we find directly as to where this feeling is coming from, where it is staying and where it is going is *nowhere*. You can realize that. Or at least you can come to see that feeling down is not that serious. *I don't have to worry 24 hours a day about this feeling*. This worrying is actually worse than just feeling a little bit down. The teachings say nothing is there. There is only the base.

When you dissolve these memories, these thoughts, what is there? There is this unbounded sacred space. The mother is there. This teaching is not just trying to make you a little happier or trying to convince your conceptual pain identity of anything. It is trying to introduce you to that mother, which is boundless space. That's the mother. There is a deep sense of awareness that knows it, and which recognizes it and connects with it. The awareness that knows it is the child. When mother and child come together, there is a joy, there is a love, there is a peace, there is a completeness, there is a familiarity, there is a fullness. Everything you have ever been seeking in your life is there. That is called perfection.

On the other hand, fear and conflict arise out of a lack of confidence in oneself, a lack of peace in oneself, a lack of connection to that base, a lack of knowing oneself. It all comes out of that, and when it does, then you take the fear and conflict too seriously. It is not serious. It is the pain identity who *thinks* it is serious, and I have compassion for the pain identity. But if any other listener is there behind the pain identity, then that is the one I'm speaking to when I say it's not serious. One's thoughts, memories, emotions, conceptualizations may appear to be obstacles, but in fact they can actually be the means to introduce you to the thoughtless wisdom, which is the base. So look at your thought. *I am not happy and I have very good reason not to be happy*. You have all these reasons, and you lay out those reasons. There are people who will agree with you. But there are also those who would question your reasoning. And then there are others who would totally disagree with you. Generally, you prefer to talk only with the people who agree with you, isn't that true?

Shifting our view we say, okay, *I am suffering and I have a good reason to suffer*. But where is this coming from within? And then look. It's coming from the base. The thoughts are coming from the thoughtless wisdom that is the base. Usually, though, *where* the thoughts are coming from is not important to you. Rather, the particular forms they take become more important for you; the story becomes more important for you; your struggle with the suffering becomes more important for you. The source of the thoughts doesn't become important for you. You don't even ask questions about that. You see, your story and your suffering which is related to your life, to your family, your country, your religion, all those things are formed with your mind, conceptual mind, emotional mind. But they all go back to this



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Rinpoche on



Search

thoughtless wisdom which is the base. So do you have any connection to that? For a moment can you truly go back to that?

Why do human beings go into these stories again and again? Because it is very difficult to get rid of the stories. There are many kinds of stories in everyone's head. In my life I have witnessed the resolving of difficult relationships many times, and I truly believe that a conflict does not have to stay a conflict. A conflict can actually be a great source for becoming a friend, or beginning a partnership or a collaboration. It happens at the individual level in relationships and in the family, or with neighbors or strangers, or with the world. Whenever we give less importance to our own pain stories, then we have a chance to turn it around. But that has to be touched directly by not running away. This is an opportunity. How do you do that? Again, it's the same thing. It's always about going back to the source. So thoughtless wisdom is the base. All these memories and thoughts are a manifestation. Following them, following their pain identity and its related stories, is delusion. That's what is happening. And you can see when it happens, so that when it's happening to you, you know it.

However, when you observe that your pain is manifesting there, your story is manifesting there, and you judge it as *this is wrong, this is an error, I'm not supposed to feel like this*, the teachings clearly point out that *that* is mistaken. Do not look at the pain and the story as something wrong. Rather, leave it as it is, these thoughts and these feelings. Leave it as it is. Let it breathe. Let it take time. The teachings say that is the method. In this way, when the thoughts, memories or emotions or senses dissolve back into the source, then you feel a reconnection with the base. Just like after a big thunderstorm with windy, bad weather, and suddenly the sun shines and it's fresh and beautiful. It's like that. You see the clear sky. In these teachings the sky is always the sacred metaphor for the base, for the mother. The sun is always a good metaphor for the awareness. And the thoughts, memories and emotions are like the clouds. When those clouds are all clear, then you see the sky very, very clear. And you see the sun very clear. And you feel the warmth very clear. So you are closer to your source, closer to yourself.



Heart Drops of Kuntu Zangpo

Serenity Ridge Spring Retreat with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

HEART DROPS OF KUNTU ZANGPO
Annual Spring Retreat
with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

April 13-16, 2023

In-person at Serenity Ridge Retreat Center & Online on Zoom
Learn more at: serenityridgeva.org or ligmincha.org

Join Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in person at Serenity Ridge or online on Zoom for this special retreat on Heart Drops of Kuntu Zangpo. This core dzogchen teaching, also known as Heart Drops of Dharmakaya, provides methods for introducing the nature of the mind, which remains hidden behind clouds of thoughts and emotions until a master directly points out the source, the essence, the Heart Drop. This is the method of direct introduction to dzogchen, the highest and most subtle path of meditation in Bon.

Heart Drops of Kuntu Zangpo was composed by Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen (1859-1935), a Tibetan master who achieved the rainbow body. He was one of the most influential teachers of his time, and his works are still used as textbooks in many Tibetan monasteries.

These are meditation methods that help the practitioner free the stories, memories, fears and anxieties that bind, allowing the discovery of the freedom and infinite potentiality of one's natural mind.

A translation of Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen's text, and commentary on these essential teachings by Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, is presented in the book [Heart Drops of Dharmakaya](#). Yongdzin Rinpoche is widely revered as the greatest living dzogchen master of the Bon lineage. A translation of the root text by Geshe Sonam Gurung and Dan Brown, [Heart Drops of Kun tu bZang Po](#), also is available from Ligmincha's Bookstore & Tibet Shop at the link above.

[Learn more](#)



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's Worldwide Teaching Schedule

February to August 2023

Here is Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's teaching schedule. Rinpoche will be traveling a lot beginning in February with retreats in Costa Rica and in Houston, Texas. In March through August, he will be teaching in California, Mexico, Virginia (twice), the Netherlands, Italy, Switzerland, Austria and Germany, with more retreats soon to be added. We are so fortunate to have such a traveling teacher!

You can find the latest listings and any changes in the Events section of the [Ligmincha website](#) or the [Serenity Ridge website](#). Please register for these online retreats through the specific Events box on the website. Updates will be provided on the website as they become available.



- **February 3-5, 2023:** Ligmincha Costa Rica, [The Wisdom of the Five Elements](#)
- **February 10-12, 2023:** Ligmincha Texas, Houston, [Dream Yoga: Lucid Dreaming from the Bon Buddhist Tradition](#)
- **March 17-19, 2023:** Berkeley, California: [The Twenty-One Nails, Part 3](#)
- **March 22-26, 2023:** Valle de Bravo, Mexico, [The Five Wisdoms: Bringing Spiritual Practice to Our Dailly Life](#)
- **April 13-16, 2023.** Serenity Ridge Spring Retreat, [Heart Drops of Kuntu Zangpo](#)
- **May 5-7, 2023:** Ligmincha Netherlands, Topic TBA
- **May 12-14, 2023:** Ligmincha Italy, Rome, [The Six Lokas](#)
- **May 19-21, 2023:** Ligmincha France & Suisse Romand, Bulle, Switzerland, [Sherap Chamma & Retinue](#)
- **May 26-28, 2023:** Ligmincha Austria, Vienna, [Living with Joy, Dying in Peace, Part 1](#)
- **June 24-July 1 & July 2-8:** Serenity Ridge Retreat Center, Shipman, Virginia. [Tummo, Part 3](#), with honored guest H.H. the 34th Menri Trizin
- **August 8-13, 2023:** Chamma Ling Poland, Wilga, [Tummo, Part 3](#)
- **August 14-20, 2023:** Buchenau, Germany. [Topic TBA](#)



Sherap Chamma and Abiding in Refuge

Simultaneous Retreats with Marcy Vaughn and Gabriel Rocco in February



For the first time, Serenity Ridge will host two simultaneous retreats from February 16-19, Sherap Chamma with senior teacher Marcy Vaughn and Abiding in Presence with senior teacher Gabriel Rocco. Both retreats also will be available online via Zoom.

Sherap Chamma, Mother of Wisdom and Love with Marcy Vaughn

In many cultures the primordial female energy is seen as the origin of existence and the source of all positive qualities. As such, Sherap Chamma, Mother of Wisdom and Love, is the source of wisdom, and her medicine is love and compassion. The

teachings of Sherap Chamma comprise one of the most important tantric cycles of the ancient Bon tradition.



In this retreat, participants will learn a beautiful and simple meditation practice enabling each to directly connect with the divine feminine energy. With visualization, the sound of mantra and deep contemplation, participants can make a personal connection to this sacred form of the universal mother, Sherap Chamma, and are guided through this connection to innate wisdom and the love and compassion that naturally radiate from that wisdom.

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

[Learn more/register](#)

Abiding in Presence with Gabriel Rocco

Students of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche have received and benefited from his teachings and guidance in practices from the Tibetan Bon tradition. The core of the Bon dzogchen teachings points us to discover the inner refuge, the spacious, luminous warmth of our essential nature, by opening the doors of our body, speech and mind through resting in stillness, silence and spaciousness.

Abiding in presence offers the opportunity to devote yourself to practice, lightly guided within the warmth of community, where you are supported to develop the strength and steadiness of attention necessary to open the three doors and discover your authentic self.

This retreat is open to all who have received or are familiar with the Nine Breathings of Purification practice and the practice of abiding in presence, including all 3 Doors practitioners. For those unfamiliar with these practices, instruction will be given during the first evening teaching on February 16.



[Learn more/register](#)



Special Summer Retreat at Serenity Ridge June 24-July 8

With Honored Guest His Holiness the 34th Menri Trizin Rinpoche

Mark your calendar for this year's special two-week summer retreat at Serenity Ridge June 24-July 8! We are looking forward to having honored guest His Holiness the 34th Gyalwa Menri Trizin, Lungtok Dawa Dhargyal Rinpoche, spiritual head of the Bon tradition. He will be with us for both weeks of the retreat, along with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

You can attend one or both weeks of the retreat, either in person at Serenity Ridge or online on Zoom. We hope you can join us!

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will teach Tummo, Part 3 in the mornings. His Holiness will teach in the afternoons. The topic of his teachings is being finalized now. We will announce them on the [Ligmincha website](#) and [Serenity Ridge website](#) as soon as we can. His Holiness also will give an initiation on Saturday, July 1.

Registration will open in March.

[Learn more](#)



Upcoming Ligmincha Learning Courses

Three Heart Mantras, Ngondro, Sleep Yoga, Five Elements

Ligmincha Learning is offering several online courses with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche this February and March 2023. These online courses feature beautiful video teachings, guided meditations, readings, journal writing activities, and the opportunity to interact with senior mentors and classmates from around the world.

**The Three Heart Mantras
February 24-April 1, 2023**

The Three Heart Mantras are used in many different meditations in the Bon tradition and play a major role in the ngondro practices. 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

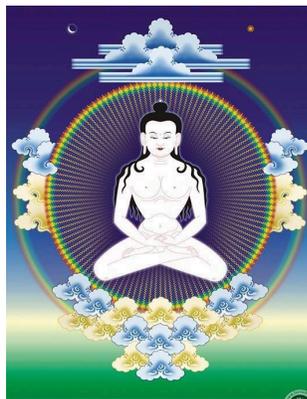
used for purification, protection and as primary practices toward self-realization.

[Learn more/register](#)

Ngondro, The Foundational Practices

March 4-December 16, 2023

The ngondro teachings are a set of nine practices that offer complete instructions for taming, purifying and perfecting the suffering mind. Although these practices are considered the foundation for entrance into the five-part cycle of Tibetan Bon dzogchen teachings, the highest teachings on the nature of mind, many practitioners adopt the ngondro as their main meditation and complete the nine sets of 100,000 repetitions over the course of a lifetime. Within each is contained the entire path to liberation. They are considered to be the foundational practices for the entire tradition.



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche rarely teaches the ngondro and recommends it for dedicated practitioners who feel a strong connection to the Bon lineage. Within the ngondro are found practices that are used within many other practices, such as the Guru Yoga Prayer, Bodhicitta Prayer, Refuge Prayer, Prostrations and the Three Heart Mantras, so the ngondro supports and deepens all other meditation practices.

[Learn more/register](#)

Sleep Yoga, The Yoga of Clear Light

March 17-April 15, 2023

The course will introduce simple techniques to enter into sleep in a healthy, balanced way. Even if we do not consistently enter into the sleep of clear light, we can benefit from a refreshing, relaxed sleep that gives us deep renewal. This is supported by breathing techniques, physical postures and guided visualizations. Tenzin Rinpoche also will provide meditations to wake up in a beautiful way, feeling the blessings of sleep and stepping into our day with serenity. Through these simple practices we can transform our sleep to be one of tranquility and awareness.

[Learn more/register](#)

The Five Elements, Healing with Form, Energy and Light

March 31-May 13, 2023

In this course Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche explores how each of the five elements relates to our daily experiences, emotions and relationships. Rinpoche guides meditations for each of the elements, designed to help clear our obstacles and bring balance to our lives.

[Learn more/register](#)

Free courses; enroll at any time. [Starting a Meditation Practice](#); [The True Source of Healing](#); [Living in with Joy](#), [Dying in Peace](#)

Learn more at ligminchalearning.com. Find descriptions in the top menu under Courses.



CyberSangha

Upcoming CyberSangha Events

Full Moon Practice February 5

You are warmly invited to join Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, invited guests and fellow participants for any or all of these upcoming online events. Free and open to all, these events are part of the Month of the Mind in Rinpoche's free yearlong program Bring Body, Speech & Mind to Life. Stay tuned for more information about a new yearlong program, to be launched in early February by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and CyberSangha!



Sunday, February 5, 2023, 10 a.m. New York time

24-Hour Full Moon Practice: Through Spaciousness, Manifest Qualities That Benefit Others

During the full moon of February 5, 2023, join us online for a meditation guided by Lourdes Hinojosa, followed by a 24-hour session of mantra recitation, contemplative silence and further periods of guided meditation. Unlike Rinpoche's CyberSangha Facebook Live broadcasts, the 24-hour full moon practice takes place via Zoom, in an online meeting space. There is no cost to participate, but registration is required.

[Learn more & register now](#)

Friday, February 17, 2023, 12 noon New York time

The Flashlight, Floodlight & Juggler: Training Attention with Meditation

Can we live more fully just by paying more attention? Our panelists discuss the science behind attention, how mindfulness can help us achieve our greatest potential, and strategies for being more present in each moment. Joining the online conversation are contemplative neuroscientists David R. Vago, Ph.D., and Amishi Jha, Ph.D.; dzogchen master Geshe Tenzin Wangyal; and host Alejandro Chaoul-Reich, Ph.D. [Learn more & view live](#)

Saturday, February 18, 2023, 11 a.m. New York time

Realizing Your Full Potential: Manifesting Qualities That Benefit Others

In a live online broadcast, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche offers a teaching and guides a meditation. This is Rinpoche's final teaching in the yearlong series and is open to all.

[Learn more & view live](#)



Thank You, Gram Slaton!

Serenity Ridge Operations Manager Moves On



All of us connected with Ligmincha and Serenity Ridge Retreat Center offer our thanks and appreciation to Gram Slaton, Serenity Ridge's operations manager. Gram began working at Serenity Ridge in July 2021 and did amazing work reopening Serenity Ridge after the center had been closed for two years due to the pandemic.

When Serenity Ridge reopened for the Spring Retreat last year, there were so many compliments on how fresh the retreat center looked and how well it was running. Gram, who has made a lasting impact at the center and on all those who know him, will be leaving Serenity Ridge, and we wish him all the best for the future! We look forward to seeing Gram at our retreats and sangha events in the future.



Support Ligmincha International's Practice Group Leaders

First International Practice Retreat for Umdzes Set for March



Umdzes, or practice group leaders, play an important role in our Ligmincha sanghas, presenting and guiding the practices of the ancient Tibetan Bon spiritual tradition. In the international Ligmincha community, umdzes in 25 countries are authorized to offer regular online and in-person practice and other programs in their own languages.

The training and commitments required to serve in such a role are significant. By supporting them to develop and deepen their practice, you can contribute to the health and vitality of local and online practice groups, preserving the ancient teachings of Bon and presenting them in culturally appropriate, accessible ways applicable to modern life.

Umdze Marcy Vaughn at Serenity Ridge

In 2023 we hope to show our appreciation of and commitment to those serving in such roles with more support. The first-ever international practice retreat for umdzes will be held in Valle de Bravo Mexico in March, and

practice leaders only need to provide their transportation costs. In addition, Serenity Ridge Retreat Center is creating opportunities for umdzes to stay and practice at the center (also without any cost to the umdzes other than travel). And we hope to make scholarship funds available for umdzes seeking to deepen their study of the practices taught by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

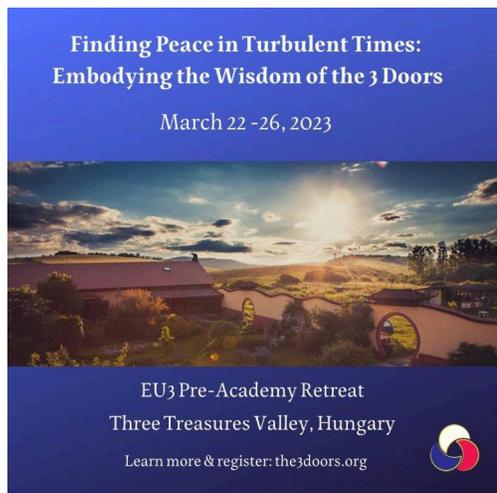
To make these things happen, however, we need your financial assistance. Our goal is to raise \$5,000 initially. Thank you for considering a donation to this program. Your contribution will help expand and sustain international, national and regional Ligmincha practice groups for the benefit of many! Please note "umdze training" in the Comment section of the donation form.

[Donate here](#)



New European 3 Doors Academy and Pre-Academy Retreat

Meet New 3 Doors Teacher Nicolas Gounaropoulos



The 3 Doors is happy to announce a new European 3 Doors Academy and Pre-Academy retreat and introduce you to one of the four teachers for these retreats, Nicolas Gounaropoulos. This is the third European Academy to be offered, and it will begin in September 2023. A Pre-Academy retreat for those new to The 3 Doors will be held March 22-26, 2023, near Budapest, Hungary. Both retreats are open to all. Registration for the Academy will open soon.

The 3 Doors was founded by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche with the aim of offering the heart essence of the Bon teachings and practices for the benefit of a wider circle of practitioners. A signature program of The 3 Doors, the Academy is a series of retreats taking place over two-and-a-half years, with individual and online group work throughout the period. It guides participants to

explore the power of meditation and community to support self-discovery and personal transformation, and to manifest actions that benefit others.

The Pre-Academy retreat, titled Finding Peace in Turbulent Times: Embodying the Wisdom of The 3 Doors, is designed for those new to The 3 Doors and serves as an opportunity to meet the teachers for the upcoming European Academy that starts in September 2023. It also will benefit long-term practitioners who wish to deepen their practice. This retreat will take place March 22-23 in Hungary at the **Three Treasures Valley**, a beautiful retreat center in the countryside. It will be held in English.

The Pre-Academy retreat and the European Academy will be led by Raven Lee, senior 3 Doors teacher, along with newly authorized European teachers Walter Hofmann, Karolina Seltenheim and Nicolas Gounaropoulos.

[Learn more and register for Pre-Academy retreat](#)

[Learn more about European Academy/sign up for registration updates](#)

3 Doors Teacher Nicolas Gounaropoulos Shares Experience Teaching Inner Refuge



Nicolas is an authorized teacher for The 3 Doors based in Belgium. Along with preparing to teach at the upcoming European Pre-Academy and Academy, he recently finished teaching a new 3 Doors course, Discovering Refuge Within. Nicolas has been teaching meditation for 25 years, but this was his first time officially teaching a course for The 3 Doors. Here he shares his experience:

I began teaching The 3 Doors eight-week course Discovering Refuge Within some weeks ago in French, and I was surprised that all the participants were practitioners in Ligmincha. Most of them were longtime students, and some lead practice groups too. This was a really wonderful experience for me.

The inner refuge is our space of unity, within which we and our experience are complete, without any effort. In this space we have access to an infinite potential of joy, creativity, love, compassion. From there we can live our life fully in the present moment. We can experience peace and freedom. It is not outside of us; it is the essence of our being.

How interesting it is to start with the inner refuge and to take time to experiment with each aspect of it. Longtime practitioners often think *I know* when listening to teachings. But I realized how this course and The 3 Doors view is to go beyond *I know*, to live it from inside and to embody it and express it. This is totally different and changes the experience and the consequences of the experience.

Here with the inner refuge, we start at the end, the fruition. It is so simple that we can think that it's not enough, but the refuge is complete and is our ultimate liberation. And taking eight weeks during this course was the best way to increase our faith in the infinite healing potential of our refuge, our deep nature, already here and accessible.

Sometimes we want so much to become buddha, a realized being, that we forget that we are human, and we repress or reject our human tendencies and experiences. I realize how The 3 Doors vision acknowledges the infinite power of the refuge to host all the aspects of our experience, even those aspects we don't want to see or don't like. As we become intimate with our fears and pain, all our conditioned existence, we discover how we are human and bring love and openness to those tendencies.

Opening our heart space to all the aspects of our being, without judgment or bias, we host our pain identities and discover they are simply not the truth of who we are. We realize our full potential,

complete and free as we are. There is nothing to lose and nobody who can lose something. This is the most beautiful gift of our practice, and this is a gift for the world.

There are so many more things to say, but to conclude I just can say that we have to go beyond the one who observes or discovers the refuge. We *are* the refuge, and we can have a deep, deep trust in it, turn toward it in any given moment and embody it. Everything is here. In doing this we manifest our full potential as realized human beings.

[Learn more about Nicolas and other Pre-Academy/Academy teachers](#)

For a full list of upcoming programs from The 3 Doors, visit [The 3 Doors website](#).



An Update on Chamma Ling Poland

With New Water System Renovation, Center Moves Forward

In a Voice of Clear Light special announcement last November, assistance was asked for problems with Chamma Ling Poland's water system. With the help of many donors from all over the world, the water pipes have now been replaced, a new well dug and a new house for storing the water built. Ton Bisscheroux talked with Ligmincha Poland board members Basia Baczyńska and Jacek Trzebuniak.

Ton: Can you tell us about the problems with the water pipes?

Jacek: We bought the center in 2004, the water supply has been a constant struggle. We have about 30 houses, and people also can sleep in tents during the retreats. We have our own well, and there is a water tank where we collect the water we pump. We need to keep the pressure for all houses and the shower room the same so they have running water. The old pump system was about 50 years old. With small retreats there was no problem, but when we hosted 200 to 300 people in the center, there was almost no water in the tap!



Basia: I have been on the board of Ligmincha Poland for 10 years, and all these years we have been struggling with the water supply. Money was always an issue, and we never thought that we would have enough to pay for it. During the past years we have been saving for repairs, and in 2022 with the help of the international sangha we were able to renovate the whole system, including pipes, pump, water tank and a new building for the bigger water tank. I am very happy for that.

Ton: When did the problem become urgent?

Jacek: In June 2022, just before the retreat with Ponlop Trinley Nyima Rinpoche with 120 people, the water pipes stopped working well. Fortunately, we had water, but not a regular supply. The pressure in the pipes was too low, and some pipes were blocked. Five of the 30 houses were without water.

In August we had the retreat with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, with 250 participants. In July we did as much as we could to prepare for the retreat, but we did not have enough time and money to do a big renovation. We made small adjustments and said a lot of prayers. The water supply could have stopped working at any moment, but we were lucky it did not happen during the retreat.

Ton: After Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's retreat, you began renovating?

Jacek: In September we began a big renovation. We dug a new well and changed all the pipes. The last part was the pump house, which we finished in December. The whole renovation may have cost about 70,000 Euros. Prices in Europe have gone up, and that made buying the materials more expensive. Now that we have finished this project, our pockets are empty. During the winter we don't have much income, because our big retreats are in spring and summer. Somehow, we will survive the next few months. In January, we held an online retreat with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

Basia: While doing the renovation, we managed to save money because Paulina Koń, the center caretaker since March 2022, is very skillful and dealt smoothly with all the workers and suppliers. She also did a lot of the construction work. Without her, this work would have been very hard for us, and more expensive.

Ton: What are you looking forward to for Ligmincha Poland and the retreat center?

Jacek: Wilga has been growing as a center during the years and also is becoming more important for the European sangha. People from many countries attend retreats, and we do our best to make them feel at home and connected. I hope more people from all over Europe, and maybe the US, will visit our beautiful center in Wilga in the future.

Basia: We are very pleased that such a huge and crucial problem as the availability of water at the center has been solved. Chamma Ling has been hosting wonderful teachers, great events and a very large number of practitioners and supporters of Yundrung Bon teachings since its inception. Each year there are more and more events and more visitors from Europe and the world. Our annual biggest event, the retreat with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, which takes place every summer, is extremely international and multicultural. Our goal is for the Chamma Ling center to continually grow and become more beautiful, so that all practitioners feel at home here. You can find a list of the events we are planning for this year [on our website](#).



Pauline Koń at Chamma Ling Poland

Ligmincha Poland wishes to thank all the amazing donors from all parts of the world, both for the support given to help the victims of the war in Ukraine and for the repair of the pipes and drains at the Chamma Ling center in Wilga. We plan to hold a one-day event/retreat online and invite everyone completely free of charge. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche wants to join and support this event. We will provide more details shortly.



Discovering Your Inner Wisdom Through Practices of Waking and Sleeping

GlideWing Online Workshop Begins February 11



GlideWing is pleased to offer Discovering Your Inner Wisdom Through Practices of Waking and Sleeping, a three-week online video workshop with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche from February 11-March 5, 2023. Participants will practice from their own homes, at their own schedule, with guidance from Rinpoche.

This workshop is about becoming liberated from fear and other disturbing emotions so you may live more fully and genuinely in all aspects of life. Ultimately, it's about achieving final liberation, or enlightenment.

Nearly all of us feel strongly attached to our physical body and to our sense of identity as a professional, a spouse, a son or daughter, for example. But our genuine self is far simpler, and more profound, than any of these. Through the practice of sleep yoga and other guided meditations, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche helps you to discover the truth of who you are, a sense of spacious awareness that is beyond the ego-based identity and which is eternal, changeless, indestructible and serene. Realizing this truth is what liberates us from the fear and negative emotions that have trapped us in suffering. It can help us overcome fear even during the most challenging moments, including the time of our own death.

[Learn more/register](#)

Upcoming: [Tibetan Dream Yoga](#), April 29-May 28, with Spanish subtitles available.

Ongoing: Focusing and Calming Your Mind: [The Tibetan Practice of Zhine](#), a free two-week, self-guided workshop.

Learn more at glidewing.com



Sharing the Timeless Joy

From the Archive of VOCL Newsletters

Did you know there are now more than 30 years of Voice of Clear Light newsletters in the Ligmincha archives? Lots of great articles and interviews, sangha sharing, history, knowledge and some beautiful pictures, too. We had fun looking back and choosing some favorites to share with you, now and in future issues. This article is from the printed VOCL Fall 1994 newsletter, written by Bill Gorvine after attending

the 1994 summer retreat. So beautiful, and although it was almost 30 years ago, it sounds like it could have been yesterday. Hope you enjoy!

From the very beginning of Ligmincha's recent summer retreat, which took place in July here in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, Tenzin Rinpoche encouraged us to do the best we could and not to get stuck in our own feelings of limitation. He knew that for some people the intricacies of philosophical discourse would prove frustrating and deflating; for others the meditations or the ritual performances would become difficult and perhaps seem impenetrable. For all of us there was the potential at any given time that anything, even just being with ourselves, could become problematic. And so he was teaching us, in a very special dzogchen way, how to apply effort and how to relax.

And I realize now, as I try to face the imposing task of capturing something for you of three quite extraordinary weeks, just how valuable his advice really is.

Certainly a large part of our experience simply revolved around keeping a fairly intense teaching and practice schedule, which definitely provided all of us with opportunities to discover and work with these various kinds of pleasant and unpleasant moments. The meditations were generally quite powerful, either outdoors overlooking the mountains or within the beautiful space provided by a 100-year-old renovated church. The meditations for the first two weeks consisted of preliminary dzogchen practices from Heart Drops of Dharmakaya, as well as integration training Rinpoche has developed based on the 21 Seals [21 Nails], a text within the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyu, from which he regularly taught. We also worked with the Six Sessions practice throughout the retreat. During the last week, when the causal vehicles or more shamanic aspects of Bon were emphasized, we began *Iha sang* offerings for accumulating well-being and prosperity and Sipe Gyalmo invocations for protection.

The teachings were amazingly clear, both when given by Rinpoche or by Professor Anne Klein, who joined us again this year from Rice University. Anne provided lucid and comprehensible accounts of very difficult concepts from sutra tenet systems, this year focusing on Cittamatra (Mind-Only) and Madhyamaka (Middle Way) positions. Some of the most interesting questions centered around the nature of the relationship between subject and object, and just how independent or separate they really are, as well as the process of naming objects, and the value of conceptual, inferential cognition of ultimate truth (emptiness) given the very direct and nonconceptual approach of dzogchen. Considering how difficult these topics are, it really is a marvel that she had any time at all to discuss meditation and compassion, but she did, and beautifully.

Rinpoche described with unique clarity and strength the dzogchen view, utilizing a wide range of means available to him in order to point out the natural state of rigpa, the innate awareness discussed philosophically, depicted metaphorically, and transmitted directly by Rinpoche and his teachers before him. He covered virtually all the topics discussed in his book *Wonders of the Natural Mind*, everything from the relation of the base (kunzhi) to the individual awareness (rigpa), the three types of rigpa, the three kinds of space, the presence of clarity and compassion in the natural state, and the difference between mind and nature of mind to points of conflict and agreement between sutra schools and dzogchen.

It should be clear by now that we were experiencing a wonderful, yet very demanding, period of study and practice. If it wasn't during a philosophical teaching that we felt discomfort, it was during a long meditation, or during afternoon yoga, or while cleaning the kitchen and thinking about the meditation we were missing. Or for those of us who like philosophy, the problems began when we tried to start fires, make tormas out of lumps of barley flour, or wrap mantras around small sticks.

But we all overcame these sort of "big problems" during the retreat by following Rinpoche's example. He always had humor and resolve in the face of obstacles and oddities, and there certainly was no shortage of these! A select few included: a "very good quality" Sony microphone that, depending on other causes and conditions to produce sound, itself had no power to send his voice to the back of the room; a large proliferation of flies happily assembling to integrate with our experience; two tiny, ancient air-conditioners rattling away during the teaching while some people gripped their chairs for fear of swooning and others slouched with heavy eyelids and dull smiles; a congregation of people wearing egg-carton pig noses quietly awaiting instruction. And somehow through all the many varieties of experience we all were slowly learning to relate more with ourselves and our own minds, and to share our insights and our perspectives with each other.

It is this sharing that stands out to me as the most wonderful thing about the summer retreat. It began with Rinpoche's willingness to transmit to us the knowledge and experience of the teaching as it has been passed through dzogchen masters past and present. Sometimes, however, his sharing also included



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Summer in the Mountains

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Continued on page 7

quite personal stories of his youth, some of which are becoming quite familiar to us now. (Who could forget the donkey eating Rinpoche's Great Bliss?) The openness thus created allowed for all kinds of revelations, from the most intensely personal to the more entertaining. (Now we can all envision Anne Klein sitting in parking lots in her parents' car a long time ago, guessing strangers' names!)

It was clear to me that our sense of community was rapidly growing during this time, and I personally felt privileged to be a part of it. For those of you who came and helped make it happen, a sincere word of thanks. I look forward to seeing all of you, plus all of our new friends-to-be, next summer, if not before.

Bill Gorvine is currently Chair and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Hendrix College in Conway, Arkansas. His book Envisioning a Tibetan Luminary, The Life of a Modern Bonpo Saint, published in 2018, presents a study and translation of the life of Shardza Tashi Gyaltzen, one of the most influential figures in contemporary Bon.

Summer in the Mountains



Professor Anne Klein and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche at summer retreat

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range of means available to him in order to point out the natural state of things—the natural awareness, unobscured phenomenally, dependent and interdependent, and unassumed directly by Rinpoche and his teachers before him. The direct and virtual of the topics addressed in his book Wisdom of the Sacred Heart—everything from the relation of the base (blue lotus) to the individual awareness topics, the three vajras (rigpa), the three kinds of space, the presence of clarity and compassion in the natural state, the difference between mind and nature of mind in ordinary and enlightened states, the difference between a wonderful, yet very demanding, period of study and practice. If it wasn't during a philosophical teaching that we felt otherwise, it was during a long meditation, or during an obvious topic, or while cleaning the kitchen and thinking about the meditation we were receiving. Or for those of us who did a philosophy, the problem began when we tried to start from outside beyond our mind. It was Rinpoche who kept reminding them out of "big" but we all practice them out of "big" practice during the retreat in themselves. Rinpoche's example, he always had humor

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and resolve in the face of obstacles and difficulties—and there certainly was no shortage of these! A select few included a "very good quality" laser microscope that, depending on other causes and conditions to produce sound, will not be proven to need its use to the back of the room. A high resolution microscope supply according to "imagine" with our experience. In this incident an over-enthusiastic calling away during the teaching while some people gripped their chairs for fear of wobbling and others slouched with heavy eyelids and dull eyelids; a comparison of "spiral" versus "egg-curve" pig nose quietly awaiting instruction. And another through all the many varieties of experience we all were clearly learning to relate laser microscope and our own minds, and such as that.



Student and Teacher

Together on the Path



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche responds to a student's question about cutting through one's pride and pain identity, from the 2022 spring retreat at Serenity Ridge.

Student: In my practice it feels like the pain identity has a pride element to it. How can I be assertive and cut through this pride without developing anger or aversion toward it?

Rinpoche: Very good question. It applies to many, many things that we have been talking about.

As I always say, knowing and judging are different. Sharing and criticizing are different. It's a development when you realize how different those responses are. If I happen to be sad, then I'm just aware that I'm sad, rather than judging my sadness.

It's similar to the way that a mother who is very open, very loving and not stressed out, responds when a child cries out. Will the mother take it personally? Of course not. What does that mother do? In the same way, when your own tears are coming and you are crying with sadness, then behave like the mother. You are aware of that sadness, but you're not labeling anything. Like that mother to the crying child, you are accommodating with that openness, with that connection, with that warmth. Your awareness is the mother, and that pain is the child. You accommodate that way. Similarly in practice, if a sense of pride or any emotion arises, simply be aware of that.



Spanish Translation of VOCL

Link to December 2022 Issue Now Available

Look for the translations of Voice of Clear Light newsletters at the top of the VOCL website.

Read VOCL in Spanish

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