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Volume 19, Number 3 / June 2019



Letter from the Editors

From Confusion to Creativity



Dear Friends,

How often does our pain and confusion get the better of us? The teachings, though, point to another way. In this excerpt from Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's latest book, *Spontaneous Creativity: Meditations for Manifesting Your Positive Qualities*, he reminds us to simply leave it as it is when our emotions and unfinished business seem to carry us away. And in the VOCL feature, Student Teacher –

Together on the Path, a student shares her experience of amazement at the creativity that has manifested through her not trying to do anything to get there! Rinpoche's response reminds us how often we can be fooled into thinking that effort is always the answer.

A lot of news and happenings to report at Ligmincha International:

- His Holiness the 34th Menri Trizin's first visit to Europe and North America has begun! See the dates and locations below and check out the five different places to attend the special Sa Le Ö Musical Healing and Meditation concerts that will benefit children in need in Nepal and India.
- Hot off the press! Two new books published by Sacred Sky Press, a division of Ligmincha International, will be available in June. *Journey into Darkness* is about the spiritual journey of the Buddha Tonpa Shenrap's daughter Shenza Nechung, translated by Sangmo Yangri, Ph.D. *Living Wisdom* features excerpts of dzogchen teachings from His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, the 33rd Menri Trizin, during four retreats at Serenity Ridge, plus many photos.
- See the latest dates and locations in Rinpoche's worldwide teaching schedule through September.
- Read this informative overview of the first of three annual Ligmincha Symposia for the Contemplative Sciences on the topic of Body, Breath and Mind.
- Mark your calendar for the June Facebook LIVE Broadcasts!
- Registration is now open for the Fall Retreat at Serenity Ridge October 22–27 on "Guidance for Living and Dying: Commentary on the Bardo Teachings from the Bön Mother Tantra."
- Coming in late July: an audio book of *Spontaneous Creativity*, narrated by Marcy Vaughn.
- June 29 is the start date for GlideWing's next online course "Healing From the Source" with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.
- "Sherap Chamma" with Marcy Vaughn, an online course through Ligmincha Learning, will begin July 10.
- An article by Joan Duncan Oliver features The 3 Doors Compassion Project, which will be offering a new online training beginning in September.
- You can find the link for the Spanish translation of the April VOCL.

In Bon,
Aline and Jeff Fisher



Letting Go and Letting Be

An Excerpt from *Spontaneous Creativity* by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

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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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Our emotional energy can derail us or be dynamic fuel for creative expression. Through meditation we can explore our emotions and give a spacious, luminous, warm hug to our emotional conflicts and unfinished business. Do you know what I mean by unfinished business? I am referring to life experiences that remain undigested. We have turned away from them or left them behind because they were uncomfortable, or we were too young or too frightened or not sufficiently supported to integrate them. But our undigested experiences do not leave us. They

appear in our dreams; they appear in situations we encounter; they appear as people who enter our lives. Again and again we are brought to familiar painful places. The good news is that we can properly compost our experiences, allowing them to become the rich soil of our continued growth and expression.

Again, the advice in meditation in relation to any emotional experience is: Leave it as it is. My teacher repeated this phrase often. I needed to hear it again and again to integrate it fully into my life. How can we understand this pith instruction, this essential teaching? Let's take the metaphor of a pond. If the water in a pond is stirred up by the wind, it appears cloudy. The windier it is, the dirtier the pond appears. But if the air is calm, gradually the dirt and debris sink to the bottom of the pond, and the water becomes clear. By not stirring the pond, by leaving it as it is, the water clears. For most of us, however, it is difficult to leave it as it is. When we have strong feelings, we feel that we have to do something, have to take care of something. It is hard for us to leave it as it is.

I encourage you to explore and trust these ancient teachings. Follow them with an open heart and apply them whenever you need them. Then you will experience what I am talking about. Your mind will be crystal clear. That's the nature of mind – it is always clear. The mind is like a lotus flower. Even though the lotus has its roots in the mud, its blossom is spotless. As with the lotus, so with the mind. No matter how much confusion and pain is present, this spotless, clear mind can be discovered right in the middle of the confusion and conflict. But often, we are not interested in discovering this mind. We are more interested in talking about that person who is causing us so many problems. When we are mired in internal pain and confusion and emotional drama, we are not looking at the space or awareness that is ever present.



Our hesitation to express ourselves fully and creatively in life comes from our conflicted emotions or mental pain. Basically, negative emotions are present because we don't know our true selves. That is the definition of ignorance. From this basic sense of disconnection from our true nature, negative emotions arise and we suffer.

(*Spontaneous Creativity: Meditations for Manifesting Your Positive Qualities*, was published in 2018 by Hay House. It is available through [Amazon](#) and other venues, including Hay House.)



His Holiness the 34th Menri Trizin Teaching Tour Begins!

Sa Le Ö Musical Healing and Meditation Concerts Start Soon



The 34th Menri Trizin, His Holiness Lungtok Dawa Dargyal Rinpoche, has begun his tour of the West! For the first time since he was enthroned in 2018, His Holiness is traveling to the West for three months of teaching. The tour, organized by Ligmincha International, in collaboration with the Yungdrung Bön Monastic Center Society, other Bön and dharma centers, and Tibetan community centers, will cover more than 10 locations. It began in London at the [Tibetan Yungdrung Bön Study Centre](#), founded by Lama Phuntsog T. Khemsar Rinpoche, on May 25-26, and ends in Woodside, New York on September 1 at the [Bon Shen Ling Center](#), established by Geshe Chongtul Rinpoche.

See updated list, as of May 26, 2019, of [the dates & locations where His Holiness will be teaching](#). Please check with [Ligmincha](#) for further updates to His Holiness's schedule.

On June 9, the first Sa Le Ö Musical Healing and Meditation Concert, a concert of profound healing through music, sacred chants and meditation will be held in Houston, Texas, followed by three concerts in Mexico and a final performance at Serenity Ridge in Shipman, Virginia on June 22. Proceeds from all performances will be donated through Ligmincha International to support children in marginalized areas of India and Nepal, including Menri Monastery in India.

Here is the concert schedule and links to buy tickets:



Follow Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche on



Search

June 9: Houston, Texas. Museum of Fine Arts Houston. [Learn more/buy tickets](#)

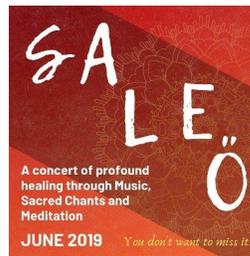
June 13: Torreón, México. Teatro Isauro Martínez. [Learn more/buy tickets](#)

June 15: Mexico City. Teatro Milán. [Learn more/buy tickets](#)

June 16: Valle de Bravo, México. Great Bön Stupa for World Peace. [Learn more/buy tickets](#)

June 22: Shipman, Virginia. Serenity Ridge Retreat Center. [Learn more/buy tickets](#)

[Learn more](#)

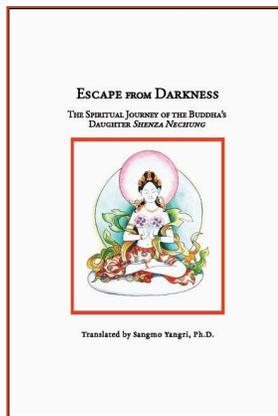


Hot Off the Press – Two New Sacred Sky Books

The Journey of Tonpa Shenrap's Daughter and His Holiness the 33rd Menri Trizin's Dzogchen Teachings at Serenity Ridge

Two new books published by Sacred Sky Press, a division of Ligmincha International, will be available in June. *Escape from Darkness: The Spiritual Journey of the Buddha's Daughter, Shenza Nechung*, is the translation by Sangmo Yangri, Ph.D., of part of an ancient text about Tonpa Shenrap. *Living Wisdom: Dzogchen Teachings from the 33rd Menri Trizin, His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche*, contains excerpts from His Holiness's teachings at Serenity Ridge, Headquarters of Ligmincha International, over the years, beginning in 1999 and ending in 2013.

Escape from Darkness: The Spiritual Journey of the Buddha's Daughter, Shenza Nechung



In the Tibetan Bön tradition, there have been numerous female lay and nun practitioners who attained high spiritual states. Their stories are included in Bön texts and also are a part of local folklore but have not been extricated from the texts or recorded from the folklore. This book is an attempt to fill the void that has been left for centuries.

In *Escape from Darkness*, the first story of a female Bön practitioner is brought to light by translating the life story of Buddha Tonpa Shenrap Miwo's younger daughter, Shenza Nechung, and describing her spiritual journey. The book tells the tale of how the demon Khyappa Lakring attempts to defeat the teachings of the Yungdrung Bön by seducing Shenza Nechung, and how she is eventually rescued and reconnects with the dharma.

The book is translated by Sangmo Yangri, Ph.D., a scholar, teacher, translator and the first Tibetan woman to receive a Ph.D. in the area of Tibetan Bön studies. In 2015, she was appointed to the position of teacher and translator at [Lishu Institute](#) in northern India, founded by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche for the intensive study and practice of Bön.

The book also includes a foreword by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche commentary by Sangmo Yangri, Ph.D., and reflections by Khandro Tsering Wangmo and Marcy Vaughn.

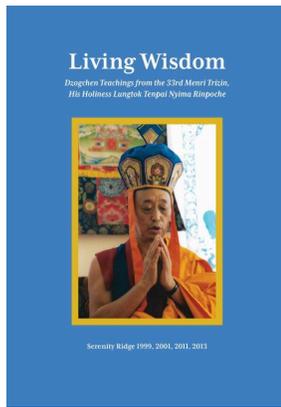
Available later in June through the Ligmincha Bookstore and Tibet Shop, both in person and online, and through [lulu.com](#).

Living Wisdom: Dzogchen Teachings from the 33rd Menri Trizin, His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche

Living Wisdom presents selected, edited excerpts of teachings from four visits of His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, the 33rd Menri Trizin, to Serenity Ridge in 1999, 2001, 2011 and 2013.

His Holiness was the abbot of Menri Monastery in Dolanji, India, and spiritual leader of the Tibetan Bön Buddhist tradition from 1968 until his passing on September 14, 2017. Throughout his life, he worked tirelessly to preserve the ancient Bön tradition and culture.

The topics taught during all four summer retreats focus on dzogchen, the highest among the Tibetan Bön teachings, which points out the true nature of mind. They include profound teachings from retreats on the Twenty-Four Masters, subsequent Lineage Masters of the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyü, and the Six Lamps. In addition to formal teachings, His Holiness's wisdom, warmth and presence shines through in the questions he answered, the stories he told, and the transmissions he gave. Many of these are



featured in the book, along with numerous full-color photos of His Holiness. Also included is a foreword by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

This book is a tribute to the 33rd Menri Trizin Rinpoche and will become available in time to celebrate the visit to Serenity Ridge of the 34th Menri Trizin, His Holiness Lungtok Dawa Dargyal Rinpoche, during **Summer Retreat** June 23–July 7. His Holiness will teach alongside Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche at the retreat on the topic of “Tummo: Inner Fire of Realization, Part 2 of 3.”

Available through the Ligmincha Bookstore and Tibet Shop, both in person and online, beginning in late June.



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's Worldwide Teaching Schedule Through September 2019

Upcoming Retreats Available on Ligmincha Website

Here is a list of Rinpoche's upcoming retreats through September 2019. It includes Rinpoche's in-person teachings at Ligmincha International retreat centers or other locations throughout the world. It also includes his online teachings offered through Ligmincha Learning or GlideWing. The schedule will be updated as teachings are added or revised.

- **June 5–9: Wilga, Poland:** With honored guest His Holiness Lungtok Dawa Dargyal Rinpoche: **Long Life Practice of Tsewang Rigdzin**
- **June 11–12:** Berlin, Germany: With honored guest His Holiness Lungtok Dawa Dargyal Rinpoche: **Teachings on Sherap Chamma**
- **June 23–July 7:** Serenity Ridge Retreat Center, Nelson County, Virginia: With honored guest His Holiness Lungtok Dawa Dargyal Rinpoche: Summer Retreat—**Tummo: Inner Fire of Realization, Part 2 of 3**
- **June 29–July 21:** Online course through GlideWing: **Healing From the Source: Meditation as Medicine for Body and Mind**
- **August 10–September 1:** Online course through GlideWing: **Tibetan Sound Healing**
- **August 12–18:** Buchenau, Germany: **The Twenty-One Nails (continued)**
- **August 20–25:** Wilga, Poland: **Tummo – Teachings about Inner Heat and Bliss, Part 1**
- **September 6–8:** Budapest, Hungary: **Spontaneous Creativity: Meditations for Manifesting Your Positive Qualities**
- **September 13–15:** Rome, Italy: **The Practice of Sherap Chamma**
- **September 20–22:** Boulder Colorado: Boulder Shambhala Center: **Spontaneous Creativity**
- **September 28–October 27:** Online course through GlideWing: **Awakening the Sacred Arts**
- **September 29–October 4:** Esalen, Big Sur, California: **The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep**



[Schedule by date](#)



2019 Ligmincha Symposium for Contemplative Sciences a Success!

First of Three Annual Conferences at Serenity Ridge

Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, cutting-edge presenters and participants came together April 14–16, immediately following the Spring Retreat at Serenity Ridge, for the first of three annual conferences on the intersection of scientific and experiential knowledge of how practices of body, speech and mind affect our biology, psychology, neurology and more.

The goal of the symposium was to foster a deep and practical understanding of how the human physical and subtle bodies, breath and mind catalyze the cultivation of self-knowledge, resilience and well-being. Rinpoche and organizers Michael Sheehy, Ph.D. and Alejandro Chaoul-Reich, Ph.D., were joined by an incredible set of speakers and panelists representing the sciences, humanities, religion and Tibetan medicine.



2019 Symposium presenters: From left (back row): David Vago, Willa Miller, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, Ruth Wolever, Phuntsok Wangmo; (front row): Rob Patzig, Andrew Fort, Alejandro Chaoul-Reich and Michael Sheehy. Photo by Melissa Katz.

Rinpoche kicked off the symposium with a guided practice, drawing on the Fivefold Teaching of Dawa Gyaltzen to lead everyone into a deeply felt experience of stillness, silence and spaciousness of body, speech and mind. After his guided practice, he and Dr. Sheehy engaged in a dialogue about the roles of these three doors. Rinpoche explained how, for most of us, the body is the easier door to control, and so we start by bringing it into stillness. Silence is more challenging and harder to bring into silence. And the mind, well . . . that is the hardest part for most of us. Rinpoche also introduced the idea that one of the key continuities among these three is the process of identity construction and self-identification. The more we think that we are someone, the more challenges we face in our lives.

On April 15, Dr. Ruth Wolever presented a study on tinnitus and how perceived but unreal sounds in the brain can be alleviated through mindfulness interventions. Many of the debilitating effects of tinnitus were found to be related to processes of identification, self-narrative and self-making. In the panel following, Lama Willa Miller helped participants look at how this study reveals that we often are not really inhabiting our dimensional body but, rather, are living in a fully conceptual one of our own imagining. Learning to reground ourselves in lived experience, without strong identification with who we think we are, can allow us to let go and to heal from real and perceived trauma.



Michael Sheehy, Willa Miller, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Ruth Wolever. Photo by Melissa Katz.

During the second panel of the day, Dr. Chaoul-Reich discussed his work in clinical settings, adapting Tibetan Bön-derived yogic techniques of movement and work with breath as interventions for cancer patients and their caregivers. He especially focused on the effectiveness in clinical settings of drawing attention to movement and breath done very purposefully and intentionally. Dr. Phuntsok Wangmo then explained the five kinds of breath or "winds" that operate as movements internally within a physical body. She described how these winds oscillate and flow along the channels of the physical and energetic body.

The evening session began with a presentation by Dr. David Vago about mapping neural activities to contemplative or meditative stages of development. His presentation opened up the conversation about the mind, moderated by Dr. Wendy Hasenkamp, and the limitations of both the scientific method to study awareness, and of awareness to know itself. Dr. Andy Fort called attention to the fact that the duality of the mind and body is a very new idea, and the idea of having this discourse is actually quite modern. Within classical Indic contexts, thinkers were more concerned with capacities of the mind such as intellect, psyche, consciousness, and identifying the multiple dimensionalities of the mind. This was, without doubt, the liveliest of the panels as the ideas presented were the most controversial; indeed, much was still theoretical. The audience had many questions and comments, and would gladly have stayed on discussing matters further had time not run out.

April 16 found participants practicing a very restful form of yoga as taught by Lama Willa Miller. An additional guided meditation was led by Rinpoche. In the final session, the capstone, Dr. Sheehy summarized the prior two days of activities and conversations, and then guided all presenters and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in a wide-ranging conversation on topics raised by members of the audience.

This year's symposium inaugurated a new relationship between Ligmincha and the Contemplative Sciences Center (CSC) at The University of Virginia. Dr. Michael Sheehy, the Director of Scholarship at the CSC, joined the organizing committee, which includes Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, Alejandro Chaoul-Reich and Rob Patzig. UVA students supported the program as volunteers. Gryphon Corpus and Kathleen Michel worked closely to help with organizing activities, promotion, travel planning and more. Almost the entire event was livestreamed onto Facebook, and work is under way to post higher quality videos on the Ligmincha YouTube channel, so that everyone can watch what transpired at this wonderful event.



2019 Symposium Presenters: From left (back row): Michael Sheehy, Willa Miller, Phuntsok Wangmo, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, Ruth Wolever, Andrew Fort; (front row): David Vago, Alejandro Chaoul-Reich, Rob Patzig. Photo by Vicki Wheaton.

In 2020 the conference will take place at the end of Spring Retreat, from April 5–7, 2020. Organizers also intend to livestream everything and have a more immersive online experience available to those who cannot attend in person. More will be announced in Voice of Clear Light closer to the new year.

[View video of capstone session](#)



5-Minute Wisdom

New Facebook Live Series with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche



Beginning in early June, live on the [Facebook page of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche!](#) A new cycle of short teachings and guided meditations by Rinpoche, each only 5 minutes or so in length, all part of his Pith Instructions series. Most broadcasts will be announced no later than 24 hours in advance, so [check here regularly](#) for updates.

Pith Instructions: Personal Reflections on the Heart Essence of Dzogchen

Since September 2017, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche has been offering a free, ongoing series of Pith Instructions, broadcast live from his Facebook Page. Pith instructions are an extraordinarily simple and direct way to receive and connect with the ancient Tibetan teachings. In these teachings and guided meditations, Rinpoche draws from his own years of personal reflection on the heart-essence teachings of dzogchen. The dzogchen, or “great perfection,” teachings are considered the path of self-liberation and the highest form of teaching and practice in the Bön Buddhist tradition. Their practices can transport the practitioner directly into the nature of mind, which is our true essence.

[View live](#)

[Viewing instructions](#)

[Simultaneous translation in multiple languages](#)



Annual Fall Retreat at Serenity Ridge: October 22–27

'Guidance for Living and Dying: Commentary on the Bardo Teachings from the Bön Mother Tantra'



Registration is now open for the six-day Fall Retreat with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche on "Guidance for Living and Dying: Commentary on the Bardo Teachings from the Bön Mother Tantra."

The word "bardo" means "in between" in Tibetan, including the time between life and death, and the time between death and rebirth. The teachings on the bardo are one of the six great methods of the path of the Mother Tantra (Tib: *Ma Gyü*), one of the major tantric cycles of Bön.

During this retreat, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will offer guidance on living and dying. Rinpoche will lead participants in exploring the strong connection between the practice of impermanence and the bardo teachings at the transition between life and death. In the process of dying, one of the most challenging things, and what makes transition difficult, is attachment. What produces the fear of impermanence? Is there a way we can contemplate impermanence and not feel that way?

A key issue is that things always change, and we are always in transition. The conclusion of this contemplation on impermanence is to find the changeless self within all of our changing experiences, beyond actions and reactions in daily life.

Ample time for meditation, practice, and questions and answers will be included in the retreat.

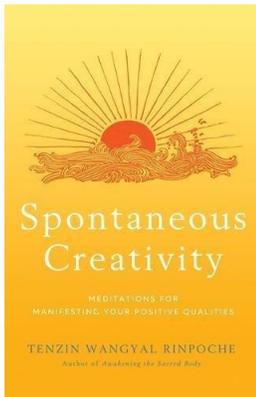
The fall retreat will conclude the latest cycle of Rinpoche's teaching of the six paths of meditation from the Bön Mother Tantra—Sleep, Dream, Elements, Chöd, Powa and Bardo.

[Learn more/register](#)



Coming Soon: Audio Book of *Spontaneous Creativity*

New Book Narrated by Marcy Vaughn Available in Late July



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's second audio book, *Spontaneous Creativity: Meditations for Manifesting Your Positive Qualities*, is expected to be released in late July. The book, in unabridged audible format, is narrated by Marcy Vaughn, a senior teacher and student of Rinpoche and editor of the printed book, which was published in 2018.

Rather than the standard definition of creativity, the book looks at creativity through a wider lens, as a dynamic force that animates us and connects us with every being on the planet. As Rinpoche says, creativity is not just a spark igniting the fire of inspiration. It is a way of living spontaneously from the open spaciousness of being—from the source of infinite potential and positive qualities such as love, compassion and joy.

The new audio book, published by Hay House, will be available through most major marketplaces, including Amazon, Audible and Hay House.

Rinpoche's first audio book, *The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep*, also narrated by Marcy Vaughn, was released in October 2018 and is currently available on the same sites noted above.



GlideWing 'Healing from the Source' Starts June 29

Three-Week Workshop with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

The next GlideWing online workshop with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, "Healing from the Source: Meditation as Medicine for Mind and Body" will be held June 29–July 21, 2019. Learn and practice from your own home, at your own schedule, with personal guidance from Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

The focus is on cultivating loving-kindness as a means for preventing and healing both physical and emotional pain. Based on ancient teachings of dzogchen from the Tibetan Bön Buddhist tradition, the workshop helps one discover the "great healer within." The core teachings of dzogchen introduce us to the nature of mind, to our own inner refuge, the true source of healing.

As Rinpoche explains, everyone has access to this source through the "three doors" of body, speech and mind. He describes stillness of the body, silence of speech and spaciousness of the mind as the "three precious pills"—a powerful medicine you can take at any time, with no side effects, to help divert you



from your self-punishing tendencies, clear pain and negativity, cultivate awareness and ultimately access the healing qualities that spontaneously arise in that space.

Online Workshop Features:

- Three weeks of personal guidance and support provided by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, as you work with the practices.
- Instruction via Internet-based video.
- No set class times; instructional videos remain available throughout the course.
- Practice in the comfort of your home, on your own schedule.
- Easy-to-use course site.
- All you need is a broadband Internet connection, such as DSL or

cable.

[Learn more/register](#)

Coming in August: **"Tibetan Sound Healing"** with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, August 10–September 1.



Next Ligmincha Learning Online Course Begins July 10

Four-Week Course on 'Sherap Chamma' with Marcy Vaughn



Ligmincha Learning is pleased to offer an online course on "Sherap Chamma, Mother of Wisdom and Love" with Marcy Vaughn. This four-week online course runs July 10–August 7, 2019, and introduces the practices of Sherap Chamma.

In many cultures the primordial female energy is seen as the origin of existence and the source of all positive qualities. Sherap Chamma, the 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 Bön tradition.

In this retreat, participants will learn a beautiful and simple meditation practice enabling each to directly connect with the divine feminine energy.

Within the support of the group, an environment is created to promote profound healing of physical, energetic, emotional and spiritual dimensions of life.

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.

[Learn more/register](#)



Power and Promise by Joan Duncan Oliver

The 3 Doors Compassion Project LIVE Online Starts in September

Joan Duncan Oliver has been a Buddhist practitioner for 40 years and is a graduate of The 3 Doors Academy and Compassion Project. She is an award-winning journalist and author whose most recent book is Buddhism: An Introduction to the Buddha's Life, Teachings, and Practices. In this article she offers an in-depth look at the Compassion Project, developed by Marcy Vaughn and Gabriel Rocco, with the support of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

Suffering is unavoidable, a fact of life, the Buddha taught. And we live in anxious times. According to the Gallup 2018 Global Emotions Report—a survey of adults in 147 nations—worry, stress and pain are at an all-time high worldwide. In the U.S., the American Psychological Association's annual survey found that a significant majority of adults are even more anxious about the future of the nation than about money or work.

But whatever anxieties we suffer, there's good news from The 3 Doors: The Compassion Project, a spinoff of The 3 Doors Academy, is offering its popular nine-month course LIVE online beginning this September.

Since it was launched in 2016, the Compassion Project's program of teachings, reflection and meditation has provided a practical, effective method for helping us transform our pain into compassion for ourselves, the people close to us, and the larger world.



Like The 3 Doors Academy, the Compassion Project is grounded in ancient Bön Buddhist teachings, reframed to address the pressures of life today. Marcy Vaughn and her husband, Gabriel Rocco, senior teachers in The 3 Doors, developed the Compassion Project with the support of The 3 Doors founder, Tibetan meditation master Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. Initially the course was offered to people in the helping professions, but its appeal quickly spread. Now participants include anyone who wants to expand their capacity for caring for self and others.

The thrust of the program—and the vehicle of transformation—is connecting with the openness that allows our natural compassion to arise. “You can’t talk about compassion without talking about suffering,” Marcy emphasizes. Instead of viewing our dissatisfaction, discomfort or disconnection as something to avoid, in the Compassion Project suffering is seen as a doorway to awareness—the key to awakening compassion for others and ourselves. When we can be with our suffering fully, without judgment, opening to it with body, speech and mind, and then resting in open awareness, our perception of pain shifts, allowing it to dissolve into the open space of being that is the natural source of compassion. Resting in the inner refuge—the open space of being—clears emotional blocks. Unwholesome habits lift. Painful reactivity no longer prevents us from responding spontaneously to each other and to life.

So can our direct experience bring us alive authentically? “The premise of the Compassion Project is that yes, it can,” Marcy says. “But the practice is to find out if it does, and to be particularly interested in the places where you’re not open and direct and warmly present. Can you be curious about discovering what supports you in allowing your defenses to loosen, to soften, so that something else can emerge? It’s interesting to discover what emerges, and to realize that you’re not stuck with your suffering. Nothing is as fixed or solid as it appears.”

[Learn more/register](#)

[Read longer article](#)



Student and Teacher

Together on the Path



As students on the Tibetan Bön Buddhist path, we offer our teachers a range of questions from the simple to the complex. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche has a wonderful ability to understand human nature, cut to the truth and share his wisdom in his responses to these questions. Here is a comment from a student attending the 2018 Winter Retreat at Serenity Ridge and an edited excerpt given in reply by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

Student: I'm in a whole different place now compared to before when there was so much exhaustion. Now, so many things are manifesting creatively and opening up for me. And I didn't plan any of it; I didn't even know where it was coming from!

So it's remarkable to me, and I just wanted to let you know how it's been manifesting, and that it's like what you've been saying about staying in the space and letting the exhaustion and the pain identities go.

TWR: Wonderful. Basically, exhaustion is the signal that there is a so much effort there. Generally, effort means trying. We don't always assume that effort is bad. Sometimes you have to exert effort. Philosophically speaking, though, from the view of Buddhist epistemology, every arising of conceptual mind is effortful. There is not a single instance of conceptual mind which is not effort-related. But there are different degrees of effort. And when a lot of effort is expended, when there is a lot of trying, a lot of conceptual mind, then even if we may sometimes think that we like it, it's a very natural thing for exhaustion arise. And where there is exhaustion, the natural response is, rest! [long exhale] Ahhhhhh! You see? Ah, and Hah are good words; they are the natural sounds of rest. Ahhhhh . . . and then simply rest there . . . and rest even longer . . . and rest some more. Rest, rest, rest.

It's about really resting, until you become fully rested. You've seen how you can sleep well, right? In the moment when you are able to let go of everything, then you fall asleep. And the more stuff that you are able to let go of at bedtime, then the better sleep you will have. We all know that very well. Sometimes even after very good, short nap, you may wake up clear, and your pains are gone, and you are fresh.

Good rest gives birth to creativity, because what defines creativity, or what defines a good creation, is less effort! This effortless creative manifestation does not drain you – rather, it gives you energy, gives you joy. And that's actually what all of these teachings are about. In the end they're saying manifest! But from the right place, with no effort; enjoy your life and from there, be helpful, not passive.



Spanish Translation of VOCL

Link to April Issue Now Available

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Upcoming Retreats

Serenity Ridge Retreat Center

The events listed below will take place at Serenity Ridge Retreat Center, Ligmincha International's headquarters, located in rural Nelson County, Virginia. To register or for more information, visit the [Serenity Ridge events](#) section on the website, [email us](#) or call 434-263-6304.

June 17–23, 2019

Summer Service Retreat

June 22, 2019

Sa Le O'' Benefit Dinner and Concert for Tibetan Orphans

June 23–July 7, 2019

Summer Retreat—Tummo: Inner Fire of Realization, Part 2 of 3

with His Holiness Lungtok Dawa Dargyal Rinpoche and Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

July 7–10, 2019

Personal Practice Retreat

October 22–27, 2019

Fall Retreat—Guidance for Living and Dying: Commentary on the Bardo Teachings from the Bön Mother Tantra

with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

November 8–11, 2019

Trul Khor, Part 2 and Part 3

with Alejandro Chaoul-Reich and Rob Patzig

November 8–10, 2019

Special Retreat, Topic TBA

with His Eminence Menri Lopon Trinley Nyima Rinpoche

December 26, 2019–January 1, 2020

Winter Retreat—Dzogchen Silent Practice Retreat: Turning Inward

with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

To register for any of the above retreats, or for more information about teachings in the Bön Buddhist tradition of Tibet, please visit the [Serenity Ridge website](#), [email the registrar](#) or call 434-263-6304.

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