

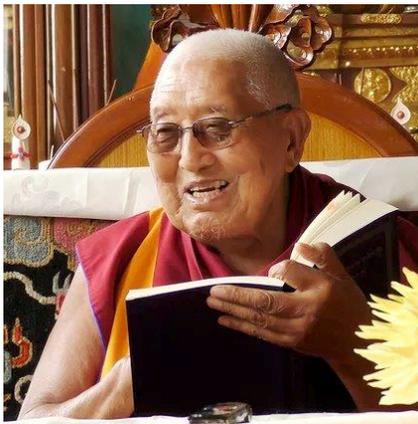

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Volume 21, Number 4/ August 2021



Letter from the Editors

Sending Prayers and Love



Dear Friends,

Together we share so much. As humans, as Bon practitioners, as part of the Ligmincha International community. We are in this together with trust and refuge in the truth of who we are. We share our daily lives, our ups and downs, our illnesses, and even the births and deaths of those close to us. We also share our compassion and empathy around the world, sending prayers for healing, with our love and wishes for happiness and long life for each other. We can feel this deeply, this heart connection.

When Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche recently heard that his beloved teacher, H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, was ill he left just a few days later for Nepal so that he could be with him. His devotion and love inspire ours as

well. A week later, during Ligmincha's online Global Long Life Prayer Practice for Yongdzin Rinpoche, people from around the world participated in more than a dozen languages, practicing continuously around the clock.

We are thankful to be able to share with all of you that Yongdzin Rinpoche is doing much, much better.

In the teaching excerpt for this issue, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche offers us guidance on some important things in life in his unique, knowing and perceptive way. Enjoy and take heart!!

Lots more to share in this issue:

- Rinpoche's fundraising goal of reaching \$100,000 for India's Covid-19 relief was achieved! Thank you to all who donated.
- Ligmincha now is fundraising to reopen Serenity Ridge this fall. Repairs and much-needed improvements will enable the center to host upcoming retreats this fall for The 3 Doors and this winter for Rinpoche's first retreat since the center closed during the pandemic. Read Rob Patzig's letter and please donate to help make this happen.
- A new 3 Doors North American Academy starts in October at Serenity Ridge. Read an interview with Marcy Vaughn about the Academy experience.
- LOTS of Zoom retreat opportunities with Rinpoche!! See the list of SEVEN upcoming retreats to be held online August through October.
- Ton Bisscheroux shares his conversation with Laura Shekerjian and Raven Lee about an age-old problem of feeling sleepy during meditation and what to do about it.
- Don't miss the CyberSangha updates for Rinpoche's webcasts and for the next Full Moon practice on August 21.
- Several online courses through Ligmincha Learning and GlideWing are offered in August, September and October. Details below.
- See Pat Leavitt's yummy new recipe!
- As always you can find the link for the Spanish translation of the last VOCL from June.

In Bon,
Aline and Jeff Fisher

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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](https://www.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:

Ligmincha International
554 Drumheller Lane
Shipman, VA 22971
office@ligmincha.org

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Guidance from the Heart

An Edited Excerpt from Oral Teachings Given by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, Summer 2021



As you know, we have been starting every practice doing tsa lung and the nine breathings and then the prayers of guru yoga, refuge and bodhicitta. These form a basic foundation that we have been doing at retreats and continuing in our daily lives. And I feel strongly that this is what you can do for the rest of your life if you want to be serious.

I want to point out that for human beings in general and particularly those here in the West, we have this tendency to want to change things all the time. And in some sense it's the same even with us practitioners, many of whom I've seen expect new practices.

We can liken the practices that we've learned to a toolbox we've acquired, a really good toolbox, an antique one handed down through the generations, one of high quality that is valuable and effective, just a really great toolbox. So the toolbox consists of our practices like the nine breathings and the tsa lung practices. And as with any toolbox, it's always good to keep your toolbox with you, because you never know what exactly you might need it for next. If you have to repair a hundred-year-old garage, the toolbox will be helpful. If you have to repair a beautiful thousand-year-old temple, then the same toolbox will be of use for fixing that, too. So whether it's a temple or a garage doesn't make much difference; as long as you have your great toolbox it will be of use for fixing anything from a shrine room to a toilet.

In that sense, these practices we have are like a toolbox that is for you to keep, rather than your always trying to change the toolbox itself. If you had a really good toolbox, would you focus on always changing it? No, you would keep it and use it for whatever variety of things you need it for. What you need it for will vary, but the toolbox itself stays the same. However, if you are focused all of the time on just trying to change the toolbox itself, then it doesn't work.

I always tell those in the local sangha practice groups, if you get bored with one practice, then it's a sign that really you're just bored with yourself. So rather than asking every time, *what practice should I do now?* simply reflect and see which practice of yours is good for you now; which practice you like, and then simply do that one. After a few months of doing it you may feel, *what a great practice, I've been doing it for six months.* And the thought returns, *now what practice should I do next?!* That's the thing, you know? It's like saying, *I have been with this person for 10 years and we are very happy! Now who should I be with next?* Sometimes people act this way even if they don't say it. Instead they think to themselves, *I am happy with you, but I'm ready to change.*

The real issue, though, is that if you are bored with yourself then you'll be bored in life. If you are unhappy with yourself, then you'll be unhappy in life. It doesn't matter who you are with, you will be unhappy. It doesn't matter what you have, you will be bored. And that, I think, is really what it comes down to. That is really important for us to remember. We are talking here about the pain identity, the collective pain identities within society. They're very hard to get rid of, and they follow you through your life.

As practitioners, we can get distracted by the whole idea of just changing one's practices versus changing oneself. It's such an important place to pay attention: How much have I changed? Over the course of this retreat, I've often asked, *As a result of the practices that we've been doing here, what do you feel has changed in you; what has surprised you; what had you previously thought you couldn't do that you actually did and are amazed at yourself for doing?* I've not been asking how many practices have changed over the course of the retreat. In fact, it is all about your relationship to these practices and how it has deepened. I know that during this retreat most of you have developed much more deeply your relationship to the lama, yidam and dakini. That is from a change in you, not in the practice.

It's the same thing when we are talking about the teacher-student relationship. As I mentioned earlier, I've been very fortunate to have met my teacher, H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, as a teacher 50 years ago when I was 10 years old. And very fortunate to have lived in the same house with him for many years. He's been father, mother and friend to me. He has cared for me more than my parents did, providing me with clothes, food, knowledge, love.

And as I have often said, I have never had one day of questioning or doubt or judgment toward him. I have always had the purest devotion possible. And with my leaving the monastery to go teach in the West, the new physical distance between us was okay for me. Of course I would come visit him once or twice every year. But when I would travel to Triten Norbutse Monastery in Nepal, I would be careful not



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to hang out all of the time with him, maybe just half an hour a day for a total of about three visits with him over the course of a trip. Other than that, I feel that it's completely okay not to see him in person. You see, he's alive in me, and his presence in me is so strong that it doesn't make much difference whether or not I see him in person.

What I am trying to say here is, human relationship matters a lot. The quality of relationship matters a lot. And of course one always has to work with oneself in these relationships. Our relationship to the teachings, the lineage, the teachers are all important to pay attention to. So often in the West the relationships between parents and their children are problematic. And the relationships among each other in our societies are often very individualistic; this deep sense of community and of helping each other is not much there. Rather, it's very, very isolated and individualistic. And often that is mirrored in the family. It is similar in the teacher-student relationship. As well, in the relationship to the teaching and the practice, the devotion and connection and commitment are lacking. The sense of deep trust is lacking.

Clearly, though, when the situation in the family or in society or in the teacher-student relationship or any relationship is questionable, then of course, one should analyze the situation and not blindly agree with it and follow along, absolutely. But what is important is that at the personal level, in one's own life, in my life, in your life, we each need to protect ourselves from the negative impact of society and the media and social media. If you just look at the media alone here in the United States, the two major news networks present two totally different worlds. And no one from either side is saying they are lying. Rather, they are all saying they are telling the truth.

Even across the different schools of Buddhism there are different doctrines or sets of beliefs, leading to four ways or nine ways of defining what is the truth. So of course one can become polarized on some issues here and there, but at some point you have to come to acknowledge the truth that exists on both sides, honoring both sides, learning from both sides, unifying both sides together rather than always trying to polarize and separate and individualize.

And that's what we've been working on doing here over the course of this retreat, whether it's a rift or polarization in your relationship with your parents, your brother, your sister or anyone with whom you've had issues and about whom you might still have negative feelings. You don't want to be holding on to negative thoughts toward even one person, as you prepare to go to sleep, or as you prepare even to die. You want to hold some sense of compassion and kindness for everyone on this earth. That preparation is something that you have to do now, not afterwards. And that requires sacrifice. Sometimes sacrifice is not for the benefit of others, but rather it is for one's own growth. Then you feel free. And in the end you feel that you haven't sacrificed anything. In the beginning it feels like you are sacrificing something, but in the end you feel that you are the victor. In the beginning you feel like you've lost something, but in the end you feel like you have gained more than anyone possibly could!

So in our overall relationship to the teaching and the practice, our level of commitment is very important. As many of you know, as a teacher I work very differently from many teachers. It's not better, but different in the sense that I am really trying to meet you where you are. I'm really trying to understand. For example, there are people for whom the traditional practice of taking refuge in the lama, yidam and dakini is not important. That's okay. I will always try to communicate on whatever levels that you will understand. That is what I have been doing these past 32 years that I have been teaching in the West. On the other hand, there are people who feel a real connection through that refuge practice. And it's important to give encouragement and support to those people as well. But I am just as careful not to push others who do not feel like doing that. Both are equally important to me.

You see, my intention is just to help. And there is no resistance in me personally; everything that I know, I can share any time anywhere without any reservation, and with no doubts. I have been doing just that, whether it's in person at our retreat centers, or online, or on Facebook. That's the main thing I have. That's the best thing that I have.



Help Serenity Ridge Reopen!

Funds Needed for Repairs and Improvements

Dear Sangha and Friends,

Rinpoche and all of us at Ligmincha send our greetings. We hope that our retreats with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, our resident lamas, and our Western teachers, as well as our courses and publications, have supported you throughout this past challenging year.

Like you, we are starting to enjoy the lifting of restrictions and coming back together again in person with loved ones, friends and sangha.



Thanks to many generous donations last year at the start of the pandemic, and supported by receipt of Paycheck Protection Program loans from the government, Serenity Ridge remains ready to serve you and the whole Ligmincha community. We will open the doors to in-person retreats later this year. We truly look forward to welcoming everyone back to Serenity Ridge! We are busy preparing to reopen partially this fall to support events held by The 3 Doors. Our goal is to reopen fully for Rinpoche's annual winter retreat in December.

However, the more than yearlong closing of the center has created hardship. We had to let many of our staff go, and we have had to defer much-needed repairs and improvements. If Serenity Ridge holds a place in your heart, please consider a donation to help us reopen the center.

Our kickoff to this fundraiser was our annual summer auction, this year online. The auction coincided with our summer retreat. We are grateful to all those who participated and helped us raise \$13,500 in donations.

But we must continue to fundraise to meet our \$150,000 goal. The things that we need to accomplish to reopen the center fully include:

- Adding a new well and water treatment system to restore water capacity and quality. An earthquake reduced our water supply (\$100,000).
- Replacing the 40-year old roof on the Lama House, Rinpoche's residence when he is at the center four times per year (\$20,000).
- Adding food buffet stations with acrylic protective barriers known as a 'sneeze and cough guard' (\$12,000).
- Repairing the exterior of gumpa/meditation hall (\$7,500).
- Clearing a trail/fire break from campground to stupa behind the Lama House and removing dead trees (\$5,000).
- Adding trails to the river and old cemetery in the adjoining 75 acre of woods, purchased in 2019 (\$3,500).
- Completing the installation of our ability to live stream teachings during Serenity Ridge onsite retreats (\$2,000).

These improvements to Serenity Ridge will make our facilities more welcoming and safer to all, including Rinpoche and our visiting lamas, and create new practice opportunities. The trails will allow visitors to more deeply connect with nature and the elements. And access to the cemetery will allow us to provide burial services for practitioners' ashes, in time.

We receive every size of donation, no matter the amount you are able to offer, with deep gratitude and thanks.

If you would like to donate directly online via credit card or PayPal, to donate to Serenity Ridge please click on this direct link to the [Serenity Ridge donations page](#) or to the [Ligmincha International donations page](#).

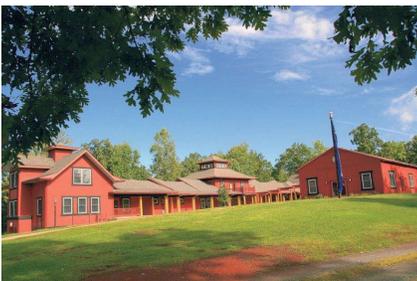
With much appreciation,

Rob Patzig
President, Ligmincha International



Investing Our Attention in Openness

The 3 Doors Sixth North American Academy Begins in October



The 3 Doors will begin its sixth North American Academy October 6-12, 2021, at Serenity Ridge Retreat Center in Virginia. The intensive two-and-a-half-year program is led by senior teachers Marcy Vaughn and Gabriel Rocco. Joan Oliver, an Academy graduate, recently talked with Marcy about the Academy and the benefits of attending.

What is The 3 Doors Academy?

The 3 Doors Academy offers participants an opportunity to engage deeply in meditation and the process of self-discovery. We explore practices of body, breath and movement. We explore generating sound and resting in silence, and we rest and abide in open awareness. We are encouraged to reflect on the limited

patterns we're living with as they show up in our actions and as they are held in our body, speech and mind. These are the three doors.

A great benefit of meditation is that it supports us to realize that our habitual patterns are not fixed. We may have repeated these patterns for years, but as we become aware, habits can loosen and open. We invest our attention in that openness, and fresh possibilities emerge. We change, and we can express change in ways that benefit ourselves and others.

Why do people attend an Academy?

Often someone will come into an Academy with the motivation of wanting to meditate more regularly or needing support for their practice. We may think we can do better, or that we have more potential than we are expressing. So some unique mixture of inspiration and exasperation motivates us to look more deeply into ourselves. And interestingly, the process of opening more fully to be with ourselves, just as we are, brings the benefit of being both kinder and freer. We discover that life has more possibility than any one of us may be accessing at any given moment. There's a motivation to express the goodness in yourself and connect with the goodness in others. This is exponentially supported by spending time with others in meditation, reflection and sharing.

The Academy can support participants to reflect on what limits one's capacity for creative and positive expression in life and to engage practices to bring open, nonjudgmental attention to those limitations as we experience them in the body, in speech, and in our thoughts and feelings. As we bring open and kind attention, we can awaken new possibilities and express them. We come to know and accept ourselves more deeply and to bring love to fearful places. To be willing to sit with what might look like a block or an obstacle or discomfort and to realize it is not fixed or solid is amazing. So much becomes workable, even relationships we may not have envisioned as possible to heal.

How did The 3 Doors begin?

The 3 Doors was founded by Tibetan teacher and meditation master Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche more than 10 years ago.



**THE
3 DOORS**

TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH MEDITATION

Rinpoche realized that in his tradition there is a treasury of wisdom, knowledge and methods that have been tried and applied for centuries and have had results in transforming confusion into wisdom and bringing forth compassionate actions.

The very core, the pith essence of the teachings, is like pure water, meaning that everyone can drink it and benefit from it. But if the water is in a container that you don't recognize, or you feel *I can't drink from a blue container, I can only drink from a yellow container*, then the 3 Doors says, *Here are teachings that are available that don't mean you have to believe in what I believe in or wear the clothes I do or even vote the way I do*. You just need the motivation and curiosity to explore further.

The 3 Doors Academy is its signature program. The Academy meets for six in-person retreats of six days each over a two-and-a-half-year period, with supplemental online group and individual mentor meetings plus individual work in between. The fifth North American Academy finished in spring 2021 and will graduate in fall 2021, shortly before the sixth North American Academy begins. About 150 people have participated in North American Academies. Additionally, two Academies have been held in Europe and two in Latin America.

Is the Academy primarily geared to beginners, or is it also effective for more seasoned practitioners?

The Academy is open to everyone. Perhaps it has even more meaning for people who've had a taste of meditation and its benefits. It's not just that you're going on another retreat; you're living your life and integrating your practice with your life. Each one of us has a relationship with a body, is a member of a family, and is a member of society at a particular time in history. How are these relationships? You will be given an opportunity to sit with yourself and come to a more robust and compassionate relationship with yourself, your family and close friends, and the larger world.

The heart of the program is that our habitual patterns become an identity of who we think we are. And this is not true; this identity is full of holes. You are in a constant state of change. You can explore your relationship with change in a way that will allow you to manifest creative and positive energies. The motivation, the inspiration is self-arising: you get a taste of what's possible and you want to activate that. So the limitations are just a door, and that door can open. But you have to be willing to sit with your blocks, your limitations, and realize they're not solid.

What is the retreat experience like for participants?

Retreats are held at Serenity Ridge, a beautiful 100-plus acre retreat center in a wooded area near the Rockfish River in Shipman, Virginia. Each retreat combines periods of meditation with periods of group reflection and expression. Included are periods of silence and the opportunity to engage with others informally, supporting the integration of meditation and life.

Retreat days begins at 7 a.m. with the yogas of breath and movement, usually held outside on an upper deck with a beautiful view across the valley. There are four additional group teaching and meditation periods during the day, plus a small group meeting, with the final meditation ending at 8:30 p.m. Members of each small group stay together throughout the two-and-a-half-year Academy, offering an opportunity to form strong bonds and deepen the ability to relate to others. The day includes free time for reflection and journal writing, walking in the natural environment and interaction with others.

In the six months between each retreat, Academy students have four Zoom meetings each month for meditation and sharing. They include two practices for the full academy led by Gabriel or Marcy, plus a mentor group meeting and a meeting of your small group. Between each retreat you have an opportunity for a private meeting with your mentor.

Is the group process an important part of the Academy?

Absolutely! One of the hidden jewels of The 3 Doors is how much we learn and receive from our fellow participants. We are given the opportunity to express practice experiences and hear the journey of others. The Academy offers a protective environment, a container in which we can safely explore and express both verbally and in writing, along with developing a deeper appreciation for the power of collective silence.

People help each other just by showing up. You end up realizing you are a support for other people's journey as they a support for yours, even if someone irritates you. We're all triggered by other people. In the Academy we become interested in what triggers us, our own reactivity. It's the beginning of transformation. We also discover that just being in the presence of others in meditation is a support. There is tremendous support and power in taking this journey in the presence of others.

What are other potential benefits for participants?

The Academy is an opportunity to question, to be curious, to be willing to sit with and investigate life. As I loosen and open, certain things arise that I wasn't expecting. Can I allow my feelings to have the room they need? Can I realize what happens when something releases and there's a new space and something else becomes available? Can I recognize what is present in this very moment? People usually interfere with their own process. They don't trust openness, so they block it. Or something comes up and we try to get rid of it, which is another block. Or if what is present leaves or changes, we don't know what to do with that feeling of, *what next?* We're looking into all these states of being because our openness allows for a movement of expression that is waiting to be discovered.

We don't mature easily. We're often familiar with the expression of pain, but we're not as familiar with our expressions of joy and kindness and compassion, among the many positive qualities that we have. Through the practices of meditation we are exercising opening in the presence of difficult places, opening in the presence of painful places, and opening when we feel hesitation and doubt.

The view of who you are is an infinitely creative person capable of spontaneous acts of kindness and humor and love. But you may not experience yourself that way, or only infrequently. So the motivation is to look more deeply at what is limiting you. Are these limitations fixed, permanent? According to the dzogchen teachings upon which the practices of The 3 Doors are based, they're not permanent. But in me they might feel fiercely entrenched. So I want support to look more deeply into that. This is where the practices come in. They help open up these patterns and support us to become more familiar with openness, to trust this openness and begin to rely on it.

Is there anything else you want people to know about the Academy?

Participating in a 3 Doors Academy is a deep, intensive process of self-discovery. It is an investment of time, of energy, of resources. And it's an investment in where you put your attention. Your attention is your gold. Invest it well.

[Learn more or apply to the next North American Academy](#)

For those who are unable to make the journey to Serenity Ridge, consider the [Compassion Project](#), a nine-month online program starting in October 2021 that also supports you to engage with these practices in a small group and to integrate them into your life.



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's Upcoming Teaching Schedule

Hosted by Ligmincha Centers Around the World

Traditionally each summer and fall, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche travels and teaches around the world. This summer continuing into the fall he will be teaching these retreats online through Zoom, each one organized by the host countries where the retreats are usually held. Here are the dates for his upcoming retreats for August through October.

You can find the latest listings and any changes on the [Events section](#) of the [Ligmincha website](#). Please register for these online retreats through the specific Events box on the Ligmincha website.



All of the following retreats will be held online via Zoom.

- **August 2-8, 2021, on Zoom:** Ligmincha Deutschland: **Who Am I?** Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will teach from his poem "Who Am I?" This is a dzogchen poem about freedom and self-liberation, to discover how we can let go of our imagined identity. Translated from English into German.
- **August 10-15, 2021:** Ligmincha Poland: **Tummo**. Rinpoche will deliver teachings about inner heat and bliss, tummo, which allow us to connect to our own heart and to discover space, openness and an unlimited source of possibilities within ourselves. Translated from English into Polish. (Rinpoche may possibly travel to Poland, but due to the pandemic in-person participation is by invitation only to members of Ligmincha Poland and those involved in its functioning.)
- **August 27-29, 2021:** Ligmincha Finland: **Guidance for Living & Dying**. Rinpoche will lead participants in exploring the transition between life and death, including preparation for dying, the process of dying, practices related with the bardo, how to prepare for one's own death and how to help others who are dying.
- **September 17-19, 2021:** Ligmincha Netherlands: **Spontaneous Creativity**. There is now a translation into Dutch of Rinpoche's book *Spontaneous Creativity*, which was published a few years ago. In the retreat, Rinpoche offers accessible methods that help us express our natural positive qualities. Translated from English into Dutch.
- **September 24-26, 2021:** Chamma Ling Colorado: Topic to be announced.
- **October 13-17, 2021:** Serenity Ridge Fall Retreat: **Living in Joy, Dying in Peace**. In this online retreat Rinpoche will guide us to find joy and peace within ourselves and our relation to all that life, and by extension death, brings to us moment by moment. Live simultaneous translation into Spanish, Portuguese and other languages.
- **October 22-24, 2021:** Serenity Ridge online retreat: **Serenity Ridge Dialogues: Body, Breath & Mind**. Join Rinpoche, leading scientists, physicians and practitioners online for a fascinating journey featuring conversations at the intersection of scientific and spiritual knowledge about body, breath and mind.

More information on the retreats is coming soon on the [Ligmincha website](#).



Ligmincha Raises \$100,000 for India's Covid-19 Crisis

Thanks for Your Support for Successful Fundraiser

To provide support during the Covid-19 crisis in India, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche began a fundraising campaign to raise \$100,000 for three organizations in India. We are pleased to announce that this goal has been met!

Rinpoche personally donated \$10,000 to the campaign.

One hundred percent of all funds donated to Ligmincha International went equally to three organizations working to relieve the suffering the pandemic has brought to India:



- Shaheed Bhagat Singh Sewa Dal (SBS Foundation). SBS focuses on providing free cremation services, ambulance services and disaster management services in five states India.
- Tibetan Cancer Society (TCS). TCS offers support to cancer patients and also more general ambulance services for those in need.
- GiveIndia's Covid Response Fund. GiveIndia is a large fund working to impact many areas of need for those in India who are struggling for survival at this time. They offer programs from mask donations to providing food for the hungry.

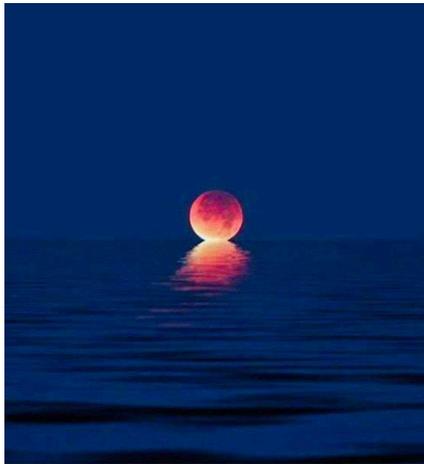
Much thanks to everyone who donated to this fundraising effort!

To view an online conversation with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and his wife, Khandro Tsering Wangmo, who talk with representatives of the SBS Foundation, [click here](#).



Falling Asleep During Meditation

A Conversation About How to Remain Wakeful During Practice



During retreats and online guided meditations Ton Bisscheroux has sometimes fallen asleep. He's felt ashamed, and blamed himself for missing a chance to abide in open awareness. Sometimes his judgment was milder because he found himself relaxing deeply and having no discursive thoughts. To explore this more deeply, he talked with Laura Shekerjian and Raven Lee, both senior students with Ligmincha International and senior teachers with The 3 Doors.

Ton: Before the meditation, I feel awake. But, during meditation, I find it hard to find the balance between focus and relaxation. When I close my eyes they feel tired, and I feel my head becomes heavier and starts to nod. I can't hear the instructions anymore. Before the end of the meditation, I wake up. Several times I have heard the instruction on what to do when you feel drowsy, but I am not able to follow them.

How would you describe what happens when we slumber during meditation? And what can we do to prevent it?

Laura: If you are not feeling tired before you sit, you can start to explore your experience in a number of ways. You could consider whether your posture supports alertness, keeping the spine elongated and the chest open. The eyes could be kept open, not closed. Closed eyes may contribute to the sense of drifting away into sleep. A deeper, fuller breath also can help bring energy into our body.

It also is important to consider what is meant by relaxation. In everyday life, relaxation is often about stepping away from activity, distracting ourselves and/or spacing out. In practice, relaxation is about loosening the patterns and structures that support the pain identity. The ego, which is so tied to this identity of limitation, doesn't know what to do and everything comes to a halt. Either we drift away or we abide in a dull, half-conscious state. The wakefulness that pervades the space of relaxation or release is absent.

In thinking of the three refuges of stillness, silence and spaciousness, this points to the need to focus our practice on the second refuge and coming to rest deeply in the silence of being, which leads to awareness of openness. The emptiness that can arise from letting go needs to be recognized. We need to wake up to ourselves. The vivid, self-illuminating awareness of the second refuge can help us know our own unbounded nature as very different from the nothingness that the ego gets lost in.

A final thought has to do with where we focus our attention. If we begin to feel sleepy, where does our attention go? Do we reinforce this state by telling ourselves how tired we are or do we recognize the fatigue and open our awareness wider? The wider awareness may then host fatigue in that moment, or we may just note it as we would any bodily discomfort and not overly identify with it.

Raven: When we fall asleep during meditation, this is connected to the imbalance of open space and awareness. The awareness becomes dull and falls into the space. So the focus is maintaining the awareness, even if it is only a glimpse.

I remember during a retreat with Rinpoche a practice right after lunch. I didn't get much sleep the night before. I was aware of the *me* who was becoming dull and almost falling asleep. But I stayed aware with a very narrow ray of light, opening my eyes from time to time to freshen the inner refuge. Later, I asked Rinpoche about my experience and his response was very helpful. He used a metaphor of the light from a lighthouse. Even if the light is not full and bright, as long as there is a glimmer of that light, then one can connect with it.

What I find helpful, too, is when I am aware of falling asleep, I open my eyes and gaze upwards to stabilize the mind that is dull and sleepy. The central channel breathing also could be helpful to refresh and reconnect. I also find it supportive to abide in the space of the heart as the door to mind.

Ton: During retreats I have seen people nodding off. When they asked about it, often the response was that this can happen after a heavy meal, or when it is hot, or for people who were very busy before the

retreat and who had now come to rest.

I was wondering, though, what the relation is between disconnecting in meditation and dealing with a past trauma?

Laura: If there is something in our life that is difficult to face, we tend to keep busy and distracted in our daily lives. When we sit to practice and turn inward, whatever we have been avoiding is right there. Going to sleep helps us avoid it. If we maintain our posture and keep our eyes open, we may be able to recognize what it is that is arising and find a different kind of relationship to it.

Ton: In dealing with my own trauma, my therapist has told me that many people use meditation to avoid pain, fear or other unpleasant feelings. I recognize that. When I started to meditate, I wanted to get rid of my physical, emotional and existential pain. A few years ago, when I became aware of the chronic tension in my body, my primary focus became to relax my body. Then I found out that it is a challenge to relax and be aware at the same time. Once, during a 3 Doors retreat when I shared that I could not stay awake, Raven invited me to catch the point just before I fall asleep. Once I managed to do that, and then I felt very alive.

I want to thank you for this conversation. Every time I feel stuck, there is total darkness. In this conversation I have learned that if there is just a glimmer of light, there is a door, a way to dissolve being stuck. Instead of blaming myself when I notice a heaviness during meditation, now I can relax and get interested in what is happening in the moment. I also want to thank Alejandro Chaoul-Reich, who participated by asking questions that prompted some of my comments and deepened the conversation. And I hope this conversation will benefit others, too.



Ligmincha Learning's Upcoming Online Courses

Sherap Chamma August 6, Five Elements August 27, Six Lokas September 17

Ligmincha Learning is pleased to offer three upcoming video-based online courses beginning in August or September: Sherap Chamma: Mother of Wisdom and Love with Marcy Vaughn; The Five Elements, Healing with Form, Energy and Light with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche; and Transforming Our Emotions Through the Six Lokas with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

These 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.



August 6-September 5, 2021

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. 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 four-week online course, participants will learn a beautiful and simple meditation practice enabling each to directly connect with the divine feminine energy. Both beginners and experienced practitioners are warmly welcomed.

[Learn more/register](#)

August 27-October 10, 2021

The Five Elements, Healing with Form, Energy and Light with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

In this six-week 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. The course is designed so that you may integrate study and practice into your everyday routine, learning at your own pace, yet enjoying the support of classmates and the course mentor.

[Learn more/register](#)

September 17-October 10, 2021

Transforming Our Emotions Through the Six Lokas with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

At one time or another each of us suffer strong emotions that throw us off balance, cause us to act in ways that we later regret, and make us lose touch with our true nature. Centuries ago the masters of the Bon lineage developed the meditations of the Six Lokas specifically to remedy this situation, to help us live our lives in a balanced and relaxed way. The meditations focus on the root causes of our suffering: anger, desire, ignorance, jealousy, pride and laziness. Through each meditation we examine our habitual patterns so that we may recognize, purify and transform them

[Learn more/register](#)

Upcoming: October 1-November 7, 2021: [Treasures of Bon History, Lineage and Practices](#)



CyberSangha 2021 Online Program Updates

Full Moon Practice August 21

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's 2021 program continues to explore the three doors of body, speech and mind with live teachings and guided meditations, science/spirituality dialogs and mantra recitation sessions. Every offering is free and open to all.

Whether you are a longtime meditation practitioner or a novice, you are welcome to attend any or all live broadcasts throughout the year.

Due to Rinpoche's travels in Nepal, his previously scheduled July 22 CyberSangha teaching and guided meditation have been cancelled.



CyberSangha
Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

During the Month of Body, join us on August 10 at 11 a.m. New York time for a live discussion between Laura Schmaizi, Marieke van Bugt, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and host Alejandro Chaoul-Reich as they discuss the role of the physical body in contemplative dance, yoga and mindfulness.

[Learn more and view live](#)

The Month of Speech will include a 24-Hour Full Moon Practice, Finding Peace Through Silence of Speech, beginning at 10 a.m. New York time on Saturday, August 21.

[Learn more and register](#)

Visit cybersangha.net for more information and [schedule updates](#) for year of Body, Speech and Mind.



Upcoming GlideWing Online Workshops with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

Tibetan Dream Yoga and Who Am I? A Journey to Self-Realization



GlideWing is pleased to offer two upcoming online workshops with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche: Tibetan Dream Yoga from September 4-October 3 and Who Am I? A Journey to Self-Realization from October 16-31 (please note this new date).

In Tibetan Dream Yoga, now with Spanish subtitles, students will explore the ancient Bon and Buddhist teachings of Tibetan dream

yoga. is said that the practice of dream yoga deepens our awareness during all of our experience: the dreams of the night, the dreamlike experience of the day and the bardo experiences after death. This powerful tool of awakening has been used for hundreds of years by the great masters of the Tibetan traditions.

Unlike in the Western psychological approach to dreams, the ultimate goal of Tibetan dream yoga is the recognition of the nature of mind or enlightenment itself. Rinpoche also will provide instructions for foundational practices done during the day and for the uses and methods of lucid dreaming. Rinpoche also will provide instructions for foundational practices done during the day and for the uses and

methods of lucid dreaming.

[Learn more/register](#)

A new start date is set for October 16 for the brand-new online workshop with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, *Who Am I? A Journey to Self-Realization*. This two-week workshop (originally scheduled to debut in June) will now be held October 16-31 and will include personal support and guidance from Rinpoche.

The primary journey of every spiritual path is to reclaim what has been lost: the truth of who we really are. Once we come to a deep recognition that our true nature is spontaneous perfection, there is no more need to search for insights or solutions, no more need to strive. According to the dzogchen tradition of Tibetan Bon and Buddhism, this simple recognition is the way to ultimate liberation. This workshop is based on a poem Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche wrote during moments of self-reflection on retreat and reflects the deep personal work he does as a teacher, father, husband, friend and spiritual being. Rinpoche will guide you through his poem, line by line, in your own journey of self-discovery.

[Learn more/register](#)



From Pat Leavitt's Kitchen: Freestyle Pesto

A New Take on a Traditional Dish

Lambs quarters, *Chenopodium album*, is an edible native plant that grows wild in Virginia and many parts of the world. It is coming up in my garden and is so good in pesto!

I often make a pesto with a mix of garden and foraged herbs, such as spring chickweed, dandelion greens, plantain, nettles, and a few violet leaves. Be sure to wash your wild greens well before using. Prefer vegan? Omit the traditional Parmesan cheese or serve it on the side.

I have been adding lemon juice and zest to pesto ever since Roxanne Clark from Louisville, Kentucky, made it that way at summer retreat in the early days. Try any of these instead of the expensive pine nuts: lightly toasted pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, walnuts or almonds. Toasting adds depth and brings out the flavor of the oils in the seeds.



To save space here, please find a basic pesto recipe in many cookbooks or online.

Here's a nice combination for a summer pesto dish. It's so good on quinoa!

3 cups cooked quinoa; cool and fluff
 1/2 cup (or more to taste) pesto
 1 bunch broccoli; cut in small bite size, blanch in salted boiling water 4 minutes, drain well
 1 cup lightly toasted and chopped walnuts

Stir the pesto into the quinoa, taste and adjust with a drizzle of olive oil, salt, pepper. Add the other ingredients and stir gently together. Serve slightly warm or at room temperature.

Good for lunch with salad and tomatoes.



Spanish Translation of VOCL

Link to June Issue Now Available

Look for the [translations of Voice of Clear Light newsletters](#) at the top of the [VOCL website](#).

[Read VOCL in Spanish](#)

Serenity Ridge Retreat Center
 Headquarters of Ligmincha International
 554 Drumheller Lane
 Shipman, VA 22971
 Serenity Ridge office: [+1-434-263-6304](tel:+14342636304)
 Ligmincha International office: [\(+1\) 434-263-3657](tel:+14342633657)

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