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## Volume 23, Number 5 / October 2023



### Letter from the Editors

#### A Breath of Fresh Air



Dear Friends,

How can your breathing support your well-being, your creativity, your handling of difficult situations and pain identities, as well as support your ability to abide in the nature of mind? In this issue's teaching excerpt, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche explains how breathing in the best way possible can be a huge support in life, in our dzogchen practice, in our ability to abide and in all we endeavor to do.

In addition to breath, the supports in life come in so many forms! The support of our lineage, our teachers, our sangha!! May we all find inspiration and continue to remind each other to keep an eye out for these precious connections and relationships.

More news and events at Ligmincha:

- Register now for Awakening Through Dreams, the annual Fall Retreat & Serenity Ridge Dialogues, October 17-22, to be held both in person and on Zoom.
- See Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's upcoming teaching schedule.
- Tibetan Yoga retreat this November with Alejandro Chaoul-Reich.
- View upcoming CyberSangha events.
- Upcoming Ligmincha Learning courses: The Three Heart Mantras and Five Elements in October; Sherap Chamma and Sleep Yoga in November; and Tsa Lung in December.
- Ton Bisscheroux speaks with Geshe Sherab Palden, attendant to His Holiness the 34th Menri Trizin Rinpoche, while at the summer retreat in Buchenau.
- The 3 Doors invites you to deepen your practice. Many opportunities are available.
- Enjoy an article from the VOCL archives on reflections by retreatants following a sleep yoga retreat in 2010.
- In the Student and Teacher article we ask what it is that makes for a good sleep? And we find a beautiful answer in *The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep* by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.
- Read the Spanish translation for the August VOCL.

In Bon,

Aline and Jeff Fisher



### Resting in One's Nature and Cultivating the Habit of Breathing Well

#### An Excerpt from Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's Summer 2023 Teachings at Serenity Ridge

Researchers and practitioners in the field of mind-body medicine have been talking about stress response versus the relaxation response. Or as I would call it, the pain response versus the response from the calmness of one's heart. At any given moment, observe yourself and the level of stress response arising within. How would you say it is? Are you calm and connected, feeling okay, feeling safe and feeling good?

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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](mailto: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](mailto:office@ligmincha.org)

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Or is it more like you are in pain and in denial of that pain? Or are you agitated and misidentifying it as creativity? Are you maybe looking for a conflict, reading bad news, interested in hearing gossip and interested in interfering in other people's business? Is your mindstate a little bit like that?

So just observe yourself and your general state at any given moment. It needs to be observed carefully for many reasons, first of all to protect yourself and second to protect those around you. There are consequences for your actions and consequences for the decisions

that are coming from pain. However, when there is heart, when there is calmness, when you are breathing better, when you're feeling good, then you are seeing more and responding to the situation more from that base connectedness, from the heart, from calmness, from feeling safe. It's a better perspective for responding to the situation. And as a result it protects you, and it protects the other people and the situation.

It protects us on many levels, even down to the cellular. We are made up of 26 billion cells at birth, and these have amazing mechanisms to heal and to charge up and to grow and expand; they have all these qualities. But as we are getting older it seems that these cells are decreasing and not able to replicate as well as before, and their potentiality is not as strong and as vital as it used to be. What or who is causing that? Of course, we could say that it's the environment, but mostly we are the ones doing it to ourselves; we kill them, we destroy them, we interfere with them, we block them. We block their natural capacity to rejuvenate and reproduce. Primarily, we are the ones interfering with that.

It's a mistake to think that our body is given a certain amount of cells for our life, like a package deal, and then as the cells get used up, we have to work hard to continuously try to gain new cells back. It's not at all like that, it's just the opposite. Your cells are naturally doing really well; it is amazing work that they're performing. But every day we are paralyzing them. How? By being in our pain identity, and seeing through that pain identity, and responding from that pain, and creating more confusion from that pain, not only in ourselves but in others as well. And unfortunately while doing so, we very often think that we are doing something good. That's a problem, because actually if we knew we were going about it all wrong, then we would take a much more protective view of the situation. Unfortunately though, we very often believe that we are doing the right thing. And the right thing never comes from that pain.

In relation to the dzogchen teachings that His Holiness the 34th Menri Trizin has been giving us, let's say that this morning you wake up and the sky outside is clear, but you are obscured. Okay, so just notice that. This is what the teachings are saying; become aware of that. Being aware of that, then try to abide and leave it as it is. Of course it's difficult to leave it as it is through the application of effort. So in the moment that you are not feeling good, then if visualizing Sherap Chamma or Yeshe Walmo doesn't calm you, then at least think of something that does calm you, for instance, remembering something like a hug from your child. Beautiful. Just try to feel into that for a moment, keeping that image. Just holding that image for five minutes, that's enough! After I do something like that, I know that things are beginning to happen in my body. I know that afterwards I have better thoughts; I have a kinder perspective on situations that arise; I can let go of more things. We've all had those beautiful experiences that we can recall. Maybe with your children, your spouse, your siblings, even with your pet, whatever it is that helps you. Just calm down, that's all. Of course, first you must have the awareness to recognize that you're not calm to begin with.

All the moments in which we don't have to live with our pain will bring us health and healing. Of course, there will be a thought, an emotion, a circumstance, a situation that you have to deal with, sure, I get it! But it doesn't have to take up a big portion of your life. It can actually be a small, clear, decisive moment of your life. And then the other times, you can be the sky. Take it from nature, in the worst of thunderstorms, a lightning flash lasts only a quick moment and then it's gone, that's it. A flash of lightning can't possibly stay lit up for a whole day or whole week at a time! We could never imagine that happening. But for some people, that's just the case. For them, their lightning stays lit up continuously.

The teachings say to simply leave it as it is, as much as you are able. Unfortunately, though, we are not leaving it as it is; we are changing and manipulating things all the time, from our food, to our air, to our water, to our behavior; everything is so manipulated. The natural resting quality is no longer there. One thing that shocked me, in the first year that I came to the West, was the value that everyone placed on just being busy. You are praised here just for being busy. However, the praise should be the other way around; if you're not busy at any given moment, then wonderful! That doesn't mean that we do not do anything at all; we all do things. However, we won't go out of our way to just keep busy. Instead we will do whatever is necessary. And certainly we will not put work ahead of healthful things like sleep, as people are doing so much here in the West. Instead, go to sleep; get up fresh; don't do much; do a few things in a precise way. Don't waste your energy, and don't waste other people's energy. It all stems from this sense of leaving it as it is.



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And when we are not able to leave it as it is, then we can simply pay attention to the breath. And this is an aspect that I very much want to emphasize here. It's very clear that if you cannot control your mind, then control your breath. Or when you cannot work with your mind, work with your breath. It's easy to work with your breath because the breath is more mechanical, in a sense. So why do you need to work with breath? Because in essence, breath is everything. The air is energy. And energy is everything as far as creation is concerned, as far as function is concerned. Space allows it, but energy creates it, energy maintains it, energy protects it. Energy is everything.

In these teachings the breath is referred to as the medicinal wind. Scientific research confirms this as it looks at the physical and psychological benefits of simply decreasing your breathing frequency and inhaling through the nose. Breathing this way activates your parasympathetic nervous system. And that breath brings you a deep sense of feeling safe, secure. If within yourself you feel you're in a safe place, that is the time they say you turn on the self-healing mechanisms in your body. When we slow the breath and breathe more deeply like this, it leads to our feeling much more relaxed and even more joyful. [TWR slowly and gently inhales through the nose, he holds it, and then he exhales, slowly and fully.] That's it! Instead of breathing twenty breaths per minute, maybe you can end up doing ten, seven, six or even five breaths per minute. It depends on your ease of doing so.

In this retreat we are receiving His Holiness's teachings of the Zhang Zhung masters on the Great Perfection. Basically these dzogchen teachings are saying that we are perfect, we are buddha, we are enlightened, we are complete. It is saying, this is who we are, right? The idea is that if your karmic wind, and your conceptual wind, and your emotional winds are not blowing strongly enough to interfere with your grounding quality and your connection to yourself and the connectivity with everything in your body, then you'll be fine. Right? That's the idea.

His Holiness's teachings point the way toward your using moments of intense vulnerability, such as when something big has triggered you and it puts you right into that stress response. Moments like, when I got the news about my child, or when I got the news about my losing my job. Okay, it's natural that you should have this response. We all have had it. For every single person there's some vulnerable area in which, when you are exposed to something, you feel vulnerable, you feel pain, you feel stress. But according to His Holiness's teaching, that is a good time to question yourself. Can I really feel this I who is stressed out? Someone is there who is feeling vulnerable, who feels a threat. It's a very good moment, a wonderful moment, the best moment, to really find out who that is. It's not always easy to feel vulnerable, and that's the beauty of the times when you are feeling vulnerable. Vulnerability is a beauty in the sense that you get to connect with an area of yourself that you otherwise wouldn't ever get to connect with. Then you see something there. [Rinpoche breathes a long slow out breath.] *I see this identity there, feeling vulnerable, feeling a little fearful, and I am trying to allow it. I am trying to let it just be there. I am trying to breathe it out.* You work like that on the deepest level.

There are two kinds of commitments that I would like you to take away from this retreat. One is to these precious teachings, to have as deep as possible a trust in the lineage and the supports of the tradition. That's on the one level, to go toward that and not compromise that. And second, there is this basic principle of the breath, that breathing properly results in a lot of healthful effects.

So can we also commit ourselves to using our breath to balance our emotions? To using our breath to control our thoughts? Using our breath to boost our immune system? Using our breath to enhance our awareness? Using our breath to reduce our blood pressure, our sugar level, and so much more? Can we all commit to changing our lives through changing our relationship with the breath? I think we can all do that, don't you? I've already done it myself.

(Editor's Note: During the retreat, Rinpoche spoke highly of James Nestor's book *Breath: The New Science of a Lost Art*, and encouraged us also to review his YouTube videos.)



## Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's Worldwide Teaching Schedule

### October to December 2023

Here is Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's teaching schedule. In October Rinpoche will be teaching in California and at Serenity Ridge for the annual fall retreat, then back to Serenity Ridge for the annual winter retreat in December.

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.

- **October 1-6, 2023.** Esalen Institute, Big Sur, California. [Connecting to the Healing Power of the Sacred Elements](#)



- **October 17-22, 2023.** Serenity Ridge Retreat Center, Shipman, Virginia. [Awakening Through Dreams and Serenity Ridge Dialogues](#)
- **November 3-5 2023.** Berkeley, California. [The Twenty-One Nails, Part 4](#)
- **December 26, 2023-January 1, 2024.** Serenity Ridge Retreat Center, Shipman, Virginia. Winter Retreat: Experiential Transmission of Zhang Zhung, Part 4. (Prerequisite: Having attended Experiential Transmission Part 3). Registration opens October 10.



## Annual Fall Retreat & Serenity Ridge Dialogues October 17-22

### Dream Yoga & Lucid Dreaming Is Focus for Retreat and Dialogues



Join us October 17-22 for the annual Fall Retreat and Serenity Ridge Dialogues with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and special guests Andrew Holecek, Gabriela Torres Platas, Yangdron Kalzang and Tim Lyons. The focus will be on Dream Yoga and Lucid Dreaming. You can attend in person or on Zoom.

In the mornings Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will teach on bringing our dream states into our spiritual practice and our spiritual practice into our dream states. In the afternoons, our special guests will give short presentations on specific topics related to

lucid dreaming followed by open conversations that include Rinpoche. We also will explore a variety of practices related to dreaming and sleeping, led by our presenters. Moderators are Alejandro Chaoul-Reich and David Germano.

We will learn how to prepare for sleep, the types of dreams that can arise, and how to bring lucidity into our dreams and the potential to impact our general well-being through greater awareness of the cycles of day and night. This recognition can transform every aspect of our waking life, opening us to infinite creative possibilities available in every moment.

This retreat is designed for all levels of students, from beginners to experienced lucid dreamers.

[View the landing site](#)

[Learn more/register for onsite retreat at Serenity Ridge](#)

[Learn more/register for online retreat on Zoom](#)



## Tibetan Yoga with Alejandro Chaoul-Reich at Serenity Ridge

**November 2-5, 2023**



Beginners and experienced students alike are invited to attend Tibetan Yoga From the Oral Tradition of Zhang Zhung: The Magical Movements (Trul Khor) of Body, Breath and Mind to be held November 2-5 with Alejandro Chaoul-Reich at Serenity Ridge and on Zoom. This is the first time these movements have been taught at Serenity Ridge in a decade!

The distinctive Tibetan practice of yoga known as trul khor or magical movement incorporates breath retention, awareness and dynamic physical movements. In this four-day retreat we will focus on the pith or root magical movements from the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyu (Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung).

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche calls trul khor a wonderful support for all spiritual practitioners, not just for those with an interest in physical yogas. By harmonizing the winds (called lung, prana or chi) and guiding their flow through physical and energetic dimensions, trul khor can clear long-held blocks in the practitioner's body, energy and mind, supporting the spontaneous arising of awareness during formal meditation and in everyday life.

Trul khor has different sets of movements composed by different masters. This retreat will focus on practices from Pongyal Tsenpo and Orgom Kundul, two great yogis who are among the masters of the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyu.

Students who complete this retreat are eligible to participate in Trul Khor, Part II in 2024.

[Learn more/register for onsite retreat at Serenity Ridge](#)

[Learn more/register for online retreat on Zoom](#)



## Upcoming CyberSangha Events

### Next Live Broadcasts with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

You are warmly invited to join Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, invited guests and fellow participants for any or all of these upcoming online activities. Free and open to all, the events are part of Embracing Life with Wisdom & Compassion, Rinpoche's free yearlong program.



#### **Wednesday, September 27, 12 noon New York time**

##### **Embracing Jealousy, Cultivating Openness**

Join Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche as he guides us in meeting any sense of jealousy we may harbor with openness and warmth, clearing the way to the deeper sense of openness that spontaneously arises in jealousy's absence. This live online teaching marks the start of Month 8 of the yearlong program.

[Learn more & view live](#)

#### **Thursday, September 28, 10 a.m. New York time**

##### **24-Hour Full Moon Practice: Embracing Jealousy, Cultivating Openness**

As Month 8 continues, enjoy the support of others in our 24-hour online practice. It begins with a meditation guided by Alejandro Chaoul-Reich and is followed by 24 hours of mantra recitation, contemplative breathing practice and further periods of guided meditation. You may join the session for 30 minutes or more at a time, at whatever time works for you. The practice is open to all and there is no cost to participate, but registration is required.

[Learn more & register now](#)

#### **New! Begins Tuesday, October 3, 1 p.m. New York time**

##### **Free Online Course: Embracing Jealousy, Cultivating Openness**

Join us for a free four-week interactive online course, designed to accompany Month 8 of the yearlong program. It takes place on four consecutive Tuesdays at 1 p.m. New York time with Juanita Rockwell, via Zoom. Class size is limited.

[Learn more & register now](#)

#### **Thursday, October 26, 12 noon New York time**

##### **Embracing Pride, Cultivating Peace**

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche ushers in Month 9 with a live online teaching and guided meditation. The focus this month is on meeting any pride we may be experiencing with openness and warmth, clearing and opening the pathways to our peacefulness within.

[Learn more & view live](#)

#### **Saturday, October 28, 10 a.m. New York time**

##### **24-Hour Full Moon Practice: Embracing Pride, Cultivating Peace**

The 24-hour online practice for Month 9 begins with a guided meditation and is followed by a 24-hour session of mantra recitation, contemplative breathing practice and further periods of guided meditation. [Registration opens after September 28]

You can learn all about the free yearlong program here, including the November schedule and any schedule updates, [at this link](#)

We hope to see you online soon!



## Try a Ligmincha Learning Course!

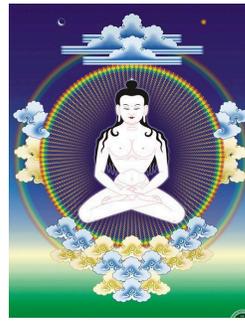
### **Three Heart Mantras, Five Elements, Sherap Chamma, Sleep Yoga & Tsa Lung**

Ligmincha Learning is pleased to offer these upcoming online courses. The Three Heart Mantras, Five Elements & Sleep Yoga in October and November with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche; Sherap Chamma in November with Marcy Vaughn; and Meditation, Breath and Movement with Alejandro Chaoul-Reich in December. 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 with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche****October 6-November 11, 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 and protection, and as primary practices toward self-realization.

[Learn more/register](#)

**The Five Elements with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche****October 10-December 2, 2023**

The Five Elements, Healing with Form Energy and Light is a six-week online course about exploring how each of the five elements relates to our daily experiences, emotions and relationships. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche guides meditations for each of the elements, designed to help clear our obstacles and bring balance to our lives.

[Learn more/register](#)

**Sherap Chamma: Mother of Wisdom and Love with Marcy Vaughn****November 11-December 16, 2023**

In this five-week online course, 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, we create an environment to promote profound healing of physical, energetic, emotional and spiritual dimensions of life.

[Learn more/register](#)

**Sleep Yoga: The Yoga of Clear Light with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche****November 18-December 17, 2023**

In this four-week course Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will introduce simple techniques to enter into sleep in a healthy, balanced way. Even if we do not consistently enter into clear light sleep, we can benefit from a refreshing, relaxed sleep that gives us deep renewal. Through these simple practices we can transform our sleep to be one of tranquility and awareness.

[Learn more/register](#)

**Meditation, Breath and Movement with Alejandro Chaoul-Reich****December 1-30, 2023 (offered with Spanish & Portuguese subtitles)**

Tsa lung is a series of ancient yogic practices that brings balance and harmony to our physical body, energy and mind. The term tsa lung can be translated as the energy-winds (Tibetan lung, Skt. prana, Chinese qi) in the channels, for these practices are designed to open the subtle channels, guiding the healthy flow of the energy-winds so that we can enjoy good health and reconnect with more calmness to a quiet, peaceful mind. These exercises are easy to perform and are beneficial for everyone

[Learn more/register](#)

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

Learn more at [ligminchalearning.com](http://ligminchalearning.com)

**Geshe Sherab Palden's Journey from Dolpo to Menri****A Personal Reflection**

*Geshe Sherab Palden and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in Buchenau*

*Geshe Sherab Palden is the chief assistant and personal secretary of His Holiness Lungtok Dawa Dhargyal Rinpoche, the 34th Menri Trizin and spiritual leader of Bon. He also creates His Holiness's itinerary when he travels. Unfortunately, he did not get a visa when His Holiness visited the United States this summer, so Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche invited him to travel to Europe as his special guest during Rinpoche's recent retreats in Poland and Germany. Later, they traveled together in Montenegro, Albania, Bosnia and Croatia. Geshe-la also had an opportunity to visit his relatives in Europe. During the summer retreat in Buchenau, Germany, Geshe Sherab Palden shared with Ton*

*Bisscheroux the story of how he became a geshe.*

I want to dedicate this story to my late father, Yogi Nyima Wangyal, who passed away in 2017. Not only had my father taught me to be an independent and determined person, he had gone through many hardships in supporting me and making me who I am today. Father, you will always hold a very special place in my heart and I will always love you.

I was born in 1985 in Barle Village, Dolpo, Nepal. At the age of 6, I traveled with my father from our village to Kathmandu, about 250 km [155 miles]. After a short stay at Triten Norbutse Monastery, I left my father and went by bus, together with a monk, to New Delhi, India. From there I traveled to Menri Monastery in Dolanji, India.

My journey started somewhere in the second half of 1991. I remember that at that time, Kathmandu was a very popular city and the village people who had returned from their visit told the story of modern lifestyle in the city. As a 6-year-old child, I didn't know there was any other country outside of Nepal. One day, some villagers were planning to go to Kathmandu to seek new opportunities or employment to survive. My father wished to do the same and told me to go with him to the city to study there. I was thrilled with this new opportunity as I would get the chance to travel and see the world. It was like a dream come true for me.

When we left, as part of our local tradition, all our relatives and friends gathered at our house to say good luck and bid farewell. Early in the morning, we started our journey on foot to Dunai, the district headquarters of Dolpo. There were eight of us, including my father. After five hours of walking, we finally arrived at Dunai and rested for one night.

The next day, I was very excited to board an airplane. Unfortunately, our Dolpa Airport in Juphal was under repair and maintenance, so there was no flight available at that time. This was a rural area with many remote villages surrounded by forest and mountains, and there was no proper road or transportation to reach any nearby town. The only option left for us was to walk to Kathmandu.

After deciding to travel on foot, we started to gather food, utensils and blankets. The next morning around 4.30 a.m., the eight of us began our journey walking to Kathmandu, which was expected to cover about 235 km [146 miles]. In between, there were some short breaks. During many parts of our journey, I would sit on my father's shoulder, even when he also had to carry a heavy bag on his back. We trailed along the side of the river, and in this remote place there was no way of getting a hotel to stay. Once the sky got dark at around 7 p.m., we would find a cave for cooking dinner and resting for the night.

We would repeat the cycle again the next day. In the early morning we would embark on our walking journey, crossing many mountains and many rivers, burdened by our own heavy bags. Sometimes we needed to overcome obstacles, especially because there was a 6-year-old child in the group. I remember we would avoid surging waters during crossing of the river. One time, I was very afraid of crossing the river and wanted to give up. Fortunately, my kind father helped me by carrying me on his shoulders, along with his heavy bag. Whenever I felt frightened and scared, I would just close my eyes without thinking what was going to happen. With my father's strenuous efforts, I managed to cross many rivers and shaky metal bridges.

One night while we were resting inside an unknown cave, I looked at a faraway mountain and saw a place with many night stars twinkling across it. The scene looked so amazing and beautiful to me. When I asked my father what these twinkling lights were, he said those were lightbulbs powered by electricity. This was the first time in my life I had seen lightbulbs because in our village there was no electricity.

After that, we traveled by foot for almost five days until we finally reached a hotel and rested there. It was late at night and our group was preparing for the next day. In the early morning something would come, and we had to catch it. But I didn't know what it would be. Early the next morning, I suddenly saw two bright lights approaching us. It was noisy, its shape was like a house, so I said to my father, "Dad, a house is coming!" I had never seen any photo of a bus before. It looked strange and amazing. After three days of traveling by bus, we arrived at Triten Norbutse Monastery in Kathmandu. Altogether, the journey from my village to the monastery took us almost eight days.

At Triten Norbutse Monastery, we received the blessing from H.E Yongdzin Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, and stayed in a tin house near the monastery. After a few days, my father got a job as a cook in the Triten Norbutse kitchen, and we both stayed in the monastery storehouse (today, a shop). Every day, my father prepared food for the monks, and at night he taught me prayers and reverence. While we were sleeping together, I learned the Supplication Prayer (Soldep) of Nyame Sherap Gyaltzen and Praise of the Twelve Deeds of the Buddha Shenrap. While listening to my father's voice, I fell asleep.

During that period, I didn't get the chance to attend any classes. At that time there were only 15 monks at Triten Norbutse, most of them senior monks, and they still had to learn how to train children. Although I could not attend the teaching, I got to wear monk robes and attend the pujas (prayers and rituals).

One day after the Tibetan New Year in 1992, His Holiness the 33rd Menri Trizin Rinpoche came from India with some of his assistants for a short visit. This was when I received the ceremony of ordination from



*Geshe Sherab Palden's father Nyima Wangyal*

H.H the 33rd Menri Trizin Rinpoche and H.E Yongdzin Rinpoche. As part of the initiation of Tsering Tracha (tsering means long life and trached means to cut hair, done for new monks), I was given my new name, Sherab Palden.

H.E. Yongdzin Rinpoche told my father that I was too young to hang around there, so I should be sent to India to receive proper education. Fortunately, some assistants of His Holiness were still around and planning to return to India.



*My father and me at Triten Norbutse with the monk Samten Nyima, who later brought me to India, 1992*

While my father stayed at Triten Norbutse Monastery, I left for India together with one of the assistants of His Holiness, who came from our village, and two Tibetan friends from Dolanji. We traveled by bus, covering a distance of 1,250 km [777 miles] in about two days. While we were waiting at the Delhi bus terminal for the next bus, I saw many small shops, hawkers and cookies. It was like a big shopping mall to me. I was so excited that I walked here and there aimlessly and forgot the way back. I was lost for a while, very afraid and missed my father. Fortunately, my companions found me at last, and we got onto another bus. Later, after traveling about 10 hours on the road, we reached Menri Monastery in the Dolanji village in the evening. This was the final

destination of my journey from my village in Dolpo, Nepal. This was my new home, and I have been staying there since then.

I completed my secondary school in 2005 and became monk in 2005 at the age of 21. And after 15 years of studying philosophy and the vast and extensive traditional monastic studies on the five major treatises of Buddhist philosophical texts, I completed my geshe degree in 2020.

And now, I am the personal secretary to His Holiness the 34th Menri Trizin. When His Holiness goes outside of the monastery, I have to take care of all the arrangements. I am also responsible for his private office. I check and answer his mail, phone and correspondence. If somebody wants to visit His Holiness, I make the appointments. If people want blessing from His Holinesses or to receive teachings, they have to come through me.

As His Holiness the 33rd Menri Trizin Rinpoche used to say, if anyone has the right karma and monlam connection, they would come to Menri, so there was no need to find them. [Monlam is a Tibetan word that means a prayer or wish, sometimes from a previous life, that happens naturally.] I believe this happened to me too. At that time, I had never heard about the Menri Monastery and my parents didn't have the intention of sending me there, but it seems I was pulled by it.



*Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Geshe Sherab Palden in Montenegro*



## **The 3 Doors Invites You to Deepen Your Practice**

### **Range of Programs Offered**

The 3 Doors, founded by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, provides dynamic learning environments that support you to build a strong and meaningful meditation practice. We serve a growing international and intergenerational body of practitioners. Programs range from drop-in sessions to immersive study over multiple years and are offered in varying formats including online, in-person, live and prerecorded.

### Applications Open for 3 Doors Academies That Start in Spring 2024

The Academy is The 3 Doors signature program. This 2.5 year immersive meditation training provides you the opportunity to engage deeply in the process of self-discovery. Participation involves both online and in-person retreat commitments with monthly group Zoom sessions, individual teacher-mentor sessions, personal retreats and weeklong in-person group retreats.



#### North American Academy 7

Taught by Marcy Vaughn, Phil Tonne, and Anja Benesc  
Scholarships are available.

[Learn more](#)

[Apply](#)

#### Pre-Academy Mini-Retreat

Saturday, November 18, 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m. NY time, on Zoom

This event is open to all who are interested in learning more about the upcoming North American Academy. It will include three practices, one guided by each of the Academy teachers, as well as the opportunity to share experiences, ask questions and discuss what the Academy journey will be like. In addition, Marcy, Anja and Phil will lead a weekend retreat on Zoom January 27-28, 2024. Information about registering for these events will be posted on [The 3 Doors website](#) soon.

#### European Academy 3

Taught by Raven Lee, Nicolas Gounaropoulos, Tonny Maas and Walter Hofmann

[Learn more](#)

[Apply](#)

#### The Healing Power of Self-Compassion

A weekend retreat taught by the European Academy teachers October 6-8, on Zoom

In meeting life's uncertainties and challenges, we generally search for a way out of our suffering. Instead of bypassing or rejecting our pain, the wisdom of the 3 Doors supports us to open to the ways we have adapted and survived in our human journey.

[Learn more](#)

#### New Latin American Practice Group in Spanish Every other Thursday evening

As The 3 Doors prepares to launch its third Academy in Latin America later in 2024, it is offering a new open guided practice in Spanish with Latin American teachers Alejandro Chaoul-Reich, Rosario Arellano, Lourdes Hinojosa, Patricia Vigil and Carlos Villarreal. Join a growing community of practitioners who gather to learn and deepen their practice on Zoom every other Thursday.

Dates Scheduled: October 12 and 26, November 9 and 23, December 14, January 11 and 25, 5:30 p.m. Central Mexico time zone

[Join on Zoom](#)

#### Still Space to Join the Compassion Project

A comprehensive 9-month exploration of meditation as a pathway to compassion for self and others offered in English with Spanish translation and also in Dutch.

#### Compassion Project

October 18, 2023-June 12, 2024

Online via Zoom. Offered in English with Spanish translation with Rebecca Ergas.

[Learn more](#)

#### Compassion Project in Dutch with Tonny Maas

October 20, 2023-June 14, 2024

Online via Zoom. Offered in Dutch.

[Learn more](#)

#### The Heart of Self-Transformation. Exploring the Medicine of Breath, Awareness and Being

An Online Retreat with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

December 2 and 3, 2023

Over the course of two days, we will reflect on habitual patterns that limit our health, vitality and the expression of goodness that is inherent to us all. These habits can show up in our bodies as tension or exhaustion, in speech that is divisive or judgmental, and in our minds as fears and insecurities. Through simple meditation practices we awaken the natural medicine of breath and awareness, releasing limiting energetic patterns and discovering pathways of well-being and joy. In addition to teaching and guided practices, this retreat offers opportunities to reflect on and share our experiences of practice.

\*Spanish and German translation available. Additional languages will be posted soon.

[Learn more](#)

Additional programs offered online and in-person around the world can be found on [The 3 Doors homepage](#).



## Sharing the Timeless Joy

### Sharings from Retreatants Following Retreat on Sleep Yoga in 2010, from the VOCL Archives

From October 6 to 10, 2010, Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught at Serenity Ridge on *Sleep of Clear Light: The Practice of Sleep Yoga*. Students received instructions in how to bring more lucidity to both their waking and sleeping hours. A particularly memorable part of the instruction involved staying awake all one night and into the next day while continuing to engage in regular meditation practice. At day's end, after finally drifting into a welcome deep sleep, practitioners were awoken twice in the night by designated sangha members who offered gentle assistance in the sleep yoga practice.

Below are a few sharings from retreatants in their own words and photographs.

I will always cherish the time I spent at Ligmincha last week. The teachings from Rinpoche, whose beautiful book inspired me years ago, and whose lucidity and love are continually inspiring. The interactions with other retreat-goers, wonderful seekers from all over the country, with so many profound experiences, questions, insights. The sweet little room, the awesome tea selection, the amazing food. Thank you! - Henry K.



Serenity Ridge view. Photo by Henry Kantel

\* \* \*



Koi Pond at Serenity Ridge. Photo by Rose Lettier

Being at the retreat my sense of peace has expanded. The whole experience has been transformative and special. My deepest respect and gratitude to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. - Rose L.

\* \* \*

I have never heard a voice as beautiful as the voice I heard that night (twice!) when I was awakened from a deep sleep. The voice asked me if I had experienced the sleep of clear light. "No," I answered sleepily, without opening my eyes. I wanted only to hear that voice, the most ethereal and pure voice I ever remember hearing in all my life. My friends at the retreat laughed when I told them afterward that it was like the voice of an elvish princess from *The Lord of the Rings*.



Photograph by Rose Lettier

Then the owner of the voice asked me, "Are you having samsaric dreams?" and I said yes. She said "Okay! Then I will sing you the Guru Yoga prayer." She sang those four Tibetan lines, and that's when I dared to open one eye, and all I saw was a profile. I heard a most sincere and excellent chanting of that prayer with which we'd begun every practice, all week long. And it just filled my heart with joy. It was like the goddess herself (the khandro!) was singing. Then I went back to sleep.

As we were practicing in the gompa the day before, I had felt like I was not a very good student, because whenever I tried to meditate in my exhausted state I just went off into dreams. But then I remembered something Marcy (our practice leader) had told us, about how she keeps her eyes open at half-mast when she meditates, so that's what I did, and suddenly everything turned around! I saw that the physical exhaustion of staying up all night was my best friend because it offered only two choices, falling asleep or maintaining the intention to focus in meditation. I found an open space between those two contending forces and occupied it . . . and that space is still with me, even after the retreat is over. I feel connected through that space to Rinpoche, to his students and to the lineage.

All my thanks go out to Rinpoche and Serenity Ridge and Marcy and to all the rest who made this thing possible. "May we swiftly achieve the complete buddhahood of the three bodies!" -Joe S.

\* \* \*

For me this retreat was a magical transformation from inner randomness to whole joy and comfort. It also brought me to another level of sensitivity of the inner channels and chakras. The power of practices

and my intense personal experiences were so far beyond what I ever might have expected at the time of registering for the retreat. -Serge M.

\* \* \*

Overall this practice greatly expanded my recognition of "presence" during the waking state, and that is a very blessed thing, this aware spaciousness which appears as all these states. I wrote this poem about the retreat and would like to share it:

### Being Sleep

Sleep  
And  
Waking

Being

- Teala S.

\* \* \*

Let's put it this way: gazing at the sky is a whole different thing for me now. In five days it felt like I became a different man, more respectful and mindful of my nightly sacred sleep-time journey, and more consciously aware in the waking state. I was not prepared for the difficulty, subtlety and nuance of the beautiful clear-light practices. I gained a lot from my five days of group practice and intensive learning, and I'm deeply grateful for my time at Serenity Ridge. Thank you teacher, assistants, staff and fellow participants. I feel deep gratitude for the 17,000-year unbroken Bon tradition of teachings. New tools in hand, and with consistent home practice, I now have well-founded hope of a more joyful life and lucid death process. Whether death comes a callin' later today, or 50 years from now, I'm ready to accept her consciously and peacefully. I got what I came for, and much more. Call me "Giggling Buddha." - Walter W.

[Read the full article here](#)



## Student and Teacher

### Together on the Path



*We all have experienced difficulties sleeping. Some nights can even be troubling and restless. What is it that makes for a good sleep? How can we begin to think of doing dream or sleep yoga if we are finding it hard to rest and sleep well? In this excerpt from Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's book, The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep, Rinpoche points to the importance of preparing for sleep and how healing sleep can be.*

The average person, not knowing the principles of meditation, carries the stress, emotions, thoughts and confusions of the day into the night. For such a person there is no particular practice or time set aside for processing the day or calming down before entering sleep. Instead, sleep comes in the midst of distraction, and negativities are held in the mind throughout the night. When dream arises from those negativities, there is no stability in presence and the individual is carried away by the images and confusions of the dream world. The body remains tense with anxiety, or heavy with sadness, and the prana in the body is rough and uneven as the mind darts here and there. Sleep is disturbed, dreams are stressful or merely a pleasant escape, and the sleeper wakes tired and unrested in the morning, often continuing through the day in a negative state.

Even for one who does not practice dream or sleep yogas, it is beneficial to prepare for sleep, to take it seriously. Purifying the mind as much as possible before sleep, just as before meditating, generates more presence and positive qualities. Rather than carrying negative emotions into the night, use whatever skills you have to free yourself from such emotions. If you know how to allow the emotion to self-liberate, to dissolve into emptiness, do so. If you know how to transform it or provide the antidote, then use that knowledge. Try to connect with the lama, yidam, and dakini; pray to the Buddhas and deities; generate compassion. Do what you can to rid yourself of tension in the body and negative attitudes in the mind. Free of disturbance, with a light and easy mind, you will experience a sleep that is more restful

and healing. Even if there is an inability to do the rest of the practices, this practice is something positive that everyone can incorporate into daily life.

*The upcoming annual Fall Retreat and Serenity Ridge Dialogues will focus on Dream Yoga and Lucid Dreaming with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, Andrew Holocek, Gabriella Torres-Platas and Yangdron Kalsang on October 17-22 to be held in person and on Zoom. [Learn more/register](#)*



## Spanish Translation of VOCL

### Link to August 2023 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](#)  
Ligmincha International office: [\(+1\) 434-263-3657](#)

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