


[Current Issue](#)
[Previous Issues](#)
[Translations](#)
[Ligmincha International](#)
[Bookstore](#)
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## Volume 19, Number 6 / December 2019



### Letter from the Editors

## Manifesting Around the World



*Boudhanath stupa in Kathmandu, Nepal*

Dear Friends,

From Nepal to Italy to Poland to Brazil to Virginia to Mexico to so many places around the world, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche comes to us in person and via the Internet, through his live broadcasts and teachings and through the many photographs, stories and posts that he shares. Fortunately for all of us, even when we are not able to be on retreat with him in person, we can view the latest webcast and reconnect. Thanks to the efforts of many student volunteers, we can hear his words in our

own languages. And now through his recently launched new website, [CyberSangha.net](#), we can find all of this so easily!

It is from one of Rinpoche's webcasts, given in Kathmandu, Nepal, in 2018, that we've selected the teaching excerpt included in this issue: "Release Into the Dance of Stillness." Rinpoche is dedicated to his students, to sharing his life and travels, to teaching and helping and connecting to so many people through a refreshing creativity that manifests as the dance of stillness! Enjoy!

We have many announcements and happenings to report at Ligmincha International:

- A Mandala Offering ceremony (Thenshug) will be held for the long life of His Eminence Yongdzin Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, the most senior teacher and lineage holder of the Bön tradition, at the end of January 2020. See all the details below.
- Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and the Ligmincha Board of Directors share information about Rinpoche's plans for the year 2021.
- The 2020 dates and locations for Rinpoche's worldwide teaching schedule are now available on Ligmincha's website.
- Visit the CyberSangha website and mark your calendar for the upcoming Facebook Live Broadcasts.
- Lishu Institute is offering two residential retreats this winter, the first one beginning January 20 on Phowa and Bardo teachings. Find out more in the article below and enjoy photos from the recent European tour of Lishu teachers Dr. Sangmo Yangri and Geshe Sherab Lodoe.
- There are two upcoming February retreats at Serenity Ridge: February 1–2, 2020: "The Red Garuda: Powerful Wings of The Heart" with John Jackson and February 21–23: "Sherap Chamma: Mother of Wisdom and Love" with Marcy Vaughn.
- Read an article featured in *Tricycle* magazine: Blue Ridge Serenity by Joan Duncan Oliver, a brief history of Serenity Ridge Retreat Center over the past 20 years.
- The next Ligmincha Learning online course is January 4–February 22, 2020 on "Transforming Our Emotions Through the Six Lokas."
- GlideWing's next online course with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, "Awakening the Sacred Body," will be held January 4–26, 2020.
- Student and Teacher – Together on the Path is a regular feature of VOCL. Rinpoche answers a student's dzogchen question on integrating thought with the nature of mind.
- The 3 Doors announces an online course on "Igniting the Fire of Creativity" with Marcy Vaughn beginning in January.
- View the Spanish translation of the October VOCL.

In Bön,  
Aline and Jeff Fisher

### Receive VOCL by Email

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### Bookstore & Tibet Shop

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

We hope it will return soon.

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

### About Voice of Clear Light

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

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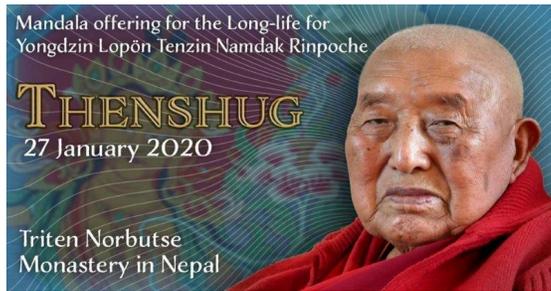
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## Honoring H.E. Yongdzin Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche

### Special Events in Kathmandu in January 2020



From January 22–30, 2020, Triten Norbutse Monastery in Kathmandu, Nepal will celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Yungdrung Bön Academy of Higher Studies. Many special events and activities are planned. Among them is a January 27 Thenshug, a mandala offering for the long life of Bön's most senior teacher and lineage holder, His Eminence Yongdzin Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, as we celebrate his 95th birthday.

Thenshug literally means to "stay everlasting," and is a ritual performed to support and extend the lifespan of an important master or practitioner. The Thenshug is also an occasion for the students to express their devotion toward their master, who keeps the Buddha's teaching and spreads it untiringly, and to fulfill all his wishes.

The Thenshug will take place at Triten Norbutse, on January 27, 2020. Since so many Western students have a heart connection with Yongdzin Rinpoche but are not able to travel to Nepal, Ligmincha International is organizing a series of activities online and at our centers around the world.

Beginning now, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche encourages all practitioners to accumulate recitations of the long-life mantra for Yongdzin Rinpoche: *SO DRUM A KAR MU LA TING NAM Ö DU MU YE TSE NI DZA*. Our accumulated mantras will be offered to His Eminence by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche (who will be in California) on the day of the Thenshug ceremony. Our hope is that we can offer at least 10 million long-life mantras to Yongdzin Rinpoche.

[Add your accumulations here](#)

On January 26, 2020, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Ligmincha International will host several events as a way of celebrating Yongdzin Rinpoche's life and work. We will also be organizing local in-person and online activities. Please see your local Ligmincha chapter's social media accounts or website for information about specific events in your area or language. All events will be streamed on Facebook Live, Zoom (free download required) or both.

#### Current Schedule for January 26, 2020

##### Mandala Offering and Long-Life Practice with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

**When:** 10–11 a.m. Eastern time

**Where:** Live on Zoom and Facebook (details to be provided)

**Description:** Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will lead us in offering a mandala, reciting Yongdzin Rinpoche's Long-Life Prayer, and reciting the Long-Life Mantra.

##### Devotion to the Masters and Stories by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

**When:** 1–2:15 p.m. Eastern time

**Where:** [Ligmincha International Facebook page](#)

**Description:** Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will teach on the importance of devotion and will tell stories about his teachers and the great masters of Yungdrung Bön.

##### Local and National Long-Life Mantra Recitation

**When:** 3–4 p.m. Eastern time

**Where:** Via Zoom and Ligmincha Facebook Pages (details to be provided)

**Description:** Ligmincha International organizations and local chapters will host group practices for the accumulation of the long-life mantra on behalf of Yongdzin Rinpoche. These mantras will be added to the total number of mantras accumulated previously.



### 'Release Into the Dance of Stillness'

#### An Excerpt from Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's January 2018 Facebook Live Teaching, Kathmandu, Nepal

Usually when we think about stillness, we think about not moving, not doing, not manifesting, not developing, not accomplishing – some sense of being frozen in stillness. But that's not the case. The true



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sense of stillness is the full mastery in movement – mastery in development, mastery in manifestation, mastery in creativity. That is the true realization of stillness and, as we all know, stillness is a very important part of our practice for entering into or accessing our true nature.

Sometimes people who have been doing meditation for a long time, just being still, become very stiff, very rigid, very tense. Because they are trying to be still with this deep sense of rigidity, a sense of resting fully in the nature of mind becomes too far away for them.

So today I'd like to share about discovering the dance of stillness. To begin with, let's just sit for a moment and simply be still in our body. As I'm speaking, just bring your awareness to your body, an awareness of the stillness in your body. In this stillness, you might feel some sense of rigidity, stiffness. But if you're aware of that, then simply allow it to go. Breathe it out, and rest deeper. Then in that depth of stillness, there is a sense of movement, of freedom, there is a sense of dance. So just try and connect with that a little bit right now.

In our everyday life, most of the time we lose the connection to the source because of our actions. Our actions are the opposite of what this idea of stillness is. These actions are driven by duality, pain, confusion, fear, and they are not arising as spontaneous manifestations. They are driven by our disconnectedness from the source. They are driven by our being lost in actions. In some sense, our actions in life are the cause for losing the connection to the stillness.



It is important that each of us look at our own life very closely, and ask what does this word stillness mean to you? What does awareness of the stillness in your body mean to you? And then look at the actions in your life – either the actions that you have to do professionally, or the actions that you like to do, or that you're driven to do, or that you're addicted to doing. Whatever those actions are and from wherever these actions come, ask yourself: Do these actions cause you to lose the connection to the source, to the stillness? Or are these actions arising as dances of the stillness and of your connection to the source? This is a question that each one of us can ask ourselves.

So first, I want everyone to reflect on the recognition of your actions – everything that you do. Just think back on your life and everything that you have been doing – today, this week, this month, this year. Ask, how many of these actions are created by pain, confusion, duality, addictions? How many of them? Look at everything – including your spiritual practices, including your social service, including your profession, including your sense of trying to help your family, or help anybody. See how many of these actions are driven by disconnectedness, pain, duality and fear. These actions then are not the dance of stillness, but rather the manifestation of disconnectedness.

However, you could be doing any of these same things as the dance of stillness when you are connected to the source. Your profession becomes like a dance of the stillness. Your social service becomes like a dance of the stillness. All of your actions, particularly those things that you do with the body, are a dance of stillness when they are connected to the source. So are your actions a dance of the stillness? Are your actions connected to the source and the stillness? That is a good question to ask yourself and to reflect on.

When you realize that many of your actions are not really the dance of stillness, but rather a manifestation of duality, look at the consequences of that. You are not being very creative in doing what you do, and you are not necessarily able to accomplish what you are trying to do. Maybe the effect is that you end up doing a lot, but not necessarily accomplishing anything – all because the things that you are doing are not the dance of the stillness, they are a manifestation of duality and being lost in action that is lost in pain. Those actions can be very draining, very stressful and disconnecting, and not necessarily accomplishing what you wish, because of where they are coming from.

Secondly, you can come to see that many of those actions are absolutely unnecessary. This is a very important point. During this last winter retreat at Serenity Ridge, I encouraged everyone, including myself, to reduce their actions by at least by 5 to 10 percent to facilitate more connection to the stillness. That would mean less actions not only in your formal meditation, but more importantly in your informal lifestyle. That is not to say you will be less creative and accomplish less when you do this. No. You will definitely be more creative, more restful and accomplish more, because your actions will be more like the dances of the stillness and coming from the connection to the source. Even a positive action that comes from disconnectedness will still have an effect that is more like a negative action because of the outcome. It may at first look like it is coming from love, but then love becomes hate. It's like you are trying to rest, but the rest becomes stressful. Or like you are trying to connect, but then you

end up disconnecting. Then in some sense the outcome of your action becomes negative. That is why reducing such actions is helpful.

So how would you do this? Basically, be aware of the kind of commitments that you make with people, and don't become overly enthusiastic about things, or don't enthusiastically make unrealistic promises. Rather, when you are moving into making an enthusiastic promise, for instance, then just settle down, relax, reflect, think carefully, and from there you can say yes or no with some sense of clarity.

Reflecting in that way you may find more time to realize that there are a lot of actions that are absolutely not necessary. In the absence of those actions, you can rest more, recover more, heal more, be more creative. You can connect more to the source, feel the dance of the stillness and manifest those dances in your life. That is important.

So self-reflecting, recognize how many of these doings are absolutely unnecessary, not only unnecessary but how they are negatively affecting you. Realize that often you are doing something to become more happy but you are becoming more sad. You are doing something to accomplish something but you are not accomplishing it. You are doing something to gain something but you are losing it. You are doing something to connect with someone but you are disconnecting with them. You are doing something to become more happy but you end up being more depressed. It is because all of those doings are coming from the wrong space – a lack of connection to the source and to the stillness in yourself. They are not the dance of stillness. But when you bring a little more consciousness, more awareness, then naturally you feel more connection to that stillness. Naturally you feel more connection to that movement – the dance of stillness, this sense of being unblocked. When the dance of stillness manifests, every doing is doing from freedom, joy, flow. Every doing is like a dance. There's not a sense of effort.



## A Letter to Students from Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

### Yearlong Sabbatical Planned for 2021



Photo by Brian Harris

To All My Students,

I send you my heartfelt greetings. After much reflection, I am writing to share with you an important decision that I have made. As you know, I always encourage people to look deeply into and reflect on their lives. I, too, reflect on my life, family, and spiritual practice. As I turn 60, I find that I want to spend more time with my family and make space for personal retreat. So, starting on January 3, 2021, I will be taking a yearlong sabbatical. This will be a time for me to actively engage with stillness, silence, and spaciousness and explore them in a new way.

From now until the end of 2020, I will continue my usual teaching schedule globally and online. During this time, I encourage all of you to participate as actively as you can. In 2021 my only scheduled teaching activities will be summer retreats at Serenity Ridge in the US and Chamma Ling in Poland. In January 2022 I will resume my regular schedule. While I am away, I will not actively engage in social media. This means that I won't have any scheduled Facebook Live events. When inspired I may occasionally share poems, thoughts, and reflections. I look forward to returning from my sabbatical and sharing its fruit with all of you.

Preserving and sharing this tradition is my life's mission. My goal has always been to help my beloved teachers, spread the teachings, and assist Bön lamas and centers in any ways that I can. Every year the teachings spread, and more people are finding these beautiful practices. I see them bring so much goodness to people's lives everywhere I go. Teaching, writing, connecting, and sharing is what energizes me. It is joyful, spontaneous, nourishing work, and it is indescribably rewarding. It is my calling.

As always, stay connected – now, and during my sabbatical – to the teachings, to one another, to me, and especially to yourselves. [Ligmincha International](#), [The 3 Doors](#), and [CyberSangha.net](#) offer so many ways to connect, practice, and grow. They exist to support you on your path. I hope that you will take full advantage of them.

With much love and many blessings, now and always,  
Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

*Tenzin Wangyal*

### A Letter from the Ligmincha Board of Directors



## Supporting Rinpoche and Local, National or Cyber Sanghas

Dear Sangha,

Rinpoche has maintained an extraordinarily full teaching and travel schedule for more than 30 years. The Board is fully supportive of our Spiritual Director, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, in his wish to take a yearlong sabbatical beginning January 2021. We are glad that he can take this time to focus on his life, family, and personal practice. We know that Rinpoche looks forward to discovering and sharing his insights with all of us in 2022 as much as we await seeing him return.

We are writing to share additional information to assist you and your local, national, or cyber sanghas.

- Rinpoche's sabbatical does not begin for more than a year. There are many opportunities all around the world to practice with and receive teachings from Rinpoche in person before his sabbatical. ([View Rinpoche's global teaching schedule for 2020.](#))
- Rinpoche's last retreat of 2020 will be at Serenity Ridge. We encourage everyone who can to attend. For those who cannot travel to the center, we intend to make the entire retreat available online.
- During his yearlong sabbatical, Rinpoche will hold summer retreats in both Europe (at Chamma Ling in Wilga, Poland) and the US (at Serenity Ridge in Virginia). We anticipate these two retreats will be fully attended. Please encourage anyone in your sangha wanting to attend either or both to register as soon as registration opens. These retreats are likely to sell out.
- Our resident lamas, Geshe Denma Gyaltsen, Geshe Yungdrung Gyatso, Lama Kalsang Nyima, and Lama Yungdrung Lodeo, are all actively teaching, offering instruction, and performing rituals. They are teaching extensively in Europe, Mexico, Central and South America, and the United States. Our geshes and lamas are excellent teachers, and we encourage everyone to seek opportunities to be with them. Lishu Institute in India also remains a place of long-term study during this time, under the guidance of Geshe Thupten Negi, Geshe Sherab Lodeo, and Dr. Sangmo Yangri.
- We will be inviting other Bön lamas to teach at Ligmincha centers around the world. These will be wonderful opportunities to extend our connection to the Bön lineage.
- We will expand our live and online practice opportunities in many languages. The Dutch, English, German, Polish, Portuguese, and Spanish communities are already practicing together online in real time. We continue to seek opportunities for group practice online and in person. If your community needs assistance developing online opportunities, please write to our president Rob Patzig or board member Frank Jeri, whose email addresses are below.
- Online courses with Rinpoche will remain available and new ones are being developed. These can be found both on [ligminchalearning.com](http://ligminchalearning.com) and on [glidewing.com](http://glidewing.com). Our intention is to release new courses in advance of his sabbatical.

Our own experience in learning of Rinpoche's intention to take time away from teaching left us all feeling many different things: happiness, sadness, anxiety, surprise, and more. But we are reminded of a story Rinpoche often shares at retreat. He had the great good fortune to live with his teacher, His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, for many years. They no longer have many opportunities to see one another, but their connection is never broken – they are never apart from one another in their hearts and minds. Like them, this coming time is a special opportunity for each of us to experience the connection that comes from abiding in the inner refuge. We are always connected.

Rinpoche's goal, the goal of Ligmincha International's Board, and the goal of our staff over the course of the next year is to ensure that all of us stay connected and can support one another in 2021. We are actively planning for Rinpoche's return in 2022, with a full calendar of online and in-person activities. In the meantime, we are here to serve and support each of you. Please contact any of us if we can be of assistance to you or your sangha.

We ask your support in communicating Rinpoche's announcement and the contents of this letter to your community.

In service,

Rob Patzig, US ( [r.patzig@ligmincha.org](mailto:r.patzig@ligmincha.org) )  
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**Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's Teaching Schedule for Next Three Months**

## Full 2020 Schedule Available on Ligmincha Website

Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's full 2020 Schedule by Date is now available on the [Ligmincha website](#), with location, teaching topic and contact information. Rinpoche's schedule also is available as individual [Events](#) boxes on the website – the ones with photos have complete information; information about others is still to come.

You can also find Rinpoche's schedule of online events, including his live Facebook broadcasts, at Rinpoche's new [CyberSangha website](#) and at [Ligmincha Learning](#) and [GlideWing](#).

Here is a listing of Rinpoche's teachings over the next three months.

- **December 7–8, 2019: Lima, Peru:** Connecting with the Source. Email: [frankjeri@hotmail.com](mailto:frankjeri@hotmail.com)
- **December 26, 2019–January 1, 2020:** Serenity Ridge Shipman, Virginia: Winter Retreat: [Dzogchen Practice Retreat: Turning Inward](#)
- **January 4–22, 2020:** Online course through Ligmincha Learning: [Transforming Our Emotions Through the Six Lokas](#)
- **January 10–12, 2020:** Houston, Texas: The Power of Mantra: A, Om, Hung. Visit: [Ligmincha Texas](#)
- **January 18–19, 2020:** Pasadena, California: [The Practice of Chod Fear & Attachment – Doorways to Liberation](#). Email: [dndbenson@gmail.com](mailto:dndbenson@gmail.com)
- **February 28–March 1, 2020:** Berkeley, California: The Body of Light: Transformation Through Space, Light and Energy, Part 3. Email [Laura Shekerjian](mailto:Laura Shekerjian)
- **March 3–8, 2020:** Mexico: Topic TBA soon. Visit: [Ligmincha Mexico](#)
- **March 7–December 31, 2020:** Online course through Ligmincha Learning: [Ngöndro: The Foundational Practices](#)



*Rinpoche teaching in The Netherlands*



## Update on CyberSangha Broadcasts by Tenzin Rinpoche

### View Rinpoche's Facebook Live Teachings Without Entering Facebook



**CyberSangha**  
Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche invites you to connect with him, the ancient Tibetan teachings and fellow students around the world through regular live broadcasts that can be easily viewed on [Rinpoche's Facebook page](#). You don't need a Facebook account to view these teachings.

There's good news for those who prefer not to visit Facebook at all: You can now view many of Rinpoche's recent Facebook Live recordings, as well as some of his upcoming live streams, directly on Rinpoche's new website, [CyberSangha.net](#). Through the assistance of volunteers, over time the plan is to have nearly all of Rinpoche's recorded broadcasts and most of his live streams viewable directly on CyberSangha.net — just visit the page of the website devoted to the specific teaching to view.

The recently launched CyberSangha website includes not only Rinpoche's full schedule of upcoming live broadcasts, but also tips for viewing, opportunities for connecting with fellow students and instructions for accessing translations in multiple languages.

Mark your calendar for the scheduled broadcasts shown below. They are free and open to all.

- **Thursday, December 12, 1 p.m.** New York time: [Cultivating Compassion — Questions & Answers](#)
- **Sunday, December 15, 2019, 1 p.m.** New York time: [Poetry of Tibet](#)
- **Thursday, December 19, 2019, 1 p.m.** New York time: [Retrieving the Elemental Essences from Nature](#)
- **Saturday, January 4, 2020, 10 a.m.** New York time: [The Power of Forgiveness](#)
- **Thursday, January 9, 2020, 1 p.m.** New York time: [Retrieving the Elemental Essences from Nature — Questions & Answers](#)
- **Thursday, January 16, 2020, 1 p.m.** New York time: [Opening to a Deeper Wisdom](#)
- **Thursday, January 23, 2020, 1 p.m.** New York time: [Opening to a Deeper Wisdom — Questions & Answers](#)

View live on [Rinpoche's Facebook Page](#)

Learn more about the [translations](#) on the CyberSangha website

[View the archive of recorded broadcasts](#) or search by category or keyword



## Lishu Institute 2020 Retreats

### Enjoy Photos from Lishu Teachers' Summer European Tour



Two upcoming retreats are set at Lishu Institute, Ligmincha's residential retreat center for practice and study of Tibetan Bön teachings, beginning in early 2020.

Since it is often challenging for retreat-goers to find extended periods of time for retreats, Lishu is now offering retreats for two months, one month or two weeks. Students can join the program for one or more retreats each year.

A retreat at Lishu Institute is a great opportunity for in-depth study and practice of the Bön tradition in the serene rural environment of the retreat center. Lishu is located in the northern Indian state of Uttarakhand, not far from the state capital of Dehradun.

Here are the topics for the next retreats offered at Lishu in the new year. All retreats include teaching and practice.

- **January 20– February 16, 2020 (4 weeks):** Phowa and Bardo from the Bön Mother Tantra
- **Feb. 24– March 22, 2020 (4 weeks):** Trekchod and Togel from the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyü (Four Cycles of Precepts)

Lishu Institute was founded by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche to help preserve the ancient spiritual tradition and culture of Bön from Tibet.

For more information, email [Sangmo Yangri](mailto:Sangmo Yangri).

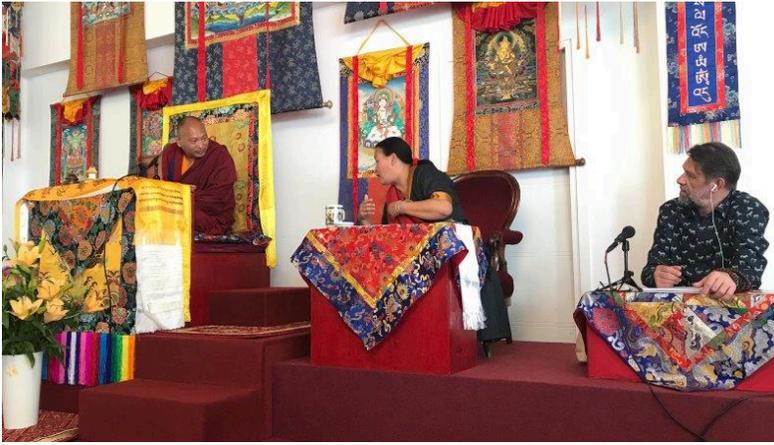
[Visit Lishu's website](#)

[Visit Lishu's Facebook page](#)

Enjoy these photos from the Summer European Tour with Lishu teachers Geshe Sherab Lodoe and Dr. Sangmo Yangri.



*Geshe Sherab Lodoe and Dr. Sangmo Yangri at Chamma Ling Poland with Oliver Wirtz and Florian Bruckmann*



*Sangmo-la translating for His Holiness the 34th Menri Trizin at Chamma Ling  
Poland Summer Retreat*



*In Frankfurt, Germany*



*In Budapest, Hungary*



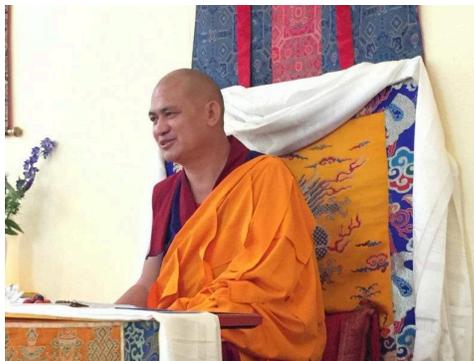
*Teaching Phowa Retreat in Berlin, Germany*



*Teaching Phowa Retreat in Berlin, Germany*



*Dr. Sangmo Yangri in Finland*



*Geshe Sherab Lodeo teaching in Germany*



In Helsinki, Finland



In Helsinki, Finland



## Two Retreats in February 2020 at Serenity Ridge

### Red Garuda with John Jackson and Sherap Chamma with Marcy Vaughn

Serenity Ridge is pleased to offer two upcoming weekend retreats in February 2020. "The Red Garuda: Powerful Wings of the Heart" with John Jackson will be held February 1-2, 2020. "Sherap Chamma: Mother of Wisdom and Love" with Marcy Vaughn will be held February 21-23.



#### February 1-2, 2020:

"The Red Garuda: Powerful Wings of The Heart" with John

Jackson. Mythologies throughout the world recount the story of the eagle-man, the one who transcends and rises above mundane existence to connect with the wisdom of the spacious, luminous sky. From the western Himalayas, across India, to the Mongolian plains, to the Indonesian archipelago, the Garuda

represents this transcendent quality present in all humans, that which empowers and removes all obstacles to our spiritual development.

The Red Garuda is especially known as a healing practice for emotional and physical problems, both for ourselves and others, for the fiery strength of enlightened energy quickly burns away all obstacles. It also is known for its ability to resolve issues related to disturbances of the nagas, the beings of the waters. Please join us for this weekend and connect with the power, strength and courageous wisdom that lie within your innermost being.

[Learn more/register](#)



**February 21-23, 2020:** "Sherap Chamma: Mother of Wisdom and Love" with Marcy Vaughn. In many cultures the primordial female energy is seen as the origin of existence and the source of all positive qualities. As such, Sherap Chamma, Mother of Wisdom and Love, is the source of wisdom, and her medicine is love and compassion. The teachings of Sherap Chamma comprise one of the most important tantric cycles of the ancient Bön tradition.

In this retreat, participants will learn a beautiful and simple meditation practice enabling each to directly connect with the divine feminine energy. Within the support of the group, an environment is created to promote profound healing of physical, energetic, emotional and spiritual dimensions of life. With visualization, the sound of mantra and deep contemplation, participants can make a personal connection to this sacred form of the universal mother, Sherap Chamma, and are guided through this connection to innate wisdom and the love and compassion that naturally radiate from that wisdom.

[Learn more/register](#)



## Blue Ridge Serenity by Joan Duncan Oliver

### Tricycle Magazine Feature on Serenity Ridge

Joan Duncan Oliver has been a Buddhist practitioner for 40 years and is a graduate of *The 3 Doors Academy* and *3 Doors Compassion Project*. She is an award-winning journalist and author whose most recent book is *Buddhism: An Introduction to the Buddha's Life, Teachings, and Practices*. In this article for *Tricycle magazine* (Winter 2019), she shares some of the history and beauty of *Serenity Ridge, Ligmincha's Retreat Center in Virginia*.



Ask the Bon Dzogchen master Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche whether setting is an essential aspect of spiritual practice, and his response is unequivocal: "The building and the environment are both very important for our inner personal development and spiritual development." Hence the key role they have played in the development of Serenity Ridge, Tenzin Rinpoche's retreat center in Shipman, Virginia, which is also the headquarters of Ligmincha International, founded to preserve and disseminate Bön Buddhist teachings and Tibetan culture. "In both the exterior—the colors, the paint—and the interior decoration, I wanted the buildings to look Asian/Tibetan, to support a Tibetan wisdom tradition," he emphasizes.

Bön is Tibet's oldest indigenous spiritual tradition, and Tenzin Rinpoche—a geshe (equivalent to a Ph.D.) and former monk—was one of the first teachers to introduce Bön to Westerners. Having come to the US in 1991, he had already established a small Bön center in Charlottesville, Virginia, when he began looking for a permanent place to hold retreats. He was drawn to the Blue Ridge Mountain area "for its spirit and energy"—and its resemblance to Tibet and northern India, where he was raised. But much of rural Virginia is spiritually and socially conservative, wary of outsiders with unfamiliar practices and views. After the first property that the search committee pursued fell through, they regrouped and found a place in Nelson County, which had already welcomed several spiritual groups.

The property seemed ideal: 19 wooded acres, along with a few modest buildings and spectacular views. It remained for Tenzin Wangyal to check it out. "Before I came to Serenity Ridge the first time, the weather had been a bit dramatic—a lot of rain, water almost up to the bridge. The day I went, the rain stopped, the water went down, and when I arrived at Serenity Ridge, there was a full rainbow shining there. I felt an instant connection. Without looking any further, we decided to make this our home and a home for the Bön tradition in America."

It was an inspired choice. The initial 19 acres acquired in 1997 have since expanded to some 90 acres through a joint purchase with an environmental group. With the addition of several new buildings, the center now resembles a small Himalayan village perched on the ridge that gave it its name.



The previous owners' 1970s redbrick ranch house became Lama House, quarters for Tenzin Wangyal and visiting lamas. A nearby "mother-in-law" cottage was redeployed as an office to coordinate the retreats and workshops hosted by the center throughout the year. A storage shed on the premises was repurposed as the gopma—Tibetan for temple or meditation hall—with altars, thangkhas, water offering bowls, and other ritual trappings replacing the tractor and lawn mowers.

The first structure the Bön community built from the ground up was Garuda House. Linked to the gopma by a covered loggia, it is organized around a classic Tibetan-style pavilion with a shrine room housing rare manuscripts and an outdoor balcony from which a conch shell horn is blown to summon meditators to practice. Wings on either side contain living quarters for retreatants. Constructed in stages from 1999 to 2007, Garuda House, like the gopma and office, is faced in wood siding painted red—another traditional design element. The upswept roofs of the wings evoke the wings of the garuda, a mythical birdlike creature that is a protector deity in Bön and a symbol of primordial nature in Bön dzogchen teachings.

The heart of the community now is Kunzang Khang, a monumental, 12,000-square-foot, three-story building that opened to great ceremony in April 2019. Kunzang, Tenzin Rinpoche explains, "means 'good for all,' accommodating all ways and means, all approaches." And all activities. The building houses a dining hall and kitchen, a place for socializing, a meeting-room-cum-practice-area-cum-performance



John Massie, a landscape architect and longtime student of Tenzin Wangyal, designed Garuda House, the gumpa, and Kunzang Khang. He pushed for a simpler, more contemporary design for the new building, "but Tenzin Wangyal kept telling me, 'No, I want it to look more Tibetan!'"

If the aesthetic at Kunzang Khang is determinedly ancient Tibet, the infrastructure is strictly 21st-century America. A cadre of licensed carpenters, plumbers, and electricians installed cutting-edge lighting, heating, and cooling systems, and every effort was made to use green materials. The dining chairs are recycled—a gift from a hotel in Charlottesville that was redoing its dining room. Consistent with the Ligmincha ethos, which relies on donations and volunteer labor, many of the decorative elements were created by sangha members. One couple turned their living room into an art studio to fashion 90 or so fabric-covered acoustic panels for the dining hall ceiling. Tenzin Wangyal's Mexican sangha sent mandalas to hang in the entrance hall, and two visiting Bön lamas painted traditional Tibetan symbols around the front door. The door itself was a custom design donated by its manufacturer, a student in The 3 Doors Academy, The 3 Doors' signature two-and-a-half-year program. Another sangha member gold-leafed a panel for the door.



*Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and John Massie.*



The arrival of Kunzang Khang set off a flurry of building at Serenity Ridge, including a meditation garden and a stupa—a reliquary—donated by a sangha member in honor of her late husband, a former monk. Visiting lamas painted the stupa and made the traditional 100,000 tsa-tsas—miniature clay sacred objects to seal inside it.

Sangha members who lend their time and talents to such projects at Serenity Ridge view their efforts as spiritual practice. It's all part of completing what Tenzin Wangyal refers to as "the mandala," a reference to the sacred geometric form—a circle or square

symbolizing the universe—in which a Tibetan monastery is traditionally laid out. Completing the mandala with a new, larger temple up the hill from the existing gumpa will be "a kind of offering," Tenzin Wangyal says. John Massie adds, "The process is very Tibetan. I think of all those old monasteries I've visited in Nepal, India, and Tibet. They were built over time."

[View article](#)



## Ligmincha Learning Online Course Begins in January

### 'Transforming Our Emotions Through the Six Lokas'



*Shenlha Okar – Essential Buddha of the Six Lokas Practices*

Ligmincha Learning is pleased to offer an online course with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche on "Transforming Our Emotions Through the Six Lokas." This seven-week course runs from January 4–February 22, 2020.

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 Bön 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 or greed, ignorance, jealousy, pride and laziness. Through each meditation we examine our habitual patterns so that we may recognize them, then invoke the enlightened energy of the Buddhas to purify and transform us so that we and all other beings might not continue to suffer

in this way. The practices have a deep healing and transformative power, and are traditionally practiced at length as a preliminary to dzogchen contemplation.

[Learn more and register](#)

**UPCOMING:**

**February 1–29, 2020:** "Sherap Chamma, Mother of Wisdom and Love" taught by Marcy Vaughn.

**February 29–April 4, 2020:** "Treasures of Bön: History, Lineage & Practices" with Geshe Denma Gyaltsen.



## 'Awakening the Sacred Body'

### GlideWing Online Workshop Starts January 4



Start the new year with "Awakening the Sacred Body: The Tibetan Yogas of Breath and Movement," an online workshop offered through GlideWing, with personal guidance from Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. This three-week online workshop, offered January 4–26, 2020, instructs you in practices of Tibetan yoga, practices that have been used for thousands of years to open and awaken the energy centers and channels of the subtle energy body.

Students will explore two sets of practices that, while easy to perform, can bring profound mental, emotional and physical benefits. In the Nine Breathings of Purification, you will rely on the power of the breath to clear and open three channels of light within the body as a means to connect with the natural mind. The Tsa Lung movements will help you open five chakras within the central channel of the body in order to access the deeper wisdom

that is always available.

This three-week online workshop features guidance and support from Rinpoche as you work with the practices, instruction via Internet-based video and an easy-to-use course site. There are no set class times, and instructional videos remain available.

**Coming in February:** "The Truth That Sets You Free: Discovering Your Inner Wisdom Through the Practices of Waking and Sleeping." February 15–March 8, 2020.

[Learn more/register](#)



## News from The 3 Doors

### Upcoming Course and Presenting Our Graduates!



*Congratulations, graduates! Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, Kallon Basquin, Gabriel Rocco and Marcy Vaughn with recent graduates of The 3 Doors North American Academy, October 2019. Photo by Jude Gorjanc.*

The 3 Doors is pleased to announce a new online course starting soon and the next 3 Doors Academy beginning in September 2020.

Join 3 Doors senior teacher Marcy Vaughn for the online course on "Igniting the Fire of Creativity" in January–February 2020. Are you living an inspired life? In this course, participants will explore meditation practices that support having a vital relationship with your inherent creativity, to care well for yourself and others, and to awaken the inspiration to express your life fully. You will be supported to explore the power of self-generating sound through following the energetic map of the chakra system within the body and chanting the Five Warrior Syllables. These five sacred sounds from the tradition of Bön Buddhism have been engaged for centuries to remove obstacles and ripen the capacities of the practitioner. This six-week self-guided course includes six prerecorded teachings, released once a week, and three practice and discussion sessions that may be joined in real time or accessed as recordings.

[Learn more/register](#)

The next 3 Doors North American Academy will begin in September 2020. One of the main features of this unique program is the 63 transformations or life changes that participants document as they apply 3 Doors practices to their daily lives to benefit themselves and others: 21 in relation to yourself, 21 in relation to family and friends, and 21 in relation to your professional life or participation in society. This two-and-a-half-year Academy program is a deep exploration into applying The 3 Doors practices in real-life situations and liberating your mind to be of benefit to others. This program consists of six in-person group retreats, several live group practice sessions each month on video conference, which may be accessed as recordings later, and one-on-one mentor sessions with a senior teacher.

[Learn more/apply](#)



## Student and Teacher

### Together on the Path

*As students on the Tibetan Bön Buddhist path, we offer our teachers a range of questions from the simple to the complex. Here is a dzogchen question from oral teachings given by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche at the 2000 Summer Retreat at Serenity Ridge.*

**Student:** Thought obscures *rigpa*. If you are a very experienced practitioner, can you integrate thought with *rigpa*?

**Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche:** Yes. Let's put it this way. If you are an advanced practitioner, you will be able to integrate, but that does not mean a fully enlightened being has thought. Let's take an example of an individual who at first is unable to be together with someone, then is not bothered by it, then is able to be together, and then likes to be together. First you say, "I don't like a person." That person is an enemy, an obstacle or disturbance for you so you cannot be in the same place as that person. So you work on it and can accept the presence of that person in a big room with a lot of people. That means you are coming closer. Then the room can become smaller with fewer people in it, and then it comes to the point where you don't mind that person's presence. Then you kind of miss the presence of that person. And then it comes to the place where you really want that person to be there.



The person is the same, you are still you, but the relationship has been changing. This is about your development as a practitioner – how you are able to be with your emotions and limits and dualities and experiences. "I'm feeling not very good today and that is fine." The one who is able to say, "no big deal," is getting better. What happens is the more it becomes a support for you, the less it disturbs you; the less it disturbs you, the less it leaves karmic imprints, and the freer you become from your experiences. You have experiences and they are gone, in contrast to previous times when the experience stays there.

You can think this way: the whole world is there to help you and make you happy and support you. If you see in that way, everybody seems as if they are helping you. It is a pleasant experience. Some days are like that: you don't know why, but it seems everybody likes you. You go for coffee; it seems like everybody you meet likes you. Everybody seems like an ornament. Other days, even the people who are supposed to like you hate you; they don't care about you; they are not paying any attention to you. And the other people you encounter are of course not paying attention to you.



## Spanish Translation of VOCL

[Link to October Issue Now Available](#)

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



## Upcoming Retreats

### Serenity Ridge Retreat Center

The events listed below will take place at Serenity Ridge Retreat Center, Ligmincha International headquarters located in rural Nelson County, Virginia. To register, or for more information about these and other retreats throughout the year, visit the [Serenity Ridge website](#), [email](#) or call 434-263-6304.

**December 26, 2019–January 1, 2020**

**Winter Retreat—Dzogchen Practice Retreat: Turning Inward**

with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

**February 1–2, 2020**

**The Red Garuda: Powerful Wings Of The Heart**

with John Jackson

**February 21–23, 2020**

**Sherap Chamma: Mother of Wisdom and Love**

with Marcy Vaughn

**April 2–5, 2020**

**Spring Retreat—Topic to be announced soon**

with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

**April 5–7, 2020**

**Serenity Ridge Dialogues—Topic to be announced soon**

with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

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

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