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Volume 20, Number 6 / December 2020



Letter from the Editors

Bringing Lightness to Life



Dear Friends,

This issue features two teachings by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche from his online retreat on the "Body of Light" hosted by Ligmincha Poland this summer. Both point us back to what is important—living life fully in the present and bringing more lightness to our view, our energy, and our actions.

Ligmincha is very happy to announce details about the NEW five-year Dzogchen Experiential Transmission of Zhang Zhung series. It begins with the upcoming online winter retreat: "Part 1: Ngöndro," starting December 27

on Zoom. The ngöndro teaching is a prerequisite for the next in the series, typically offered during winter retreats at Serenity Ridge. See all the details below and register soon!

How can we support Ligmincha International to continue serving the global community during these difficult times? Please read Rob Patzig's heartfelt letter for inspiration. Let's share our gratefulness however we can for this incredibly precious path of the Bön, and for all our teachers, and all that Ligmincha brings us. Emaho!

More announcements to share from Ligmincha International:

- NEW: "Spiritual Stories from Zhang Zhung" December 19–January 3, with Lishu teachers Geshe Sherab Lodoe and Dr. Sangmo Yangri, on Zoom, Saturdays and Sundays. Details below.
- Two new audiobooks of Rinpoche's are now available: *Awakening the Sacred Body* and *Awakening the Luminous Mind*. Both are read by Marcy Vaughn.
- Mark your calendar for Sunday, December 6, 10 a.m. New York time, for the next **CyberSangha** conversation on "Enhancing Your Spiritual Practice: Advice from Six Tibetan Nuns." And the next Full Moon practices are on November 30 and December 30.
- Ligmincha Learning has two upcoming online courses: "Meditation, Breath and Movement" beginning January 8 with Alejandro Chaoul-Reich and "The Three Heart Mantras" beginning January 22 with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.
- Take a peek at the new Ligmincha Store items that have arrived from Nepal.
- An online three-day retreat on "Sherap Chamma" is being offered in February 2021 with Marcy Vaughn.
- View the Spanish translation of the October VOCL.

In Bön,
Aline and Jeff Fisher



Fully Knowing Yourself and Becoming Lighter Along the Way

An Edited Excerpt from Oral Teachings by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, August 2020

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](https://www.lulu.com).

About Voice of Clear Light

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

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

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The dzogchen teachings introduce us to the idea of self-recognition. We are all familiar with the guru yoga prayer. Within it there is the request, *help me to recognize myself*. That is a very important part of the prayer. I don't know how much awareness you bring to that line, but it's important. If you haven't brought so much attention there in the past, then you should.

Help me to recognize myself. And feel that I really want to know myself.

We are always curious about other people, aren't we? However, it's important to be curious about yourself and, eventually, come to a deep desire to fully know yourself. Knowing yourself is, in a way, knowing through the three doors of body, speech and mind; the doors are an entrance. I want to know myself through the door of body. I want to know myself through the door of speech. I want to know myself through the door of mind or heart.

Many times, though, what commonly occurs is that I *exit* through my body. I *exit* through my speech. I *exit* through my mind, my heart—I get so emotional about everything and take everything personally. This is a typical characteristic of human beings. No matter what's going on in the world, in the news; or no matter who is talking to you, whether friends or family, immediately you feel this sense of, *you are talking about me!* Even when I am simply teaching, people will say, "You are talking about me." I am not talking about you personally. I am talking about human beings. We have so many commonalities. If I'm talking about anybody, I am talking about myself. You happen to be very similar to me, that's why you think I'm talking about you. We take everything so personally. And every time we take things personally, it hurts, it impacts.

The way it's taken personally is by the "pain identity" not by the "infinite possibilities identity." When someone is open to their infinite possibilities, then no matter what you throw at them, everything is a means of support. Everything is a door to growth. No matter what is said, no matter what is done, they grow, they flourish, they expand. But from the point of view of their pain identity, no matter how many beautiful, lovely things you say to them, they will respond with, "Why are you saying so many nice things to me? Do you think I need that? Do you think I'm weak?" So no matter what you say, it doesn't work.

When we use these three doors of body, speech and mind as an exit, the impact of that disconnection affects all our dimensions. It impacts the body, so the body becomes not very healthy. It impacts speech, our communication skills and methods, so we hold a lot of pain; we suppress things, exaggerate, fight or argue. There is no balance in our communication. And it impacts our heart, our mind—either we feel so much emotion and less thought, or we don't stop thinking and feeling. The result is that there is no balance of any of these activities. These all are signs of disconnections, signs of the pain identity.

That is typically what happens. But we can use the three doors as an entrance into answering this question of who we really are. Maybe it's hard to know deeply who we are, but you can start by becoming clear that you are not what you think you are. That's for sure.

So if you don't know who you are, start by recognizing for instance that you are not what you do. You may be used to saying, "I'm a lawyer." No, you are not a lawyer. You have a job playing a role of lawyer. That's clear. We constantly refer to ourselves as, I am this, or I am that. Habitually we will say, "I am sick." But no, you are not sick. You have symptoms, you have some experiences, but you don't identify as the sickness. You don't identify as your weakness. You don't identify as your pain. You are none of what you do. You're none of what you think. You are none of what you are feeling. These are all experiences arising in a much bigger space. If you lose that bigger space, every single experience is going to affect you negatively. Even good ones will affect you negatively. Even if you have a beautiful experience of love, it will not last, because there is no container for it.

The first step is to recognize that we have been misidentifying ourselves with these experiences. It's very, very important to recognize that. It looks like a very simple thing, a not very sophisticated thing, but it affects us all in our everyday life, day and night, dream and sleep. It affects all of our actions, how we see ourselves. When we say dzogchen, the great perfection, what it means is every knowledge, every quality, is perfected in you. You are very valuable. You are a precious human being. You have a precious life. You have this jewel in you. You are pure. You are Buddha. You are Kuntu Zangpo. That's what the teaching says. That's what we are trying to learn.

But in our ordinary sense of our identity, each person has a different set of things that they identify as themselves. One of the very common ones that we all go back and forth about is self-worth. I am not good enough. *I am not a good enough father. I am not a good enough teacher. I am not a good enough husband. I am not a good enough person.* Whatever it is. And then you project your life based on the sense that you are that unworthiness.

For example, in a relationship you will be doing a lot of things to please the other person. Even as a parent, it manifests. You think, *maybe I'm not a good enough parent*, so you buy a lot of gifts for your child. They're not asking for gifts. They don't need gifts. Maybe they will tell you, "I don't need the gift. I don't need that." Why are you giving? Because you feel that you want to be a good parent.



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Rinpoche on



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Or you are in relationship with your partner and you try to do too many things for them, to the point, that your partner is feeling bothered. "Leave me alone, give me a break, give me some space." *No, I want to be nice to you, because I don't feel good enough. I know you are not looking at me as worthy of you, so I'm trying to do my best so that you see me as worthy. Then maybe I will feel a little worthiness through your seeing it in me.*

Every single issue that we have in society is rooted in that single point of identity with what you are not. Even the disease in our body is connected to that identity. Even the heaviness in our body is connected to that identity. Even the heaviness in the family collective pain stories is connected to that identity. Even the blockages in our body are connected. Even when you cannot feel free, breathe free while you are sitting with someone, enjoy some sense of freedom and space. You cannot feel that because of that identity.

These stories, these pains, these sicknesses, these blockages, are what we are trying to overcome. When they are overlooked long enough, they particularly manifest in our body. Every sickness in your body, every pain in your body, every blockage, even numbness in some area of your body, not enough blood flow, not enough prana flow, not enough fire for the digestive systems, not enough space and energy so that the body is self-regulating or self-disciplining or self-healing. It's not because someone else is blocking you. Rather, these thoughts are blocking, these emotions are blocking. The single source of all of these blockages is one's identity. Your particular identity is not able to be known by anyone else—you are the only one who knows it.

We can try to have a better relationship to our body, a better relationship to our speech, a better relationship to our mind and heart. At least becoming lighter, getting rid of all the heaviness, heavy stories, all the pain, sickness, all of the different kinds of heaviness. We are trying in the teachings and the practices to liberate these. We are talking about transforming all of these, turning them all into much more of a sense of lightness.

We are transforming and bringing lightness in the ways that we look at ourselves—our body, speech, mind, our qualities, and our action. Our body is the doorway to our self-realization. Our speech is the doorway to our self-realization. Our mind is the doorway to our self-realization. Our qualities are the doorway to our self-realization. Our creativity, our actions, are the doorway to our self-realization. That's what it is.

Healing is not something you make; it is something that happens when you allow it. Our body, our mind, our relationships have a natural way of healing themselves. When you don't block them, grasp them, control them, manipulate them, suppress them, the healing happens by itself.

So our practice is not a matter of our really trying to do something; it's more like *not* doing all that we do, so that the magic and healing can happen. We are not trying to make healing happen. We are trying simply to clear the blockages. Blockages are the result of doing extra things that we should not be doing. That's clear, right?



New: Experiential Transmission of Zhang Zhung Series!

Part 1: Ngöndro Begins December 27 on Zoom

The five-year Experiential Transmission of Zhang Zhung series is the centerpiece of the Yungdrung Bön dzogchen teachings that are presented at the end of December each year, usually at Serenity Ridge in Virginia. We are excited to announce that this year, Part 1: Ngöndro will be held online via Zoom and is open to everyone.

Live simultaneous translation will be available in multiple languages.

The ngöndro teachings are the foundation of and entrance to the dzogchen path. Attending a Part 1: Ngöndro retreat or previous Ligmincha Learning ngöndro course is a prerequisite for further study of this cycle of teachings, which will continue in subsequent years.

The December 2020 retreat will be held December 27, 2020–January 1, 2021. It will be led by Geshe Choehortshang Rinpoche, who will guide the teachings, and Geshe Yungdrung Gyatso, who will lead the meditations. Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will teach Part 2 in December 2021.

The ngöndro teachings are the foundational practices that establish one on the dzogchen path. Dzogchen is considered the highest teaching in Bön and Tibetan Buddhism. It reveals that reality, including the individual, is primordial pure, complete and perfect, and that nothing needs to be transformed (as in tantra) or renounced (as in sutra) but only needs to be recognized for what it truly is. In this way, suffering self-liberates and one's own enlightened nature spontaneously manifests. The view, meditation and conduct are all based on self-liberation, which allows all that arises in experience to exist just as it is, without grasping, aversion or elaboration by the conceptual mind.

Ngöndro offers complete instructions for taming, purifying, and perfecting the suffering mind through nine practices. Although the practices are called preliminary or foundational, because of their power many practitioners adopt them as their main practice. Ngöndro contains within it the entire path to liberation, and its practices can accompany one through the years like a lifelong friend.

Three Sets of Practices

The ngöndro includes three sets of three practices, or nine in all.

The first three tame the mind of the practitioner:

- Opening the heart with guru yoga
- Contemplating impermanence
- Admitting misdeeds

The second set purifies the practitioner:

- Developing bodhicitta (ultimate compassion)
- Going for refuge and performing prostrations
- Offering the mandala

The third set perfects the practitioner:

- Purification through mantra
- Offering the illusory body as a tsok (offering ritual)}
- Requesting blessings

Everyone is invited to attend this special retreat, including practitioners who have already received the Part 1: Ngöndro teachings in a previous cycle. All who attend the new retreat (or a previous cycle) will be eligible to study Part 2 of the Experiential Transmission of Zhang Zhung with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche at our Winter Retreat 2021, which will take place both online and onsite at Serenity Ridge Retreat Center in Virginia.

Registration is now open!

[Learn more/register](#)



Geshe Nyima Woser Choekhortshang Rinpoche lives in Prague, Czech Republic, and currently is an assistant professor in the Department of South and Central Asia at Charles University in Prague. He completed his geshe degree at Menri Monastery in northern India in 2008. He regularly teaches at Ligmincha sanghas in Italy and is a spiritual advisor for Ligmincha Italy.



Geshe Yungdrung Gyatso is the resident lama of Ligmincha Poland. He lives in the Chamma Ling Poland center in Wilga, near Warsaw and he completed his geshe degree at Triten Norbutse Monastery in Nepal in 2009. He also teaches throughout Europe.

Winter Retreat
Experiential Transmission Part 1: Ngöndro

December 27, 2020
– January 1, 2021

live on **ZOOM**

with Geshe Choekhortshang Rinpoche
and Geshe Yungdrung Gyatso

Learn more & register at www.ligmincha.org



Ngöndro Practice Retreat on Zoom, January 2–6, 2021

With Geshe Yungdrung Gyatso and Marcy Vaughn

Immediately following the winter retreat, continue your practice of the ngöndro for up to five days with Geshe Yungdrung Gyatso, Ligmincha Poland's resident lama, and Marcy Vaughn, senior teacher. This is a wonderful opportunity to experience the benefits of practice and the support of sangha, while deeply engaging with these beautiful and essential foundational practices of the Tibetan Bön lineage.

Participants may attend any number of days they wish, from one to five. This practice retreat is open to students who attend the ngöndro online retreat from December 27, 2020–January 1, 2021, as well as students who have received the ngöndro teachings prior to Jan. 1, 2020, either by attending a previous retreat or a Ligmincha Learning ngöndro course. This practice retreat will take place on Zoom.

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche highly recommends this intensive practice retreat for students who plan to receive the Experiential Transmission ngöndro teachings during the 2020 Winter Retreat, and for those who have received these teachings in recent years.



Schedule

Saturday, January 1—Wednesday, January 6, 2021 (NY time)

8–9:30 a.m.: Practice with Geshe Gyatso

10–11:15 a.m.: Practice with Geshe Gyatso

1:30–3 p.m.: Practice with Marcy Vaughn

3:30–4:30 p.m.: Practice with Marcy Vaughn

Check back soon for registration information.



Why Is Ngöndro Important as a Foundation in the Dzogchen Experiential Series?

Previous Excerpts from VOCL Offer Guidance by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

These excerpts are from two previous VOCL. The first two questions are from an interview in July 2005 with Tenzin Rinpoche about his Experiential Transmission teachings offered during annual winter retreats. The second is from oral teachings Rinpoche gave in December 2000 on "Opening One's Heart," the first practice of the ngöndro.



Sunshine at Serenity Ridge

VOCL: Why is ngöndro considered such an important practice?

TWR: Ngondro is very important because it is traditionally the foundation for all the other practices of the Bön Buddhist tradition. Without a foundation one cannot build a house. In the same way, one cannot build a spiritual practice without a firm, stable foundation. The ngöndro is also considered a path toward "ripening" oneself, and that also is very important. When one becomes ripened [in one's practice], then whatever one is learning and practicing will stay on that foundation. When one lacks a strong sense of spiritual foundation, often the result is that one continuously searches for more and different practices, from different teachers, in different traditions, and so on. This often leads to more confusion rather than spiritual development. Understanding this notion of the ngöndro as being the foundation and a path toward ripening is very important.

VOCL: Why is the winter retreat presented as a progressive series of annual teachings?

TWR: There are few places in the world, and far fewer in the West, where one can study a complete path to enlightenment step by step, year after year, experience after experience—places where one can continuously work with one tradition, with one group of lineage teachers, with one path. Instead, it often seems that people are continuously shopping around, unable to have a deep experience of one dharma path before jumping to the next teacher or teaching. They bring the same patterns and habits of inconsistency that they have in ordinary life to their dharma practice. In my experience, that approach doesn't work. Our winter retreat is a great opportunity to follow one path all the way through. Since the time I was little, I have always practiced the Experiential Transmission of Drugyalwa Yungdrung. I have found through personal experience that these teachings are something that we can really study, practice, hold in our hearts and keep for the rest of our lives. If we just work with this one cycle of teachings, it will eventually bring us to illumination.

We can talk a little bit about ripeness. "Am I ready for serious practice in the dharma?" That is one question. Your mind might say, "I'm ready!" but the question is, internally, are you prepared or not? The first three practices of the ngöndro are to get ready, to prepare yourself.

The other question you might ask about ripeness is, "What are the things that make me not ready?" What are the obstacles that prevent me from entering the dharma? That's why we start here, with opening the heart, with cultivating a sense of devotion. Because when you don't have a sense of devotion—or a sense of your heart being open, ready to connect, ready to take refuge, ready to commit—when there are none of those qualities, you are not going to be ready.



Year-End Letter from Ligmincha President Rob Patzig

Help Support Ligmincha International

November 23, 2020

Dear Sangha,

We are living in a time of such great uncertainty, challenge and transformation. Isolation and loss in the face of Covid-19, separation across political and social justice issues, and the biodiversity crisis can seem overwhelming. How fortunate that the teachings of enlightened beings and realized masters of the Yungdrung Bön tradition are available to us! The outer refuge of our teachers and the teachings guide us inexorably to the abiding refuge in our own hearts. And discovering that true nature carries us through life's challenges and beyond.



Prayer flags at Serenity Ridge

Though technically on sabbatical, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche continues teaching live on Facebook. He recorded a new course on Sleep Yoga that we launched in September, and recently released a video of his dzogchen poem, "Who Am I?" in 17 different languages! He continues to design new programs even as he makes time for family, hiking, and writing.

Ligmincha continues serving the needs of its global community in spite of all Ligmincha centers remaining closed for the foreseeable future. All our retreats have moved online. In this past year, thanks to our extraordinary volunteers, each retreat has included translation into between four and nine languages. Without our many volunteers who also translate written materials, manage our social media accounts and host our retreats on Zoom we could not function.

We are working on many new projects for 2021. Among these are: resources and teachings on death and dying, an introduction to Tibetan astrology course, training programs for our Western practice leaders and instructors to further their development and knowledge, two or more new books by Sacred Sky Press, six or more online retreats, and a digital media archive of all Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's teachings and teachings by other lamas, geshe and rinpoche.

As for so many, the financial ramifications of the pandemic have stripped Ligmincha of its usual sources of income. Even though our centers are closed, Ligmincha bears substantial costs to support online programming while also maintaining Serenity Ridge Retreat Center for a future reopening.

If our programs have touched you in the past year, please lend your financial support to help ensure that we can continue our mission. We need your support! You can donate online via credit card or PayPal at <https://ligmincha.org/ligmincha-international-donate/>. Information for sending a check also is available on that page.



Spiritual Stories from Zhang Zhung

Lishu Teachers Offer Zoom Sessions in December and January

In the Bön tradition, spiritual stories are a traditional form of teaching. They inspire devotees and practitioners to develop and strengthen their faith in dharma teaching. Join Lishu Institute teachers

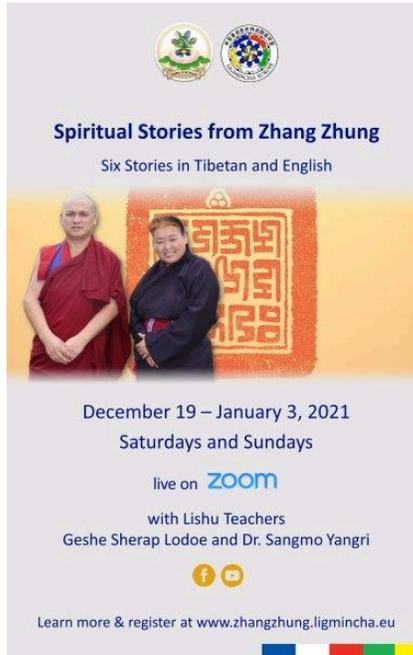
Geshe Sherap Lodoe and Dr. Sangmo Yangri on Zoom December 19–January 3 for Spiritual Stories from Zhang Zhung.

Geshe Lodoe and Sangmo Yangri will present six stories in Tibetan and English. The stories of Taphritsa and Nangzher Lopo belong to the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyü teachings. The selected stories of Kongpo Bonri and Shenza Nechung belong to the medium hagiography of Buddha Tonpa Shenrap Miwo. The story of Gongzod Ritro Chenmo belongs to the A-Tri teachings. Tulku Loden Nyingpo and Shardza Rinpoche had independent biographies.

The December 19–20 teaching will feature Taphritsa and Nangzher Lopo. Stories from Kingpo Bonri and Gongzod Ritro Chenmo will be shared December 26–27. And stories of Tulku Loden Nyingpo and Shardza Rinpoche will be shared January 2–3. The sessions will begin at 8 a.m. New York time.

One hundred percent of your donation for the sessions will go to the teachers of Lishu.

[Learn more/register](#)



Spiritual Stories from Zhang Zhung
Six Stories in Tibetan and English

December 19 – January 3, 2021
Saturdays and Sundays

live on **zoom**
with Lishu Teachers
Geshe Sherap Lodoe and Dr. Sangmo Yangri

Learn more & register at www.zhangzhung.ligmincha.eu

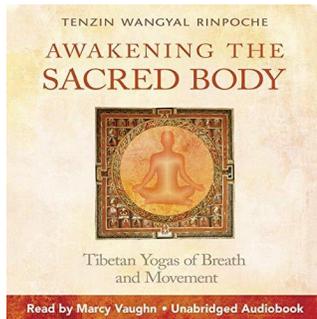


Two New Audiobooks by Tenzin Rinpoche

Awakening the Sacred Body and Awakening the Luminous Mind

We are pleased to announce the release of two new audiobooks by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche: *Awakening the Sacred Body* and *Awakening the Luminous Mind*. The books are read by senior teacher Marcy Vaughn, who edited both of the print books. Both are available through amazon.com (free with an Audible trial and also on Kindle) and through Hay House, the publisher of both books.

Awakening the Sacred Body



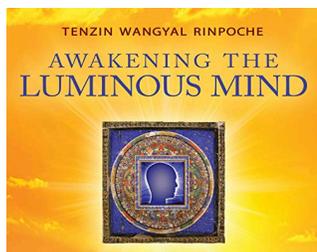
The power of the breath has been recognized for millennia as an integral part of health and well-being. In *Awakening the Sacred Body*, teacher Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche makes accessible the ancient art of Tibetan breath and movement practices. In clear, easy-to-understand language, he outlines the theory and processes of two powerful meditations—the Nine Breathings of Purification and the Tsa Lung movements—that can help you change your relationship to yourself, to others, and to the world.

The simple methods presented in *Awakening the Sacred Body* and in the accompanying online video focus on clearing and opening your energetic centers to allow the natural human qualities of love, compassion, joy and equanimity to arise. When sadness releases, joy is able to arise. When anger releases, love becomes available. When prejudice releases, equanimity prevails. And when lack of kindness ceases, compassion is present.

This audio product contains a PDF with supporting material, available to download.

[Amazon](#)
[Hay House](#)

Awakening the Luminous Mind



In *Awakening the Luminous Mind*, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche guides you to find refuge within instead of searching for support outside of yourself. Using the heart instructions of Dawa Gyaltsen, an eighth century Tibetan meditation master, as a vehicle to guide contemplative practice, Tenzin Rinpoche opens your eyes to the gifts hidden in your ordinary experiences.

The meditations presented in this audiobook provide a direct way to meet the challenges of life as we encounter them. Fully incorporating

Tibetan Meditation for Inner Peace and Joy

Read by Marcy Vaughn • Unabridged Audiobook

these practices into daily life will help you open and transform your perceived limitations into unlimited possibilities. They will help you dissolve self-doubt and self-judgment, and discover the wisdom and light inherent within you in every moment.

This audio product contains a PDF with supporting material, available to download.

[Amazon](#)
[Hay House](#)

Two other audiobooks by Tenzin Rinpoche also are available through Amazon and Hay House—The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep and Spontaneous Creativity. Both books are read by Marcy Vaughn.



'Enhancing Your Spiritual Practice: Advice from Six Tibetan Nuns'

Next CyberSangha Broadcasts with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Invited Guests

Mark your calendar for Sunday, December 6, 10 a.m. New York time, for the next [CyberSangha](#) broadcast, a conversation on "Enhancing Your Spiritual Practice: Advice from Six Tibetan Nuns." And the next Full Moon practice is on November 30.

Sunday, December 6, 10 a.m. New York time "Enhancing Your Spiritual Practice: Advice from Six Tibetan Nuns"

Nuns from six spiritual traditions of Tibet will offer their advice for attaining realization in meditation practice. The conversation is in Tibetan with simultaneous translation into English and multiple other languages. Hosted by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal and Khenpo Gyurmey Dorjee.

Presenters include:

- Tsunma Phuntsok Tsultzin (Bön tradition)
- Lopen Karma Wangchuk Lhamo (Karma Kagyu tradition)
- Sonam Dolma (Sakya tradition)
- Ven. Geden Sangmo (Jonang tradition)
- Geshema Tenzin Kunsel (Gelug tradition)

[Learn more](#)

Monday, November 30, 2020

24-Hour Full Moon Practice of the Mantra of Liberation

Join us online for meditation followed by a 24-hour mantra recitation session and periods of contemplative silence, supported by Ligmincha International's global community of practitioners. The session begins at 10 a.m. New York time on the day of the full moon and ends at 10 a.m. the following day. Unlike Rinpoche's CyberSangha® Facebook Live broadcasts, the 24-hour full moon practice takes place via Zoom, in an online meeting space. There is no cost to participate, but registration is required.

[Learn more](#)

Upcoming: Wednesday, December 30, 10 a.m. New York time: 24-Hour Full Moon Practice of the Mantra of Purification.



Enhancing Your Spiritual Practice

Advice from Six Tibetan Nuns



Tsunma Phuntsok
Tsultzin (Bön)



Sangay Peidon
(Nyingma)



Lopen Karma Wangchuk
Lhamo (Karma Kagyu)



Sonam Dolma
(Sakya)



Ven. Geden
Sangmo (Jonang)



Geshema Tenzin
Kunsel (Gelug)

Hosted by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal
and Khenpo Gyurmey Dorjee

Sunday, December 6, 2020

10:00 am NY time

Free & live on Facebook:
[tenzinwangyalrinpoche](#)



Learn more at [cybersangha.net](#)





How to Deal with Our Parents

Teachings from Recent Online Retreat with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

In August 2020, Ligmincha Poland hosted an online retreat on the Body of Light, attended by more than 800 people from around the world. During question-and-answer sessions, several students shared stories about their difficult relationship with their parents. Rinpoche elaborated on the subject, and talked about how we can use the teachings and our practice to heal and to have a fuller relationship. Here are some of Rinpoche's comments, compiled by international correspondent Ton Bisscheroux.



Chamma Ling Poland

Anger Toward Parents

Several people have shared that they feel anger toward their parents, particularly their mother. The emotional anger is there; you can feel it in any part of your body. Me as a daughter or son, the pain identity, feels neglected by the mother. But when I feel anger in my heart, my pain identity is not looking at the pain and is not bringing light into the pain. My mind is going back 10 or 15 years, looking at my mother and thinking about what she did or didn't do and what I needed.

Challenges in Our Upbringing

I see differences in the culture. I talk a lot about this with my wife, Tsering. We were born in India from Tibetan refugee families. Our lives had hardships; we lived in poverty and had challenges in our upbringing. Like many people who left Tibet, our parents had to leave everything behind and went through all kind of difficult situations. Our parents were not enlightened beings, and there are things they did wrong as parents, but we both have enormous respect for them. We don't feel any sense of hurt or misuse. I wish I could have served my parents more and given more to them. If there is any regret, it is in relationship with my mother, because at the time she needed my help, there was nothing I could do. When I hear people complain about their mother, I say that they have an amazing opportunity to serve their parents.

Getting Stuck in Our Stories and How We Can Liberate Them

Open yourself to fully feel what is in your heart. Maybe you are so numb that you don't feel the pain in your heart. The reason the pain has stayed so long is because of your stories. Every time you repeat a story it gives extra extension to exist in your heart. It is a memory, and each time you remember it, it is like making an extra copy on your computer. You have so many copies that you don't know which was the original. You may be working hard to clear the pain in your heart, but maybe you are deleting a copy, not the source, so your work is wasted. What should you do? No more no stories, no more copies, and try to get to the root.



You can get stuck in family, professional or political stories. Why are we attracted to the negative story? The pain identity will die if there is no story. The pain identity wants to survive and therefore it needs stories. Being aware of that is helpful to let go of the story.

When you are aware of this and do not engage in the pain story, what should you do? Recognize how exhausted you are and rest in your body, speech and mind. We need to rest; society needs to rest. We need to sleep more, eat less—that is my mantra. These two simple things will probably change your health. When we rest, we become fresh, joyful, clear, we can focus on what matters. When we focus on what matters, the stories no longer matter. You live the life that you have; you no longer live a life that you do not have.

The story is not important here, because the practice we do is not psychoanalysis. This is dzogchen meditation, so what you should do is cut the story. In the Bön teachings the story is not important in the process of healing. I do not get into the story, and I do not want to deny and disconnect from the real experience of what is happening. I feel anger and my heart is hurting, my body is draining, my mind is getting obscured by this emotion. This is what I am going to work with.

Focus on Now, Not on What You Have Missed

In the Bön teachings it is important to focus on what you are feeling and not on what you are not feeling or missing. Focus on what is obviously present in your feelings, even when the experiences are, from your point of view, negative or unpleasant. From another viewpoint it could be wonderful that you are feeling anger, especially if you could not feel the anger for a long time. When you are feeling anger, go closer and acknowledge it. Connect and bring the light of awareness to the anger, because the anger needs it the most. If your attention is not on what is present, you are not looking at the anger. You are looking at a past story, what you missed, such as acknowledgement, care or love from your mother.

Whatever is present, there is a value and a purpose for it. Your issue is not your mother; it is not what has happened. Your issue is that you are unable to acknowledge the present moment and the lively anger you are feeling. Avoiding this feeling instead of connecting with it is the issue. In a larger sense there is no good and bad. It is important to be aware of whatever is. When you are aware of what is, that is always good. That is called Samantabhadra [Kuntu Zangpo]—all good. If there is pain and you are aware of it, this awareness clears the pain. If it is joy and you are aware of it, it increases and matures the joy. It finds its voice, it finds its purpose, it manifests in your life, it heals your body, it changes your world.

Accept Change

Sometimes you might wonder if a human can ever change. But if you look, you can see things always change. The only way to bring about change in your life is not to run away from challenges, to see them as opportunities instead of obstacles. Get closer to them. Do not expect the Body of Light and avoid the heaviness of your body. Do not expect love from the mother and avoid the anger you feel toward her. Don't play those games. If you feel anger toward your mother, that is where you want to go closer. You run away from the anger you are feeling; you long for the love you are not feeling. Or you try to see something wrong in the heaviness of your body, and you are longing for the Body of Light, which you are not feeling. So move toward what you are experiencing in life, regardless of what it is, because that is your dynamic energy. Any time you are able to go closer to the life you are living, you will change. Hoping, wishing or blaming—none of those is a healthy game, so don't play that.

Be Your Own Therapist

Why are therapists important? Because they are neutral and create a sacred, protected space for us. Can you be your own therapist? Absolutely yes, when you are able to go beyond your pain identity. When you are fully able to engage, connect and be aware of your pain identity as it is manifesting. When you are able to let it rest, let it dissolve. When you are able to be open enough to let the opposite quality arise. When you are able to see and feel gratitude to a new arising of life. When you are able to fully live, act and manifest from that open place. You can look at all your past stories as a difficult moment, and the self-therapist is fully present there.

Full Attention in Your Heart

Basically, what I am saying is, love your mom and dad, love their weakness. Whatever pain you have in your heart, bring full attention to your heart, to the pain, the blockages, the painful emotions. They are waiting to be acknowledged and seen. Without being busy and getting caught up and delaying because of all your samsaric stories, bring the light of awareness directly into the heart.



Pat Leavitt Shares Famous Granola Recipe

A Serenity Ridge Retreat Favorite!



Follow the instructions as given and you will only have to wash the oil off your hands once. What makes it so good? The hands-on mixing, as you're thinking about how much your family and guests are going to love it. This granola was adapted from the recipe served at Claymont Court in West Virginia. I decreased the honey as much as I could so it's not overly sweet. All the nuts and seeds make it high protein (high fat too, in a good way) and will sustain you through the morning meditation sessions.

You can adjust the quantities of nuts and seeds to what you like as long as the total amount is the same. Like if you didn't have pumpkin seeds or walnuts, just increase the coconut, sunflower and almonds to replace. I do chop the walnuts and almonds by hand, I just like it that way. Once you've done that, the rest is not much labor.

At Serenity Ridge, we usually made 4 hotel pans (40 cups of oats) and it made a 4-5 gallon bucket. Enough for 80 people for about 3-4 days of breakfast!

[NOTE: We have included the US units as well as Metric.]

For a household size batch, use 1 hotel pan size, that is a 12" x 20" x 2" high (30 cm x 51 cm x 5 cm) baking pan. Or if you have 2 pans, 13"x 9" (33 cm x 23 cm) pyrex, for example, that should work. Or a heavy-duty foil pan 12" x 20" (30 cm x 51 cm).

Dry ingredients: (all nuts are raw)

10 cups (2.4 L or 850 g) rolled oats (not quick oats)
1 cup (2 ½ dl or 120 g) chopped almonds or 2 ½ dl

1 cup (2 ½ dl or 120 g) chopped walnuts
 2 cups (4 ¾ dl) shredded unsweetened coconut
 1 cup (2 ½ dl or 128 g) pumpkin seeds
 2 cups (4 ¾ dl or 280 g) sunflower seeds
 1 ½ TBSP cinnamon
 1 generous cup of raisins (2 ½ dl or 165 g)—mix this in after it has baked and cooled)

Mix all dry ingredients well in big bowl.

Preheat oven 300 degrees Fahrenheit (medium low heat) (150 degrees Celsius).



Wet ingredients:

¾ cup oil (1 ¾ dl) such as sunflower or grapeseed; melted coconut oil works too

1 ¼ cup (1 and ¾ dl) honey

Now oil well the pans, and then combine the wet with dry ingredients.

Rub the oil and honey into the oats and everything.

Massage it in! Work into the bottom of the bowl and get everything coated.

Transfer to oiled pans and bake, stirring occasionally: the edges will get brown first.

Bake approximately 1 hour, or until golden brown. Stir one final time and allow to cool in pan.

Then mix in raisins.

Store at room temperature, in glass jars, cookie tins, etc. although you can refrigerate if keeping longer than a few weeks. Freezes well, too.

Enjoy!!



Ligmincha Learning Upcoming Online Courses

'Meditation, Breath and Movement' and 'The Three Heart Mantras'

Ligmincha Learning is pleased to offer upcoming online courses beginning in January with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Alejandro Chaoul-Reich. 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.

January 8–February 7, 2021

Meditation, Breath and Movement with Alejandro Chaoul-Reich



This course is bilingual with all resources available in English and Spanish. The videos are in spoken English with Spanish subtitles available, and all written materials are in both languages.

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 (Tib. 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 suitable for everyone.

There are three levels of tsa lung practice: external, internal and secret. External tsa lung works primarily on the physical level, using simple movements and breath exercises to balance the energies within our body. Internal tsa lung works more at the level of breath and subtle energy, bringing attention to opening the five chakras and the central channel. Secret tsa lung uses subtle visualizations within the chakras and central channel to bring harmony to the mind, so that we can rest in our inner refuge, the nature of mind. All of the tsa lung exercises integrate and balance the five elements within—earth, water, fire, wind and space.

These practices are drawn from the Bön Mother Tantra (Tib. Ma Gyüd), the highest tantra in our tradition. They are a beautiful complement to any meditation practice, and particularly to dzogchen. They are frequently performed at the beginning of a session so that meditation is deeper and more stable. External tsa lung is commonly performed in all Ligmincha centers and groups.

[Learn more/register](#)

January 22–February 28, 2021

The Three Heart Mantras with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche



The Three Heart Mantras are used in many different meditations in the Bön tradition and play a major role in the ngöndro practices. They are said to be the essence of enlightenment in sound and energy, and as we sing or chant the mantras our awareness is transformed to be in union with the Buddhas. They are used for purification, protection and as primary practices toward self-realization.

It is said that creating these mantras in any form brings merit and purification, so they are commonly found carved into stones, printed on prayer flags where they spread their benefits through the winds, and even drawn with gold ink and kept on shrines as an object of reverence and meditation. Their blessings are said to be endless. Also within this course Tenzin Rinpoche explains the essence of the guru yoga, refuge and bodhicitta practices, making this an excellent introduction to the tradition.

[Learn more/register](#)

Ongoing and Free Courses: Ligmincha Learning offers several ongoing, free courses. They include “Starting a Meditation Practice, Parts 1 & 2”; “The True Source of Healing”; “Living with Joy, Dying in Peace”; and “Transforming Your World Through Service.”



Special News from Ligmincha International Bookstore

New Items Just Arrived!

We are excited to announce that the Ligmincha International Bookstore and Tibet Shop has just received a special shipment from Kathmandu. We are hard at work getting the new items unpacked and posted online to share these new treasures with you. Included are statues, thangkas, books, wooden kangling, phurbas and more! Because you asked, we have also added incense and prayer flags online.

To view these items and more, click [here](#).

Please email us at store@ligmincha.org if there are other items you would like us to provide online.



Statues from Kathmandu, Nepal



Sherap Chamma: Mother of Wisdom and Love

Three-Day Online Course in February 2021 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.

Senior teacher Marcy Vaughn will offer an online retreat on Sherap Chamma February 19–21 via Zoom. The retreat is open to all and is expected to be offered in several languages. Check back later on [Ligmincha's website](#) for details.

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.



Sangha Sharing

From the Heart

(This issue features a piece by Vickie Walter from Maryland written after a practice session while on a personal 3 Doors retreat. VOCL invites you to share a short poem or writing of yours that has arisen through your connection to Bön. Please limit your poetry to 40 lines or less. Just send it to our [email](#).)

Being in True Nature



Sunrise over the Potomac

I pull my chair into a patch of sunlight close to the low split-rail fence that separates the yard from the wild vegetation, tall trees and wide river beyond. I bring to this sitting the intention to explore being open in the world during these times of Covid-19, now that I have ventured away from the security of my house and driven to a small cabin in a Virginia state park that sits on a cliff above the Potomac River.

All the five elements are here—the earth below my feet, the air blowing lightly through the leaves, the water of the wide Potomac in front of me, the fire of the sun warming my right shoulder and head, and the space of the pale blue sky above. I sit and feel it all, feel myself relaxing and resting. This is not a “formal” meditation. I just want to open to everything, if I can, without any structure. I sit. I breathe. I let go.

All of the creatures here slowly make themselves visible to me: the small birds that flap their wings as they land on the fence or tree branches; larger black birds that glide by; and two majestic eagles soaring past, riding the currents of the wind. A large brown butterfly with circles of bright orange outlining its wings, and tiny white butterflies that dart here and there. A small light brown lizard that moves along the fence, pausing when it approaches where I sit. I feel peaceful, still and quiet inside. As I sent warmth to it, the lizard also seems to relax, to give up its vigilance.

One of the tiny butterflies lights on the ground in front of my foot. I realize that I’d only seen the white underside of their wings—the top is a rich mocha color, like mushrooms. A large lizard climbs the fencepost a couple of feet in front of me, dark stripes down its back and an iridescent blue tail that wiggles sinuously like a snake. I feel a touch of fear, a drawing back, and wonder who is feeling fear. I look and don’t find anyone, so the fear dissolves. A fly lands on the fence, and I feel distaste—I don’t like flies, and last night inside the cabin one buzzed around my head and landed in my hair. Now I look at that dislike and see that it is only a past story, nothing to do with this moment. I open to the fly, too, and when it lands on my hand I lift it, say hello, and softly blow the fly away.

I am not a student of the natural world. I don’t know the names of most trees, or birds, or flowers. But it seems as if the world opens to me, in all of its fullness, and I see into it more deeply. I see its impermanence, its illusory nature. The river at first seems perfectly still; shifting my focus, I see that it continuously moves with small ripples driven by the wind and currents. The clouds, which a moment ago seemed unmoving, have shifted, and so have the two sailboats that had seemed so still in front of my vision; now they are downstream. Nothing is solid or fixed; everything is changing.

Yet there is an unchanging depth to everything. As I let go more, I can see this boundless, unchanging nature in myself and in everything. And yet each leaf, each sprig of goldenrod, each bird has its own unique nature, its own shining clarity. Everything is truly itself, and at the same time part of the whole of this larger openness—including me.

The large butterfly with the orange spots and a small brown/white butterfly land close to me on a blade of grass. I feel touched by their beauty, their completeness—as I do by everything around me. All seem infinitely precious. This boundless nature is in everything, and in this present moment it feels “all good,” complete—even though I hold the knowing that the eagle is a raptor searching for its prey in the river; and that the virus is taking more lives daily; and fires and other disasters are destroying parts of this earth; that our planet is moving farther from the sun each day; and that we are living in times that seem inauspicious and may well become worse. All of it can be held in this boundlessness, which is unmoving and unchanging.



This doesn’t mean I don’t mourn the loss of life, or the suffering, or the changes in this world, or my inability to recognize my authentic self much of the time. Each moment, it’s a matter of letting go, shifting perspective, and opening with awareness to the larger space that is always here within and around me, opening to each person, each situation, each thought or feeling—everything. That’s a joyful thing to do. That’s a valuable way to live the rest of my life, until my final breath. And perhaps living in

this way I can make some small contribution that will be of help to this struggling, suffering, beautiful world.

At the end of my sitting, I stand up from my chair, see and feel the fullness of the wide river, the trees, the blue sky above. I feel myself standing, embodied. Everything is vast, so much vaster than I ever think it will be when I am in my small mind. I take a breath. I wish to remember this, to have confidence in it, as I do now. Oh, shit—with that wish I am already moving into the future, still holding this boundlessness within me yet knowing that my perception of it will fade, as it always does.

But for now, in this present moment, it has not faded. It is still here. And what if it doesn't fade? What if it doesn't? What if, one day, it remains?



Spanish Translation of VOCL

Link to October Issue Now Available

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

[Read VOCL in Spanish](#)

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