

7th Lojong in Germany

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“Pay Attention to the Movement of Energy!”

Report from the course and practice retreat of the 7th Lojong with Zhenya Rud in Höfen, July 2018

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After an introductory course in the 7th Lojong practice, seven days of retreat followed by exactly 28 sessions, according to the Base of Santi Maha Sangha, “The Precious Vase”, the minimum to get a result or taste from this practice. The 7th Lojong includes Tsa-Lung exercises on the inner level of the vajra body with prana, channels, and chakras. Essentially, we practiced *detong*, the first of the three exercises, to have an experience of the inseparability of bliss and emptiness and to train the mind in a state beyond thought through the method of Kumbhaka and the generation of inner heat. The ultimate goal of this exercise is to enter the state of contemplation.

The conditions were very good: What a luxury – only practice, food and sleep were on the program; our help in the kitchen was barely required because the organizer, Kordula Döring from the Cologne red Gakyil, had planned the meals from a cookbook of Tibetan Medicine and Claudia Beckmann, as a karma yoga practice, prepared balanced and very delicious meals that kept our wind energy low. The weather was great and the seminar house of Hans Vogel proved once again to be a wonderful place for intensive retreats in the countryside – with its quality of silence and remoteness, with Gönpa and Vajra Dance pavilion, and with shady places for individual practice and group sessions in the big garden with the wide sky above us. In the evening we could still sit together and enjoy a glass of wine – to bring down the lung.

Zhenya Rud, second-level Yantra Yoga instructor authorized by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, steered

our fairly busy practice program from 6am to 8pm with great dedication and passion. In addition to the actual Lojong practice, we did special breathing exercises to train the full breathing and the breathing holds. Zhenya's deep understanding of the interplay of movement, breathing, and prana led us to look beyond the bodily movements for the flow of breath and to discover and direct the flow of prana within us. Zhenya had time enough to also individually correct and check habits and blockages. This course was very much in the essence of the practice and aimed to achieve a precise and deep experience, with as little pressure as possible in holding the breath and without tension. I found it very good to sit in the middle of the circle from time to time and feel the support and strength of the other practitioners.

Today, after the retreat, I am having a lazy day at the lake. While swimming, I enjoyed my full harmonious breathing. Now I am observing a small child who plays on the bank and sits upright with a straight spine, right up to the head; even if it leans forward, it pays attention to keeping the central channel straight – without effort.

When Zhenya was holding a board to our backs while seated, most of us had the feeling that with a really straight back we were leaning backwards – that's how much our sense of balance has shifted. But we can also transform that – just as we can bring our confused mind back to its natural state, with pleasure.