



New Resident Lama for Ligmincha Texas

Geshe Denma Gyaltsen Arrives in January from Nepal



Meet Ligmincha International's new resident lama in Texas: Geshe Denma Gyaltsen. This article was written by Barbara Shreffler and Dorothy Matthews of the Ligmincha Texas sangha.

We welcome Geshe Denma Gyaltsen as the new resident lama of Ligmincha Texas. Geshe Denma arrived in Houston on January 3 to serve as Ligmincha Texas's first resident lama.

Geshe Denma was born in northern Nepal. His father brought him to Menri Monastery, India, regarded as the mother Bon monastery in exile, in 1981 to begin his program of study toward the Geshe degree. He received all the Bon teachings, initiations and transmissions in sutra, tantra and dzogchen from His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, the 33rd Menri Trizin, and His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche.

When he became a senior student, he was asked to teach philosophy to younger students. He successfully completed this degree program in 1996 and was awarded the Geshe certificate, which is considered equivalent to a Ph.D. in Bön Buddhist philosophy and religion.

Geshe Denma was an accomplished teacher and in 1998 was appointed, with the approval of the Tibetan government in exile, first abbot of Zhu Rishing Yungdrung Kundak-Ling Monastery, a Bon Monastery in Sikkim, India by His Holiness. He served two terms in this capacity until 2003. In addition, from the time he graduated until 2008, Geshe Denma also was active in assisting Geshe Nyima Dakpa with the Bon Children's Home, which houses many children in Dolanji, India, providing them with food, healthcare and free education. Geshe Denma has traveled many times to the USA, Austria, Poland, Canada, Russia, Belarus, Germany, Switzerland and Holland to teach and to raise the funds for the Bon Children's Home. In addition, he assisted in the administrative work of the Bon Children's Home whenever possible.

During this time, Geshe Denma was the treasurer and co-editor of a well-respected publication, *Door to Bon*, and for three years from 2002–2005 the elected secretary of the Local Tibetan Assembly in Dolanji. Once Geshe Denma attained his geshe degree, he became a senior teacher at the monastery and taught philosophy when he was in residence at Menri.

From 2009 to 2013, Geshe Denma often traveled to the United States to participate in Bon practices and to learn more about the work his fellow geshees were doing to bring this tradition to the Western world. In 2011, Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, founder and spiritual director of Ligmincha International, asked Geshe Denma to become the resident lama of Ligmincha Texas. Geshe Denma accepted the challenge and began coming to Houston to get to know the Ligmincha Texas sangha, study English and begin work to acquire his religious visa and ultimately become Ligmincha Texas's first resident lama.



In 2014 with the help and support from Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and members of Ligmincha Texas, the formal application for the visa was made. In late October 2015, the application was approved and on December 20, 2015, Geshe Denma was awarded his R1 Visa. He arrived in Houston on January 3, 2016, welcomed by his grateful sangha and ready to assume his duties as resident lama for Ligmincha Texas!