



## A Glimpse of Life at Lishu Two Students' Experiences

*Anna-Kaisa Hirvanen, from Finland, is one in the first group of students to start a three-year Bon studies program at Lishu Institute near Dehradun, India. Anna-Kaisa is a founding member of Ligmincha Finland and its first Chair of the Board. She began a blog about Lishu a year ago in March 2015. Here is an excerpt from one of her recent posts, titled "Unbroken Lineage of Wisdom," from March 2016.*



*Lishu students January 2016 including Anna-Kaisa (center)*

Studying in Lishu is a rare opportunity that I feel grateful to have had once again. Even though one cannot say it is easy or glamorous, since studying and practicing in this kind of simple, quiet environment with a small group of people for sure has its challenges. However, these kinds of conditions are rare to find and beneficial in many ways. For instance, we are living in India, which in itself gives an opportunity to change some of the habitual ways we are used to thinking and acting in the Western countries. Things do not work in the same way as in the West, in fact, quite often they work the opposite way! At the same time, India is a land of great blessings, since so many spiritual traditions are very much alive and a natural part of everyday life here, including the Bon tradition that we can study, practice and experience in more detail and depth

in Lishu.

The teaching as well as the texts and prayers that we study in Lishu are in Tibetan, with translation to English. Together with the formal Tibetan language studies this gives the chance to learn more of the Tibetan language, which in turn opens up the teachings in a completely different way than studying them in English only. In a small group of people, with no other activities around to distract us, the teaching and practice is very personal and intensive.



*Lishu study group and teachers*

We ended this second trimester of studies by attending Sherab Mawe Senghe Initiation in Menri Monastery, which is the root place of study and practice for many Bon teachers and practitioners. To receive blessings in this way is something very precious and rare. Sherab Mawe Senghe (Manjushri in the Buddhist traditions) is the wisdom aspect of the mind, the sharp and clear mind of intellect that we need in order to understand the teachings. This wisdom deity initiation and transmission comes directly from Kuntu Zangpo and has been passed through all Menri enthronement holders until this day. During the initiation we were also very much blessed to see a crystal statue of Drenpa Namkha that is very rarely displayed to the public.

