The Venerable Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche is the head teacher of the Bönpo people. He was born in 1926 in Southeastern Tibet. Rinpoche began his studies at an early age and took his vows at 15. He continued his studies at the major Bönpo monasteries: gTung, Drung Ling, and Menri in Tsang near Shigatse in Central Tibet. Rinpoche’s two main masters were Bonruponlob Rinpoche and the Venerable Lopon Sangye Tenzin Rinpoche.

Rinpoche rose to the position of Lopon in 1953 at the young age of 27, the same year he obtained the Geshé degree from Menri Monastery. As Lopon, or Head Teacher of Bönpo, Rinpoche was able to reach safety in Nepal.

In 1961 he was invited to London by Professor David Snellgrove under the auspices of the Rockefeller Foundation Visiting Scholar program. He remained in England for three years, collaborating with Professor Snellgrove on The Nine Ways of Bön, the first scholarly study of the Bön tradition to be made in the West.

Returning to India in 1964, Rinpoche founded Dolanji Settlement in Northern India, the principal seat of the Bönpo people in exile. He returned to Europe in 1969 as a visiting scholar at Munich University to collaborate on a Tibetan-German-English dictionary. From 1970 to 1979, Lopon Rinpoche taught the monks at the Bönpo Monastic Center in Dolanji while at the same time supervising the publishing of a large number of important Bön texts in New Delhi.

By 1978, enough texts were published to organize a curriculum around them. A Lama’s college was established under the guidance of Lopon, returning to India in 1964 with the assistance of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. Rinpoche is again with us, continuing to teach and write about the Bön tradition.

Heartdrops of Dharmakaya by Lopon Tenzin Namdak is the first book written in English that actually describes in detail the practices of Dzogchen.
**Shipping & Handling Costs**

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**Orders $100 and over:**
- Shipping $10

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- Please send order to: Ligmincha Institute, P.O. Box 1892
- Address: ___________________________________________
- Name:______________________________________________
- Shipping and Handling Costs
- Shipping & Handling .......................................................$______

**Books on Dzogchen**

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<td><em>From Tushita to Menri Monastery</em></td>
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<td><em>Explanations of the Ngondro Practices</em></td>
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<td><em>Practice of Dream Yoga</em></td>
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**Books on Dzogchen (Continued)**

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**LOPON'S 1996 SCHEDULE**

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<td>Charlottesville, VA</td>
<td>Taped teachings on the Nyingma Ngondro practices</td>
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<td>July 22</td>
<td>Conway, MA</td>
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<td>July 23</td>
<td>Santa Fe, NM</td>
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<td>July 24-25</td>
<td>Buenos Aires, Argentina</td>
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<td>July 26-28</td>
<td>Cordoba, Argentina</td>
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<td>July 29-31</td>
<td>Menri Monastery, India</td>
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<td>Aug. 1-3</td>
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**Dharma Items Available from Ligmincha Institute**

- **Books on Dzogchen**
- **Tapes**
  - **Heartdrops of Dharmakaya** ($15.95)
  - **Women of Wisdom** ($10.95)
  - **The Nature of Mind** ($15)
  - **Practice of Dream Yoga** ($14)
  - **Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen's text** ($15.95)
  - **Menri Monastery** ($15)
  - **Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche** ($45)

**Contact Information**

- Ligmincha Institute, P.O. Box 1892
- (804) 977-6161 or Ligmincha@aol.com
- More information available at Ligmincha.org
Dzogchen in Colombia

Rinpoche’s first visit to South America and Colombia couldn’t have been more auspicious. The retreat was scheduled for the time of Losar, the Tibetan New Year. We all in Colombia had the benefit of welcoming the Fire Mouse year in the presence of the living teachings.

The retreat took place 60 miles north of Bogotá in an old Spanish monastery, a construction dating from the time of the Conquest—over 400 years old. The old monastery, now turned into a family country house, offered us a quiet place for inspiration, practice and enjoyment.

From the first day, the prayer flags, fixed around an old wooden beam in front of the shrine room, fluttered with the cold breeze of the high valley. During a three-day retreat, together with 26 other Colombian believers, we received from Rinpoche an introduction to Dzogchen, as well as the initiations for the “Short Meditation Session.”

After the three-day retreat, Rinpoche offered two public lectures in Bogotá: one on “Compassion” and the other on “Spirituality in Daily Life.” Fortunately, both were videotaped and will be available at the institute shortly.

The audiences at both lectures were greatly moved, especially as they related Rinpoche’s wisdom and advice to the current difficult situation in Colombia, one that has a forty-year history. Rinpoche’s comparisons with the way Tibetans have suffered since the Chinese occupation was a vivid example for us as we begin to work with our own country’s violence.

It was a great lesson for us all to experience how, in the adverse conditions of our country, we can find, with a right attitude and a deep inspiration from our master, a practical and profound path to overcome our daily difficulties and sufferings. From the depth of our hearts, we all thank you, Rinpoche, and we pray for your well-being and for a future opportunity to be blessed again with your presence in this country.

—Santiago Villaveces

For me, after being part of the sangha for some years now, hearing again the introductory teachings was as refreshing as the first time and even more overwhelming than before.

—Santiago Villaveces
Among my readings for a course in Tibetan Renaissance, I encountered *A General Introduction to the History and Doctrines of Bön*, written by Samten Karmay, a Tibetan scholar who lives in France. I thought it might be interesting to share some of his points in this newsletter.

Overview

Karmay structures his account in nine parts:
1. ‘Ol-mo lung-ring, the land—mythical or real—where Bön claims to have originated.
2. Shen-rab mi-bo, its founder.
3. The persecution of Bön in the 8th century A.D. and subsequent developments.
4. Bönpo Canon.

It is interesting that Karmay chose to divide his account into nine parts. The author mentions that one of the most popular ways of dividing the Bönpo Teachings is into the “Nine Ways of Bön,” in which the last (and highest) teaching is Dzogchen.

Through the nine topics that he chose, Karmay introduces us to one way of understanding the history and identity of the Bönpos. I have chosen to present parts three and four in *The Voice of Clear Light* and hope that it may inspire some of you to expand your reading.

Part 3 — The Persecution in the 8th Century and Subsequent Developments

The main point here seems to be the relationship/antagonism between Buddhists and Bönpos and their struggle for religious and political power. One of the main topics is the linking between the Bönpos before and after the so-called “dark period” (9th-10th centuries).

According to Karmay, we know that “Zhang Zhung covered the whole of Western Tibet and was an independent kingdom. The capital was Khyung-lung ngul-khar to the west of Mount Ti-se, and in the 7th century, there was a king ... to Tibet in the 8th century, Bön also got exposed to its doctrine, from which it absorbed Indian elements like the theories of karma and rebirth.”

Bön emerged as a fully organized religion, similar to Buddhism but without losing its own characteristics, which Buddhists wanted to eliminate from their doctrine from the beginning. The attitude of Bönpo towards Buddhism was one of reconciliation. Buddha Sakyamuni was considered an emanation of Shen-rab (p. 184).

Bön embraced all beliefs of Tibet, including the folk and popular ways of religion. Bön therefore represented “The Tibetan Religion.”

Invitation to Bön History

Thangka painting of Yehe Waimo by Tsering Dorjee.

Mountains

Mountains are pretty

Mountains are high

Mountains can grow

And reach the sky.

— Hilary Vreeland, First Grade

Enzin Rinpoche arrived in Dallas on April 19 to participate in a public forum with J. Marvin Spiegelman, Ph.D., a Jungian analyst well versed in world religions. The task was to reenter the rich East/West dialogue which Carl Jung himself had begun with Asian religions a few decades ago. Jung’s reservations about “introverted” Asian religions being practiced in the West are well known, but he continued to struggle ambivalently with the issue to the end of his life.

Understanding and coming to terms with the self is the profound central issue for both Jungian psychology and Tibetan Dzogchen. Whether the different approaches to self are complementary or more a political success than a purely religious one—the masses were still following Bön” (p. 185). At that time, the Bönpos went underground, or at least their texts did. Karmay mentions that the distinction between the Nying-ma and Bön-po Ter-ma (Treasures, i.e., rediscovered texts) movements is that the Nying-mapas hid the teachings because they were to reappear when the people were ready, whereas the Bönpos hid their teachings because of the Bönpo persecution that lasted approximately from 785 until 1017 A.D. At that point, the “later propagation of Bön” began with the rediscovery of texts by Shen-chen l-a-ga (p. 184).

Bön emerged as a fully organized religion, similar to Buddhism but without losing its own characteristics, which Buddhists wanted to eliminate from their doctrine from the beginning. The attitude of Bönpo towards Buddhism was one of reconciliation. Buddha Sakyamuni was considered an emanation of Shen-rab (p. 184). Bön embraced all beliefs of Tibet, including the folk and popular ways of religion. Bön therefore represented “The Tibetan Religion.”

“During these centuries, Bönpos enjoyed a good deal of quiet religious life. They did so as long as they kept away from the religious and political squabbles of Buddhist sects” (p. 185), but starting with the destruction of Brus Monastery in 1386, due to a flood, a period more “mediocre in comparison to the earlier one” (p. 186) began.
Spring Morning

Spring is giving the mountain a dusting of pale green and pink.

The air saunters through the trees...

Coming to rest on the cows resting on the hill.

Waiting for the day.

—Cindy Allred Jackson

Ongoing Practice

In Charlottesville, we meet to practice the Short Meditation in Six Parts each Wednesday from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. Each Sunday we meet to do the Preliminary Practices (Ngn Dro) at 7:30 p.m. On the last Sunday of every month, we meet according to morning or afternoon sign-up for a whole-day or half-day practice retreat of the Ngn Dro.

For those not acquainted with the Short Meditation, instructions are offered. Please call Ligmincha to let us know if you are interested in receiving instruction.

Khyung Dzong News

Southern California

Hello to Ligmincha’s Global Sangha

from the Southern California Sangha

We are still reveling in the warmth and glow of Tenzin Rinpoche’s March teachings here in Los Angeles. On Thursday, more than 35 people gathered at the beautiful Shambhala Center in West Hollywood for the Concentration and Mindfulness Practice, and over that weekend, we were treated to a breathtakingly exquisite Shamanic Healings Teachings.

On Friday, the Sangha melded together so well, the shrine room at the center, (a perfect container for the teachings) was literally shimmering with energy, and the teachings were so clear that it all seemed to penetrate to a very deep level within us.

We are still digesting and assimilating the multilevel experiences. We are grateful to Rinpoche for his time, energy and dedication “to the Work,” but especially grateful for his ever-growing capacity to reveal and articulate his own experimental authenticity. There seemed to be no interference in the connection between the deities and the manifested world. Rinpoche was an open channel with us and each of us benefited by this magical weekend, each in our own way.

The good news is that Rinpoche will be back for five days, Aug. 29-Sept 2, Labor Day weekend. Lopen Tenzin Namdak will be teaching Part 1 and Part 2 of the Experiential Transmission, and Tenzin Rinpoche will be teaching with him.

Rinpoche is so happy with the Shambhala Center as our location that Kallon Basquin, director of Shambhala Training in Los Angeles, has secured the center for the Labor Day event. This will not be a “sleep-over,” so it will be helping the out-of-towners secure inexpensive motels within walking distance of the center. Rinpoche has stated that there is much more from Part 2 that he would like to cover this time.

On Aug. 28 at 7:30 p.m., Rinpoche will be lecturing at the Bodhi Tree Bookstore. His subject will be dreams, the subject of a book he is writing. We are all looking forward to reading it.

Kallon has also offered the Shambhala Center for our weekly practice Sundays at 5 p.m., so if you’re going to be in town, give me a ring at (818) 248-1828, and I’ll give you directions.

—Al Vreeland

The question of bringing it all together in unity is interesting, but not important. The important thing is, what does the self want?

—J. Marvin Spiegelman, Ph.D.
I've been asked that question quite a few times, and I hope the following charts and information will provide a quick look at where our money comes from and how it is spent. The figures presented include the first nine months of our current fiscal year, from July 1995 through March 1996.

For this nine-month period, Ligmincha received nearly 45 percent of its income from retreats and special events. Restricted contributions (26 percent) and pledges (15 percent) were the next largest source. Most of the contributions coming into Ligmincha since July 1995 have been restricted — that is, they were designated for a specific purpose, and must be spent accordingly.

Such contributions are greatly appreciated, but we are finding that we need unrestricted contributions, which can be used to offset the growing operation costs of the institute. In addition, we have learned that contributions specifically designated to go to organizations or charities outside the United States are not tax deductible. Therefore, please read the following Future Directions and How You Can Help segments for suggestions about your future contributions.

**Contributions supported the Bon communities in Nepal and India (see the dispersed contributions chart for the percentage breakdown). With the aid of your contributions, we gave $32,000 to these worthy organizations during this nine-month period. We have made several welcome improvements at Ligmincha, but these have all served to increase our operating expenses.**

- Pledges — Rinpoche 13.1%
- Legal & Accounting 3.0%
- Retreats 44.3%
- Miscellaneous 1.0%
- Rent 4.1%
- Utilities 3.7%
- Sales 11.1%
- Other Restricted Costs 10.1%
- General Costs 3.9%

**Future Directions**

We have come a long way this year, yet we have our eyes set on the following financial goals for the future.

1. **Continue to support and expand our existing activities** — This includes providing space and office support for meetings and retreats for Charlottesville, Houston and Los Angeles sanghas. Postage, printing, and utilities are also included.

2. **Continue to provide a salary and housing for Tenzin Rinpoche** — We are hopeful that we can reach our goal of $200/month with just a few more pledge donors. Rinpoche gives freely of his time and his wisdom so that we can benefit. It is our privilege to be able to help support his teaching efforts and to give something back to him as well.

3. **Purchase of land for a permanent retreat center** — We seriously looked into buying some land near Charlottesville to provide a permanent retreat space (which would lower overall costs). It would also allow us flexibility, freedom and a place to build a community, to provide private retreat space, and to allow for future growth. However, we were unable to financially support such a purchase at the time and feel that we need to increase our land fund from its current $23,000 to at least $100,000 before we are able to make such a move. Special fundraising will be implemented for land purchase.

4. **Support of the Bon community** — Several areas need our financial assistance.

- Menri Monastery, India
  - Dialectic school — for education and training of monks
  - Monastery orphans — children aged 8-15 who come to live in the monastery and prepare for the dialectic school.
  - Library project — to preserve, repair and build new space for storage of sacred Bon texts.

- Tritsan Norbutse Monastery, Nepal
  - Dialectic school — education and training of monks. Especially important in helping Tibetans reconnect with their background in an environment that is similar to Tibet.
  - Farm project — The monks need money to buy land in order to be able to raise their own food and thus become more self-sufficient as they take in greater numbers of refugees.

5. **Publication projects and new publication purchases** — These translation and printing projects and purchases make the Bon wisdom increasingly available to members of the sangha.

6. **Scholarship fund** — This fund provides help for those otherwise unable to attend retreats or events.

**How You Can Help**

We need your contributions as well as your attention at our retreats in order to meet these and future goals. We continue to need your pledge support to provide for Tenzin Rinpoche. In addition, if you can make a general, unrestricted contribution, it will be most helpful in meeting our goals. We will use these donations to meet our operating expenses as well as address the above goals.

If you have a particular project that you want to support, please designate it in the memo field of your check. These will be fully tax deductible except for any money specifically designated for one of the Bon communities outside of the United States (listed under 4). Due to IRS regulations, any contribution specifically designated for an organization outside the United States (and therefore not regulated by the IRS) is NOT tax deductible. If you want to support these communities, you can send a general contribution to us with a note detailing your desire. We will take this request into account when deciding how to apportion the donations.

If you do not need your donation to be tax deductible, then please specify the desired Bon community by name in the memo field on your check. We disperse monies to these communities two to three times a year, when we can assure that the money will arrive safely, and when there is a decent exchange rate. Please make all checks payable to Ligmincha Institute.

Thank you for your support of these important projects and goals, and I hope to see you soon.

—Pam Foresman, Treasurer