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SCHEDULE OF TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE & OTHER EVENTS – 1997

JAN. 22-MAR. 5 HOUSTON, TX
Ah Khrid Meditation, 7-8 p.m. on six Wednesdays: Jan. 22, 29; Feb. 5, 12, 26; Mar. 5. Ah Khrid is a complete Dzogchen teaching that is based on transmitting the actual meditative experiences of the master to students. Beginners welcome. Contact the Houston Khyung Dzong, (713) 523-7330, or Edouard Philippe at eddy@hti.net

JAN. 24-26 HOUSTON, TX
Introduction to Six Lokas. This meditation is to purify the roots of unbalanced emotions in the six energetic physical and psychic chakras through the power of mind and the mantra. Contact the C.G. Jung Center, (713) 524-8253.

JAN. 23-MAR. 6 HOUSTON, TX
Dream Yoga: Jan. 23, 30; Feb. 6, 13, 20, 26; Mar. 6. Rinpoche will teach the theory and practice of dream yoga in the ancient Bön/Buddhist tradition of Tibet. Contact Rice Continuing Studies Dept., (713) 520-6022 or (713) 527-4803.

FEB. 1-2 HOUSTON, TX
Subject to be determined. Contact the Houston Khyung Dzong, (713) 523-7330, or Edouard Philippe at eddy@hti.net

FEB. 7 HOUSTON, TX
Introduction to Yoga. Contact the Houston Yoga Center, (713) 524-4572.

FEB. 14 SAN FRANCISCO
Dream Yoga. Rinpoche will teach the theory and practice of dream yoga in the ancient Bön/Buddhist tradition of Tibet. Contact the Maitri Psychotherapy Inst., (510) 934-8246, (e-mail) kenbradford@designlink.com

FEB. 15-16 SAN FRANCISCO
Ah Khrid Meditation (beginners welcome). Ah Khrid is a complete Dzogchen teaching. It is based on transmitting the actual meditative experience of the master to students. Contact Mark Dahlby at (415) 824-7596 or at writers@writers.com

FEB. 28, MAR. 1-2 LOS ANGELES
Six Lokas Retreat. The Six Lokas meditation is to purify the roots of unbalanced emotion in the six energetic physical and psychic chakras through the power of mind and the mantra. Contact the California Khyung Dzong: Alicia White, (818) 248-1828, (e-mail) Alicia8000@aol.com; or Robert Anger, (310) 455-3886.

MAR. 8 HOUSTON, TX
Subject to be determined. Contact the Houston Khyung Dzong, (713) 523-7330, or Edouard Philippe at eddy@hti.net

MAR. 9 DALLAS
Ah Khrid Meditation. Contact Allan Vreeland at (214) 381-7544 or (e-mail) 71036.1210@compuserve.com

MAR. 15 WASHINGTON, D.C.
Subject to be determined. Contact Jill Sidford at (703) 486-0448 or (e-mail) jeanette@access.digex.com

MAR. 16 WASHINGTON, D.C.
Interfaith Colloquium, 2:30-5 p.m. Panelists from several faith traditions present the essence of their lineage. Contact the Center for Visionary Leadership, (202) 237-2800.

MAR. 15-23 CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA
Subject to be determined. Contact: (804) 977-6161 or (e-mail) Ligincha@aol.com

MAR. 24-APR. 1 INDIA

APR. 2-12 NEPAL

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Volume VI, Issue 1

The Voice of Clear Light

THE LIGMINCHA INSTITUTE NEWSLETTER

Winter 1997

Summer in Santa Fe



His Holiness Tenzin Nyima in the treasure room of the gumpa displaying the holy relics of Menri. He is holding the cloak of Lopon Sange Tenzin and telling the story of his passing.

Although it may be winter now, many folks at Ligmincha have already been planning our 1997 summer retreat, year five of our seven-year program, which will be held June 30-July 20 near Santa Fe, New Mexico. Tenzin Rinpoche is hard at work reviewing what will be taught and considering what support materials we'll put together before the retreat. We've already signed a contract with a new retreat center, Sunrise Springs, near Santa Fe, and are working on schedules and program improvements based on participants' suggestions from last year. With your help, we think that we'll have our best retreat ever this year.

The Teachings

Tenzin Rinpoche is inviting His Holiness Lungtog Tenpai Nyima, the head of the Bön religion and abbot of Menri monastery, to join us to continue the teachings from the vast Mother Tantra (*Ma-rgyud*). During our 1996 summer retreat, Lopon Tenzin Namdak and Tenzin

Rinpoche were able to cover only three of the forty-five *tigles* that make up the *Ma-rgyud*, so there is much more to learn and practice, as all of us felt after last summer. While much is yet to be decided about what will be covered, we can at least give you a few hints of what is being discussed, and promise a more detailed description in the next newsletter.

First, a little background on His Holiness Lungtog Tenpai Nyima. The Abbot is the most senior lineage holder of the Bön religion, and spiritual head of all the Bonpo monasteries in Tibet, India and Nepal, a position he has held since 1969. During his more than thirty years in exile, he has worked hand-in-hand with Lopon Tenzin Namdak to rebuild the Bon monastic tradition and reinstitute a rigorous training system for Bonpo monks. He takes a very personal interest in the welfare of all the monks and visitors at Menri, as well as all the villagers at Dolanji. His attention to detail is more than admirable. I recall one early morning a couple of years ago when visiting Menri hearing strange noises emanating from the bathroom in our building. We walked around the corner to find the Abbot, head of the entire Bön religion, fiddling around with the toilet near our room to make sure it wasn't leaking! He just smiled and joked that he wanted to make sure we were all comfortable. I have never felt more humbled and at the same time blessed.

While Tenzin Rinpoche is inviting the Abbot, we do not yet know if he will be able to join us, for he obviously has many demands placed upon his time. We are hopeful, though, that he can join us and be accompanied by a dance (*cham*) master so that we can all learn and practice the dances of Sidpa Gyalmo during the retreat. The dances are not just a series of movements accompanied by the call of long horns and clash of cymbals, but a tantric meditation in which the dancers become totally transformed into the yidam, possessing all her qualities and attributes. It is a masterful exercise in concentration, agility, grace and transformation.

If the Abbot is unable to join us, we will request that Lopon Tenzin Namdak return to continue his teachings. As many of you know, while the Abbot is the head of the lineage, the Lopon is the lineage's most senior teacher and Tenzin Rinpoche's root master. As everyone who meets



Ligmincha

Institute's

1997

Summer

Retreat





A guest room at Sunrise Springs.

Lopon immediately understands, there is no kinder or wiser person whom you will ever encounter. The depth and breadth of his knowledge, understanding and wisdom is truly inspirational.

While the specifics of exactly what will be taught have yet to be decided, we can share with you some of the topics that have been discussed. Tenzin Rinpoche is reviewing

the section of the *Ma-rgyud* on *sa lung*, the system of subtle prana that flows through our body. According to the practices of *sa lung*, one can become aware of and balance the subtle forces in our body that are affected by our environment, food, activities and companions. The balance of prana in the subtle channels brought through *sa lung* brings greater depth to our meditation and poise to our lives. Rinpoche is also considering teaching from the in-depth explanation of the *baro* and *phowa* practices, which go far beyond what has been taught in our shorter retreats on these topics. The *baro* teachings describe the transitions between this life and the next, while the *phowa* is a meditation technique used at the time of death to eject the consciousness directly into a state of direct awareness. Of course, complete transmissions will be given for all the practices that will be taught. The initiation *Ma-rgyud* given during the 1996 summer retreat will not be required to receive these teachings—everyone is always welcome at our summer retreats.

The Site

This year our retreat will be held at Sunrise Springs, a beautiful and modern retreat facility about 20 minutes south of Santa Fe. The facility has a beautiful main hall we will use for meditations



The meditation hall at Sunrise Springs.

and comfortable motel-style rooms with no more than three people to a room. The facility is built in the New Mexico style, with broad ceiling timbers, exposed stone walls and beautiful willows overhanging the spring-fed ponds. In our free time we will be able to enjoy the hot tubs, swimming pond, volleyball and tennis courts, and beautiful surrounding countryside. To give you some idea of how nice the site is, the event held there before our retreat is a performance by the Santa Fe Symphony.

Nearby Santa Fe also offers many amenities, such as galleries, performing arts, a wide choice of restaurants and alternative lodging for those who prefer to stay off-site. Sunrise Springs does not offer a camping area, though there are camp grounds within driving distance. We will be able to accommodate 75 participants on-site, and will offer discounts for those who prefer to stay in nearby motels, bed and breakfasts, or campgrounds. We will limit registration to about 100 participants for each of the three weeks. Preference will be given to those attending the entire three-week retreat. We are still in the process of determining the exact fees for the retreat, but are happy to report that even though we have a much nicer facility, the fees will be roughly the same as last year, which was \$1200 for the entire three weeks including lodging, meals, teachings and teaching materials. The cost will be proportionally less if you choose to attend only one or two weeks of the retreat, and there will be discounts for those who reside off-site or are in work-study positions. If you are interested in a work-study position, contact Ligmincha now and get your name on the list.

You may look forward to a schedule that is similar in many ways to previous years. Typically we will have an early morning meditation session, followed by breakfast, a teaching, then another practice before lunch. In the afternoons we'll probably have another teaching session, discussion groups, *phrul khor* (Tibetan yoga) and another practice session before dinner. Our days will be full, but never rushed, with plenty of time for sharing with friends or simply enjoying the beautiful New Mexico sky and moun-

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here

Voice of Clear Light

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NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

People who want to send articles to be published in the spring issue of VOCL should send their articles on a disk no later than February 1, 1996. For the summer issue, the deadline is May 1, 1997. You may e-mail articles to nchapman@mindspring.com.

Dharma Items Available from Ligmincha Institute

Books on Dzogchen

New!

Twenty-One Nails, Vol. II, Oral Commentaries (\$15.95) by Lopon Tenzin Namdak and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. You must have received the transmission to use this book.

New!

The Bön Religion of Tibet; The Iconography of a Living Tradition, (\$55) by Per Kvaerne. Illustrated hardback.

Wonders of the Natural Mind (\$15.95) by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. A clear and concise introduction to Dzogchen.

Heartdrops of Dharmakaya (\$15.95) by Lopon Tenzin Namdak. A translation and commentary of Shardza Tashi Gyaltzen's text.

Six Lokas practice book (\$8) by Tenzin W. Rinpoche, edited by John Jackson. You must have received the transmission to use this book.

Women of Wisdom (\$10.95) by Tsultrim Allione. Inspirational biographies of six women practitioners who reached the highest levels of awareness.

Tibetan Buddhism from the Ground Up (\$14) by Alan Wallace. An excellent and clearly written introduction to Tibetan Buddhism in general from a Western perspective.

Tantric Practice in Nyingma (\$14.95) by Khetsun Sangpo Rinpoche. Edited by Jeffery Hopkins. Explanation of the Nyingma Ngondro (similar to the Bön Ngondro practices).

The Crystal and the Way of Light: Sutra, Tantra, and Dzogchen (\$12.95) by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche.

The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying by Sogyal Rinpoche. (\$14)

Dream Yoga and the Practice of Natural Light (\$13) by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, edited by Michael Katz.

Tapes (\$9 each)

Kunzhi I or II (circle your choice)

Rigpa I or II (circle your choice)

Practice of Dream

Short Meditation Session Practice Package (\$10) Consists of tape of guided practice, a detailed explanation, and questions and answers.

Tape Sets

From year one of the seven year program, July 1993

Vol. 1: Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche on the tenet systems as described in the *Nine Ways of Bön*. Seven tapes (\$40)

Vol. 2: Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche on the tenet systems as viewed in the Bön and Buddhist traditions. Five tapes (\$29)

Vol. 3: Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche explaining some of the teachings included in *Heartdrops of Dharmakaya*. Five tapes. (\$29)

Vol. 4: Tenzin Rinpoche and Prof. Anne Klein comparing Lo Rig, (the Sutra systems, and the Nature of Mind of Dzogchen). Seven tapes (\$40)

Vol. 5: Shamanic teachings by Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. Five tapes (\$29)

Vol. 6: Tenzin W. Rinpoche on the *Zhang Zhung sNyan rGyud*. Four tapes (\$24) Sets from *The Experiential Transmission*

Part 1, Vol. 1: Tenzin Rinpoche explains the Bön preliminary practices. Includes guided practices. Eight tapes (\$45)

Part 1, Vol. 2: Tenzin Rinpoche explains the practices of body, speech, and mind from *Heart Drops of Dharmakaya*. Includes guided practices, three tapes (\$18)

Meditation and the Modern Mind Tenzin Rinpoche explains the principle of breath, integrating practice in daily life, creating a space for visualization, the importance of generating love and compassion, finding the right spiritual path. Five tapes (\$29)

Mindfulness in Daily Life Tenzin Rinpoche explains simple and clear methods of calming the mind. Two tapes (\$14)

Concentration and Mindfulness Jan. 1996 (\$15)

Clothing and Other Items

Ligmincha T-shirts (\$15)
Heavy white cotton T-shirts with 5-color

Ligmincha Logo Med, Lg, X-Lg

Khyung Dzong Logo
 Med, Lg, X-Lg.

Menri Monastery

Tibetan Healing Incense (\$3)

Large Healing Incense (\$6)

Notecards, Hung and Ligmincha logo, set of 10, five of each (\$5)

Shipping and Handling Costs

U.S.: 10 % of total order

Foreign: 15% of total order

Orders \$100 and over: shipping \$10

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(VA residents add 4.5% sales tax).....\$ _____

Grand Total.....\$ _____

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Address: _____

Tel. No. _____

Please indicate the week(s) that interest you:

Week One Week Two Week Three

Lopon's Teaching at Tsegylgar

Lopon emphasized that, when practicing Dzogchen, it is important to leave the mind "as it is." When there is no effort or grasping, duality collapses and no watcher of mind or mind can be found. What remains is the viewless and boundless Intrinsic Awareness that is the Nature of Mind.

After a strenuous schedule of teaching in Jemez Springs, Santa Fe, Argentina, Washington D.C. and Charlottesville, Lopon arrived in Boston to spend a few days resting with Wanda and me, before going to Conway Mass. to give a teaching on August 24th and 25th.

Our puppy Tashi and our cat Joey both fell in love with Lopon and with Geshe Wangyal. They managed to kidnap Lopon's hat and drag it under his bed so that Tashi could chew on it. Fortunately, we saved it before too much damage could be done, and Lopon left us—with his hat on.

While in Boston, Lopon taught me the iconography from the five *Ma-rgyud* block prints and the Yidam Thangka. I remain inspired by how Lopon brought these images to life with his voice. Lopon's explanations made it even clearer to me how truly fortunate we are to have Tenzin Rinpoche to connect us with such sacred and profound teachings as the *Ma-rgyud*. I plan to organize the material and make it available to the Ligmicha community at a later time.

Lopon gave a teaching on the Nature of Mind to about 60 people at Tsegylgar, one of Norbu Rinpoche's Gars located in western Massachusetts. Many of those present were long-time students of Lopon's from the Tsegylgar community.

The relationship between Lopon, Tenzin Rinpoche and Norbu Rinpoche is a long-standing one. Tenzin Rinpoche has a wonderful photograph, taken many years ago at Dolanji. Those in the photo include Tenzin, as a boy, along with Lopon and Norbu, who was just a young man at the time he was visiting Dolanji.

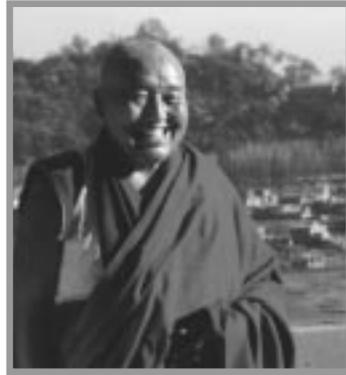
Norbu Rinpoche is an audacious and truly exceptional Buddhist Dzogchen master and scholar, who has long credited the Yung Drung Bön lineage as a vital source of pure Dzogchen teachings. Norbu Rinpoche's root master, the great Changchub Dorje, was a student of Shardza Rinpoche.

There is mutual affection, friendship and respect among Tenzin Rinpoche, Lopon and Norbu Rinpoche that I personally find heartwarming and instructive. They share a deep passion for Dzogchen. Tenzin Rinpoche's first major welcome as a Dzogchen master to the West was at Norbu Rinpoche's Merigar community in Italy.

Although under its own difficult financial pressures, the Tsegylgar Community made a very kind and generous donation to Lopon in support of Tritten Norbutse. They clearly love Lopon, and they are devoted to him and his work.

Sadly, we arrived in Conway only days after Woody and Barbara Papparazzo's daughter Nina died of cancer, after a long illness. Nina was after her early twenties. The premature death of this beautiful young woman was an anguishing reminder of the reality of Impermanence. Lopon asked that we remember Nina, her parents and the entire Tsegylgar community in our prayers.

Lopon's weekend teaching was pure Dzogchen. He was wonderfully clear and precise in explaining the Dzogchen view and practice. He emphasized



that, when practicing Dzogchen, it is important to leave the mind "as it is." When there is no effort or grasping, duality collapses and no watcher of mind or mind can be found. What remains is the viewless and boundless Intrinsic Awareness that is the Nature of Mind. Lopon explained that, once found, there is no need to change anything or to search beyond this state of pure Knowledge, which is empty and brightly clear. He stressed that we must practice to stabilize our capacity to recognize and remain in this Natural State, particularly in preparation for the Bardo following death.

Lopon also taught a Sur-Chod ritual to help the dead, and a powerful Guru Yoga and Phowa practice with Taphiritsa.

The ritual for helping the dead involved a burnt food offering (Sur-Chod) done once or twice a day for someone we love who has died, or as a regular practice for all those that have recently died. The burnt food offering gives the dead great comfort, and it can thought of as a strong Bodhicitta practice. Lopon explained that to do the practice, we should think of the dead with strong compassion while visualizing their form. Then we recite as many mantras, of our choosing, as we can. We then blow our breath, energized from the mantras, on to two or three spoonfuls of food such as grain. Then we burn the food while offering it with compassion.

Speaking of food, the retreat was catered by local restaurants, and the meals were excellent.

As usual, it was very hard to say goodbye to Lopon. Nevertheless, all were left to enjoy the splendid treasures that he left behind, and everyone eagerly awaits his return.

—Jim Manganiello

tains. Each week we will take an afternoon off and organize trips to the nearby mountains and springs, and the sights of Santa Fe.

We will be supplying you with more information on the summer retreat soon. Those of you who have attended previous summer retreats will get a mailing as soon as all the details are worked out, and we will post this information to our e-mail list and web site. Our spring issue of the *Voice of Clear Light* will also feature all the details. But don't wait until then to make a decision. Mark your calendars now and make your travel plans early. We'll be expecting you!

—John Jackson



A view from Sunrise Springs Retreat Center.

Safe Passage of Kangyur Text

I was privileged to travel with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche on his trip to Dolanji and Katmandu in the late winter of 1995. Soon after our arrival in the Himalayan village of Dolanji, it struck me that I was seeing Shambhala, perched shakily on the edge of time and space. I could feel the nearly overwhelming energy of thousands of years of work by countless monks who had given their skill and compassion for the benefit of all sentient beings. Here at the western edge of all that dedication and toil was a tiny, impoverished bastion of monks, living according to a truly enlightened tradition just as their predecessors had done for centuries.

It impressed me that most of the monks were quite young. This is because of the devastation that had befallen the Tibetan monastic community during the Chinese invasion. It had taken Lopon Namdak, Lopon Sangye Tenzin and His Holiness Tenzin Nyima many years to recover enough books and to piece together enough oral teachings to reconstruct a *shedra* curriculum with the degree of integrity and completeness that will allow the continuation of the monastic tradition.

One day His Holiness Tenzin Nyima took us to the treasury at the top of the Gompa. He showed us ancient precious items from his treasure box, including a royal seal from the last king of Ligmicha. Although the treasury appeared sound, apparently there were numerous leaks during rough weather.

His Holiness then took us to see the book collection. It was easy to see that the books were not faring very well. He told us about a strong wind storm that had lifted the metal roof clear off the book room and had scattered the leaves of the books all over the valley below. He described the unity of the villagers as they scoured the valley to recover the pages. There was definitely a measure of deep concern in his voice as he expressed how difficult it was to preserve the written and oral teachings.

I had brought along a copy of the Buddhist Kangyur and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's commentaries which all fit on a single CD-ROM. His Holiness was delighted and amazed to see that a whole room full of books could be condensed into such a small format, even though there was no equipment at the monastery that would allow him to make use of the disk.

Later on, we arrived in Nepal. We found that Lopon Namdak had generously undertaken the task of locating and securing a complete copy of the *Ban Kangyur*. To the best of his knowledge this copy was the best available. He had wrapped it for rough handling, hoping that we could carry or ship it to the United States for safe-keeping. Some volumes were brought back and

are now being kept safe by Ligmicha Institute, but the majority remained in Nepal.

When Lopon Namdak visited Washington this past summer, he expressed his concern about the political situation in Nepal. He told me about his recent trip to Tibet, during which his party was stopped by a Peoples Republic Army convoy of with tens of soldiers with machine guns. "I very seldom experience fear," he said, "but at that moment, looking at the soldiers with their equipment and guns, I was really scared." He said that Nepal is not likely to resist any order from the Chinese government concerning the Tibetans living in Nepal. Already they have convinced the Nepali border guards that they must turn away Tibetan refugees attempting to flee across the border. There is no guarantee of security for those already in residence. He told me "We really must make an effort to get the last remaining copies of the sacred texts to safety."

During the Lopon's teachings on the *Second Book of Experiential Transmissions* this fall in Los Angeles, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche asked me to take up a contribution so that we could ship the texts back via a reliable carrier. My task was made easy by the generosity of the Los Angeles sangha. We collected enough to assure safe passage of the *Kangyur* texts back to the United States!

There are many texts that are still in danger. An effort is underway to bring back a copy of the *Bön Tengyur* (commentaries) and others. Dyana Crummit made a very generous gift to kick off an effort to bring back a printed copy of the *Tengyur*. Fritz Hunrath and I discussed ways that the Ligmicha sangha might be able to pull together to have the Bön sacred works preserved on computer as well. Once the texts have been transferred to digital form, they are really guaranteed survival. The teachings are also being preserved in English through the efforts of folks such as Anne Kline, Stephen Tainer, Annette Jones, Peter Harcy, John Carleton, Andreas Wehowsky, Jeff Fisher, John and Cindy Jackson, Alejandro Chau-Reich and numerous others who are working to record, transcribe and edit the teachings given at numerous retreats. The publishing of the *Twenty-One Nails* text was the first major milestone in this effort. People interested in helping may contact me, John Carleton, or Fritz Hunrath. We are looking for volunteers and monetary support to help this important project.

Thanks for your kind attention.

—Mark Hoyer

Gar Kuru: Perfect Teaching Space



Khedup Gyatso stands before the tent he constructed for Ligmincha at Tenzin Rinpoche's request.

Khedup himself not only makes tents but does sand mandala paintings, decorates stupas and calligraphs Tibetan sacred texts. Small wonder this gar kuru is a work of art as well as a magical place.

The gar kuru or events tent shelters us during the three days of teachings on Dream Yoga and the Bardo. The space inside is at once immense and intimate, brilliant and shaded, open and protected, still and airy, a perfect union of opposites. And grounding this luminous white space is a layered covering of fiery Kurdish rugs. Brightly painted thangkas flutter softly along the cotton walls.

The first morning as we gather inside, Tenzin Rinpoche acknowledges Khedup Gyatso, the tall Tibetan man sitting near the entry. Khedup, I learn later, made this tent at Rinpoche's request, like another that Rinpoche had seen in Dolanji, India.

Later as Khedup adjusts the ropes on the outside, slackened from the early morning dew, I ask him how he made this tent.

Family of Artisans

Kedup's story begins with his father, an artisan who made tents, designed Tibetan houses, built and decorated thrones for Bön masters and was skilled at mounting thangkas on their exquisite fabric backings. Khedup himself not only makes tents but does sand mandala paintings, decorates stupas and calligraphs Tibetan sacred texts. Small wonder this gar kuru is a work of art as well as a magical place.

I ask about the decorations: blue Tibetan closed knot motifs appliqued on the tent corners, the multi-colored Ligmincha logo on the front and especially the complex blue figure on the back. Khedup says that ten Tibetan letters form a symbol that gives protection against fires, earthquakes and floods. From inside, this symbol is just above Rinpoche's head as he teaches.

Tibetan Tents

A gar kuru traditionally is used for weddings, initiations, New Year's and other celebrations, and may have other decorations such as the letters for mantras appliqued around the walls. There are other kinds of tents, of course, and Khedup describes them: a tanzung or settled tent for families to live in, smaller than the gar kuru; a lerak or tent for working people; a small kuru for two to three people, monks perhaps, which would have no decoration. Then Khedup describes a special tent for a lama, yellow on the outside, red on the inside with a special white or yellow canopy, and I imagine the reddish glow inside such a tent.

Khedup has made other tents besides ours and the one in Dolanji. He has made one for the abbot in Dolanji and two for a friend in New York. I ask if he has patterns for these tents, trying to figure from my sewing experience how such a construction is planned and put together.

Materials Old and New

The tents aren't built to exact measurements, Khedup says. He decides on an approximate size and calculates how much material he will need. This one, he gestures toward the gar kuru, was maybe 120 meters of white cotton, 50 meters for the appliqued designs, 20 for the red ruffling. Made in India, the fabric is 36 inches wide, so there are many seams.

Now we use a sewing machine, Khedup tells me. But traditionally, everything was sewn by hand. The cotton came from China but the thread was hand-spun from yak hair, the ropes as well. For stakes and poles, we use bamboo, which is plentiful in India. In Tibet, stakes and poles were of wood. (Our tent uses PVC poles, metal stakes, and nylon ropes.)

On the Bridge

On Saturday and Sunday, November 23 and 24, 1996, a workshop was held at Mt. Carmel Center in Dallas for the purpose of working on the bridge between religions. For the workshop, the bridge consisted of the concepts of mysticism and meditation. As many know, the Carmelites are a Catholic order founded by St. John of the Cross, one of the most eloquent mystics in history. The eastern, meditation side was Hinduism and Tibetan Bön.

Although I was presenting the Tibetan plank of the bridge, I was also anticipating the weekend as a personal experience. My religious childhood was Catholic, but I had never known the Carmelite order before, and I was interested in the meditative and mystical side of my Christian heritage.

Actually, I was a bit nervous. The Mt. Carmel Center is located on a beautiful 30 acres on the escarpment of south Dallas County. It commands a breathtaking view west from Dallas, and it has the quiet, well-worn comfort of contemplative life. I was nervous because I had secret doubts about my choices and my path. My cultural roots are deeply Catholic, and I could feel the comforting depth of those roots in the 1950's architecture and the striking black robes of the Carmelite priests.

I had to wonder if I would be a Bönpo today if I had discovered the Carmelites years ago. I also uncovered doubts about whether it was necessary for me to leave Christianity in order to practice Bön.

The presentations were a mixture of lecture, practice, and discussion. The public lecture by Marshall Voris the previous evening had attracted over 100 people, but the weekend was restricted to 40 due to physical limitations.

The room was quite full as we began the weekend with Hinduism and Yoga. The presenter, Michael Huston, was a frequent Mt. Carmel lecturer who had managed to combine his eastern and western practices in a manner that was smooth and fairly seamless. The common aspect of renunciation was a natural bridge, and the meditative practices of Hinduism easily fit with the contemplative traditions of the Carmelites.

I was apprehensive about how the Tibetan approach would be received. But the obvious parallel between the "dark contemplation" of St. John of the Cross and the *nyamshag* of Dzogchen was rich with practice illustrations and points for discussion.

Although the language and metaphors were different, it became clear that the practices were very similar. For example, the "dark" aspect of contemplation for St. John of the Cross was stressed because the light of gnosis does not shine on an object in contemplative space. Presence and energy in conjunction with emptiness was clearly found in the phenomenology of both Tibetan and Carmelite practice.

It was also found in Thomas Merton's quote, "I seek the imageless face of God." This was not helping my personal need for sharp differentiation.

Father Anthony Morello presented the Carmelite tradition. It was late on a rainy and cold Saturday afternoon, but for me it was the most important time of the weekend. Father Anthony had become a friend during the hours we spent planning the workshop. I found him to be open, clear and always devout.

He began at the blackboard by drawing a vertical line from the bottom of the board about halfway up. He put an arrow on the line, pointing upward. "The cosmic religions begin rooted in nature and they move toward transcendence." To one side, he then drew another vertical line from the top of the board about halfway down, with a downward arrow. "Christianity begins in the supernatural and reaches down." He did not notice my agitation as he deftly continued by explaining that the contemplation of St. John of the Cross was "infused prayer." It was a practice that included infused light, or love, that comes from God, not from the self. The experience of infused prayer, while sought, could not be produced or reproduced.

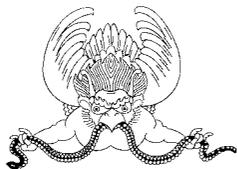
In the mixture of my feelings at that time I could discern a certainty which, for me, corresponded to a gap in the bridge between East and West. My attraction to Bön, and to the Tibetan approach to spirituality in general, was based on ownership. My understanding and approach to Bön was that the experience and practice of the natural state of mind found in contemplation was indeed possible to produce and reproduce. The experiences described with *nyamshag* did not arise from a specific source outside a separate self. The certainty I felt did not stop the internal clash of the authority of the Church with the freedom and liberation of Bön.

For me, especially during that weekend, there was no smooth resolution or seamless bridge constructed. Rather, I thought that the most practical conclusion was to build a personal connection with a particular spiritual path. That path should be carefully selected by each individual, but I would not advise putting together one's own path from a syncretistic collection of practices.

My attempt at creative spirituality for the weekend consisted of picking a peculiarly American metaphor for the task. If you are looking for a new car, you would not be better off by combining an engine from a Cadillac with the body of a Rolls Royce on the frame of a Land Rover. Each vehicle has been carefully designed with components that work optimally with each other. And when you do choose a spiritual tradition, there will be some practices and aspects which appeal to you more than others. Nevertheless, all aspects of the path work together and are necessary. In my American metaphor: a stolen battery is a long way from a ride home.

—Al Vreeland

For me, especially during that weekend, there was no smooth resolution or seamless bridge constructed. Rather, I thought that the most practical conclusion was to build a personal connection with a particular spiritual path.



Khyung Dzong News

Khyung Dzong of California

“The air is alive with the sound of chanting.”

This variation on the main song from *The Sound of Music* best describes the ambiance of our Labor Day retreat. Standing between the two shrine rooms at the Shambhala Center, one could envision oneself in a Bön Monastery. To the right, from the big shrine room, came the sound of the Dedication mantra as Lopon Tenzin Namdak led the Part 2 practitioners, while from the smaller shrine room to the left, the Part 1 practitioners were being led in the same mantra by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. However, this is where the magic comes in: All together, 45 people were chanting the same mantra but one group would start slightly before the other group. The effect of hearing the mantra in stereo and not at the same time created an echo effect that was magical, as if the entire Center was enlivened by sound.

Even though we had to say “good-bye” to Lopon and Rinpoche, they had left us sound footprints to follow. We were blessed by their visit and teachings.

Khyung Dzong News Update

While Rinpoche was here, he appointed Bob Anger to the office of program manager. Also, he appointed Ron Sharrin to the new position of practice leader. Congratulations to you both! I know these appointments will make the Khyung Dzong much stronger.

December 6–13th are the dates set aside for the seven-day Phowa Retreat with Geshe Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche. This is an extraordinary opportunity to accomplish this practice with a Master as well as partake of his knowledge and experience. He will be accompanied by Geshe Gyaltsen, also from the Menri Monastery.

On December 14th, Rinpoche will give Lung, Wang and Trid for the Three Heart Essence Mantras of Bön. We are very excited to be involved with these Experiential Teachings and are looking forward to seeing Geshe Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche again.

We are already planning the spring teachings with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. The Feb. 28, March 1 and March 2 dates have been set. Rinpoche will be teaching from the Bön Dzogchen tradition on the Practice of the Six Lokas. The Shambhala Center will host this event in their beautiful Center in Los Angeles. In Buddhist cosmology, beings can be reborn in one of the six lokas (realms of existence). While experiences can vary from pleasant to unpleasant, it is understood each such realm is a temporary and limited state, linked both with particular negative emotions that ensnare us and with cakras (energy wheels) in the body. Rinpoche will introduce precise methods for opening and purifying each of these cakras in order to purify the seeds of rebirth and to release us from constricted emotional identities in this life.

On a personal note, I traveled to Charlottesville for the Six Lokas Teachings last October and am looking forward eagerly to reviewing and deepening these teachings within myself.

—Joy to all, Alicia White

California Khyung Dzong, P.O. Box 1607, Temple City, CA 91780-7607 Alicia White, (818) 248-1828.

Greetings from Houston!

Hi to everyone from the Houston Khyung Dzong. We just finished the Experiential Transmission teachings with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and are starting to practice Ngondro on Monday nights. Yeah! We are more together as a Sangha, both in practice and in organization. We are also trying to make the teachings more available to all those who are interested by deepening our connections with other groups, such as Rice University, the Yoga Center, the Jung Educational Center, as well as extending it to the Houston community as a whole. Marta, Edy and Bruce are very helpful in implementing the outreach via electronic and non-electronic media.

A couple of months ago, Rinpoche imparted the magnificent teachings on the first eleven of the twenty-four masters of the interrupted lineage of the *Zhang Zhung Nyan Gyud*. These teachings are in the form of poems, through which each master expressed his experience. Rinpoche encouraged us to tap into these masters and their experiences by contemplating on them and their poems. Words cannot really describe the beauty of the poems and the experiences that arose.

Geshe Nyima Dakpa is visiting us at the beginning of December, when he'll give teachings on *Phowa*. Next year Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will be teaching the *Chod* practice, Dream practice, and practices from the *A Khrid* (See the schedule on page 12 for specific information).

This year we are completing the *Phrul Khor* course. Next year we will be offering an intensive retreat on February 7 and 8, which Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will open with a talk on Friday night.

Before saying goodbye to ya'all (I'm becoming a Houstonian), I would like to thank Jennifer, Belita and Ed in particular but really all the Houston Khyung Dzong in general for all the good work and for opening their arms and hearts to me and Erika on our arrival here.

—M. Alejandro Chaoul-Reich

Update on the UniDial Project

There is very good news about the UniDial long distance service project. Effective immediately, the rate for all new subscribers is 10.9 cents per minute. No minimum monthly billing amount is needed to qualify for this rate. This is an excellent opportunity to provide the Bön children with proper food and health care while you save even more on your long distance service.

The categories of residential and business have been eliminated for the present time. To obtain the necessary forms, call (512) 882-9221 or check the ABC, Inc. page at the Ligmimcha web site. Return the form, along with the summary page of your local telephone bill and a summary page for any other long distance company you use, to Aid to Bön Children, Inc. It is essential that you send ABC these telephone bills to ensure that the children will receive the money.

More good news is that Aid to Bön Children, Inc. has received non-profit status from the IRS. This means that all contributions to Aid to Bön Children, Inc. are tax-deductible.

Sponsors are needed for Bön children in India and Nepal. For \$22 per month, you can provide a child with the necessities of life. A sponsor will receive information on the child.

—Sue Anna Harwood

If you are interested in helping a Bön child by signing up for the UniDial project or by becoming a sponsor, please contact **Aid to Bön Children, Inc.** (see contact information on page 7).

We walk inside the tent, and Khedup shows me the main seams where the tent canopy joins the walls. Each seam is reinforced by two 1/4-inch ropes, a nylon one on the outside, a cotton one on the inside. The ropes are individually hand-stitched along meters and meters of seam.

Khedup points to the red ruffle on the bottom of the tent, which is to keep out the wind. He feels it doesn't work, but sitting inside I think it lets in just enough of the cool autumn wind that blows through this river valley below the Blue Ridge mountains.



The space inside the tent is at once immense and intimate, brilliant, open and protected, still and airy, a perfect union of opposites.



Ten Tibetan letters from a symbol on the back of the tent that gives protection against fires, earthquakes, and floods.

Seats 81

A slight smile plays across Khedup's face as he looks at the scattered arrangement of cushions and personal belongings on the tent floor. Really, he explains, you could fit 80 monks and a lama in this tent. Knowing that our group of thirty fills the space, I am disbelieving. But he shows the compact arrangement of 12 monks per row, double rows facing one another with shoulders to the lama. A small walkway between rows allows monks to move to their places easily and for tea to be served. I can begin to see how they all might fit, even if they are as tall as Khedup and myself.

How long will this tent last, I ask. Rinpoche has wondered this aloud during a break in teachings. Twenty years, Khedup estimates. Of course, here you don't have children pulling on the ropes as we do in India. Perhaps it will last even longer. And he tells me about a gar kuru built in 1968 which is still in use.

Teaching Place

At a previous winter retreat, he gathered in a wintry field near the English Inn to invite dissatisfied spirits to move away and to receive Rinpoche's blessings. Khedup had been there assisting Rinpoche at the ceremony. It seemed a fitting place for the teachings, despite my earlier reservations.

People can receive teachings anywhere, inside or outside, Khedup assures me. What's important is the teachings. He's right certainly. But as I sit here in the light and spaciousness of this gar kuru, I cannot imagine a more perfect setting.

—Nan Chapman



The protective symbol above the heads of all at the Dream Yoga and the Bardo retreat.

People can receive teachings anywhere, inside or outside, Khedup assures me. What's important is the teachings. He's right certainly. But as I sit here in the light and spaciousness of this gar kuru, I cannot imagine a more perfect setting.

Photographs on pages 4 and 5 are courtesy of Cecilia Clover, Sue Ellis Dyar and Polly Turner.

Biography of Lha-Tri Khenpo Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche

Lha-Tri Khenpo Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche is the abbot and lineage holder of Lha-Tri Monastery in the Kham/Dege area of Eastern Tibet. Born in Tibet, he grew up in Dorpatan, which was the first refugee Bönpo community in Nepal. His family is the lineage holder of the Lha-Tri lineage, and his father, Lha-Tri Gyaltsen Nyima, was the third reincarnation of Tsultrim Phunstok, a great Bön practitioner of Eastern Tibet.

When Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche was 6 or 7 years old, he began learning to read and write Tibetan. At that time he also began religious studies with his father and with Tsultrim Nyima Rinpoche, the abbot of the Dorpatan Monastery.

When Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche was 13 years old, the family moved to Kathmandu, Nepal. He worked in the sweater business that his family established in Kathmandu, and he also mastered the art of carpet design.

The Bönpo people now living in Kathmandu are originally from the Dorpatan area and are devotees of Te-Wa Monastery, which is located in the upper region of Tibet. Nyima Dakpa's father had the name of a lama of the Te-Wa Monastery, and since there was no monastery in Kathmandu at that time, he took responsibility for all annual religious activities. His father wanted the Bönpo community to be close and for the young people to have a firm connection with the Bön culture. For that reason he established the Bön Community of Te-Wa (Te-Bön kyi dug) and took care of the spiritual activities for these people until the end of his life.

This organization is still functioning in Kathmandu. It participates in all religious activities at Triten Norbutse Monastery and helps the Bönpo people in any way possible.

When Nyima Dakpa was 15 years old, his father took him to sMen-ri Monastery in Dolanji, Himachal Pradesh, India, so that he could be trained there as a monk. The father was getting older and did not know what would happen in Tibet. He wanted Nyima Dakpa to become a spiritual master and a perfect religious practitioner of Bön so that he could do meaningful work for the Bönpo community. Nyima Dakpa, however, became very homesick and returned home to Kathmandu.

In 1977 the senior sMen-ri Lopon, Sangye Tenzin Rinpoche, sent a message with Amdo Sangdak from

Dolanji to Nyima Dakpa's father asking why his son had not already been sent to become a fully ordained monk. "You should do that," Sangye Tenzin Rinpoche said.

It touched Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche very much when he heard the message that was given to his father. Because he was the eldest son and had the name of a lineage holder of Lha-Tri, it was his responsibility to become a monk and serve the Bönpo people. Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche knew inside himself that this was the proper time to accept that responsibility.

That same day in the evening at a family gathering, his father talked about the message from Sangye Tenzin Rinpoche. He said that it had always been his wish for Nyima Dakpa to become a monk and a spiritual master. "I would be happier for Nyima

Dakpa to become a monk than to be given gold the size of a sheep's head," his father said.

Everyone in the family encouraged Nyima Dakpa, and that evening it was decided that he would return to sMen-ri Monastery in Dolanji.

In September 1977, when he arrived in sMen-ri Monastery, he went to see H.H. the 33rd sMen-ri Trizin, Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, and Sangye Tenzin Rinpoche who welcomed him by blessing

him with scarves. Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche went with his aunt to Sangye Tenzin Rinpoche to request a prayer for blessings so that he could be successful in his wish to be a monk. Sangye Tenzin Rinpoche said, "This is my response to your return. I will give you a good prize." Then he poured a whole vase of blessing water onto Nyima Dakpa's head.

During the Tibetan New Year on the birthday of Nyam Med Sherab Gyaltsen, which is the fifth day of the first month of the Tibetan calendar, Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche took the vow from H.H. the 33rd sMen-ri Trizin and the Lopon Tenzin Namdak. Since that time, Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche has lived under the care and guidance of H.H. the 33rd sMen-ri Trizin Rinpoche, the spiritual head of Bön. In 1978, Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche was a member of the first group to be trained in the newly organized Bön Dialectic School. He received all his teachings under Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and Lharam Geshe Yung Drung Nyamgal.

Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche made a commitment to

himself not to take any vacations until his studies in the Dialectic School were complete. He kept that promise. Even when his parents sent letters asking him to come for a family reunion during the New Year, he did not return home until he obtained his Geshe degree in 1987. From 1978 to 1987, in addition to his studies, he helped with the orphanage, the monastic center, and the Dolanji settlement and school. He was the representative of H.H. the 33rd sMen-ri Trizin to meetings and conferences held away from Dolanji.

In 1982 the father and brother of Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche went to Tibet to see the Lha-Tri Monastery and to visit the people who lived there. The people at Lha-Tri Monastery sent several letters asking Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche to come there and take responsibility for educating the young monks. For this reason he decided to go to Tibet in May 1987. During this trip he visited 38 different Bön monasteries in Tibet. It was his intention to give information to the monasteries in Tibet so that the connection between the sMen-ri Monastery in India and the Tibetan monasteries could be strengthened. Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche went to sMen-ri Monastery in Tibet as well as to his Lha-Tri Monastery where he was enthroned as abbot.

In 1988, he returned to sMen-ri Monastery in Dolanji. In April of the same year, H.H. the Dalai Lama visited the monastery. During this visit H.H. the 33rd sMen-ri Trizin discussed the school in Dolanji with H.H. the Dalai Lama. At that time the school only had six grades. H.H. the 33rd sMen-ri Trizin requested permission to add the 7th and 8th grades so that the children could have more opportunity to study their Bön culture. H.H. the Dalai Lama agreed to the plan. "Bring as many of the Bönpo children as possible to one place," he said. "It will be easier." Ten thousand rupees were given for the project through the education minister of exile government of Tibet, Juchen Thupten. H.H. the Dalai Lama said that this money was the symbol of a beginning so that this project would actually take place.

At the request of the people of Dolanji H.H. the 3rd sMen-ri Trizin gave Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche the official permit for expanding the school. All necessary documents were filed with the Indian government. At the same time Nyima

Dakpa Rinpoche was given the responsibility for gathering children from all the different Bönpo communities so that they could attend the school in Dolanji. For that reason he made an official visit to Kathmandu to talk to the Bönpo people about the project. Information about the school was sent to the Dolpo, Lubrak, Zomsom and Tankye areas as well as to remote Bönpo communities in Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim and India.

H.H. the 33rd sMen-ri Trizin also asked Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche to take the responsibility for establishing the Bön Children's Home in Dolanji so that girls as well as boys could have an opportunity to receive an education. Because of his great desire to help the Bönpo children Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche was happy to accept this position. He is currently director of the Bön Children's Home, which he organized in 1989 so that the children would have a place to live while they attended the school in Dolanji.

Most of the children in the Bön Children's Home are from very remote Bönpo communities such as Dolpo and Lubrak. In the beginning, there were 45 children. At the present time there are 110 children in the Bön Children's Home. Some children have now graduated from the school in Dolanji and are continuing their education in Shimla and Varanasi.

In 1987 Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche established and became the editor of *sBön sGo (Door to Bön)*, the only Bönpo magazine published in the Tibetan language. The ninth issue will soon be published by the six members currently on the staff of *sBön Go*.

In May 1996, H.H. the 33rd sMen-ri Trizin gave Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche the responsibility for establishing Mongyal Monastery in Dera Dun, India. The land for this project was donated in 1969 by the Prince of Lingsang and the Tibetan Kham Lingsang society. The aim of this project is to reestablish the original education system of Tibet.

Since 1991, Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche has visited the United States three times to give teachings and to raise funds for the Bön Children's Home. During the trip this year he will also visit the United Kingdom and Germany. He hopes to return regularly to the United States to continue giving teachings.

—As told to Sue Anna Harwood

Nyima Dakpa father said that it had always been his wish for Nyima Dakpa to become a monk and a spiritual master. "I would be happier for Nyima Dakpa to become a monk than to be given gold the size of a sheep's head," his father said.



Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche is currently director of the Bön Children's Home, (shown above) which he organized in 1989 so that the children would have a place to live while they attended the school in Dolanji.

Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche has asked that all contributions for the Bön Children's Home be sent to:

AID TO BÖN CHILDREN
720 North Mesquite Street
Corpus Christi, Texas
78401

(512) 882-9221
<http://www.comet.net/ligmincha>

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