

# THE VOICE OF CLEAR LIGHT

VOLUME II, NUMBER 2

THE LIGMINCHA INSTITUTE NEWSLETTER

SUMMER, 1993

## LIGMINCHA' S NEW HOME

The Ligmincha Institute is now located in Charlottesville, Virginia in a lovely home located at the corner of 1126 Forest Hills Avenue and Cherry Avenue. Rinpoche and John Jackson, who lives in Charlottesville, looked at many places before settling on this one. Rinpoche will be staying here whenever he is not traveling. Many thanks again to all who made this possible especially to Anthony and Joan Curtis, John Kalyan, John and Cindy Jackson, and all those who are helping out financially.

Regular practice sessions, teachings, and weekend retreats will be held at the new Institute for all who wish to attend.

Present plans call for remaining at this location until such time as the Institute can afford to purchase more permanent facilities.

We are actively looking for someone who is retired and who may wish to relocate to help out Rinpoche and the Sangha administratively at the Institute. Please feel free to call to explore mutually rewarding opportunities.

### NEW ADDRESS, TELEPHONE, AND FAX INFORMATION

The Ligmincha Institute  
P.O. Box 1892  
Charlottesville, VA 22903

Telephone No.—(804) 977-6161

Fax Number —(804) 977-7020

Please use only the P.O. Box address for all mail to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, 'The Ligmincha Institute', and 'The Voice of Clear Light.'

*Photograph of Lupon Sangye Tenzin (Left side) and Lupon Tenzin Namdak taken in the early 1960s. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche received many of the precious Bön teachings from both Lopons. In particular he received the entire oral teachings of Zhang Zhung (Zhang Zhung sNyan rGyud) from Lupon Sangye Tenzin before he died in 1977.*

# OBSTACLES TO PRACTICE

*This is a partial edited transcript of teachings given by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche during a retreat at the Ligmincha Institute, Richmond, Virginia in December 1992. The retreat subject was from the Bön text "The Twenty-One Seals" a part of the oral tradition of Zhang Zhung (Zhang Zhung sNyan rGyud).*

I want to speak a little about the problems or obstacles that occur in practice.

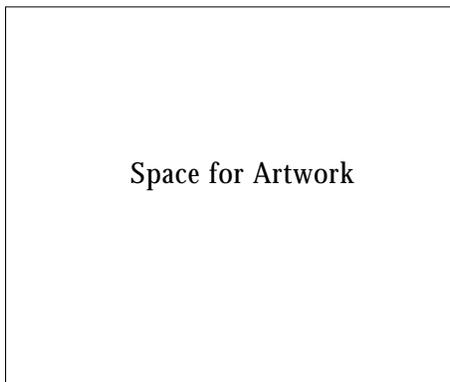
We know that obstacles are very strong interruptions to our growth and to the progress of our practice. The higher the form of meditation, the more subtle the obstacles can be. The more subtle these obstacles are, the more difficult they are to recognize. Knowing how to recognize obstacles as they occur is very important for our practice. In the Zhang Zhung sNyan rGyud there are three major kinds of obstacles identified—external, internal, and secret.

**EXTERNAL:** Externally, obstacles occur with regard to human and non-human beings. This is an external way of considering the obstacles. Sometimes love, relationships to friends, partners, or anybody, can be a great obstacle. Attachment to one's country, to a place or house—these can be the basis for decisions that can strongly interrupt the movement into your spiritual dimension and practice.

When they manifest, you should recognize them and deal with them decisively. When they arise you should break through their hold, even if people think you are crazy. What does it mean to break through their hold? Maybe a situation with one's parents is easier to understand than with partners. For example, maybe someone says you should not practice. Someone might say, 'If you go to the teaching of the Buddhists, I will not marry you.' And it is not really a problem of go-

ing to the Buddhist teachings or not, but that person just does not want to marry you in any case. Then you have to be strong to say, 'OK, we are good friends, but good bye. This is what I want to do.' This is an example of an external human problem.

When we disturb non-human beings of whom we are not aware, we can have negative effects on the mind, body, or skin. These relate to non-human obstacles. Any kind of illness can be related to these different spirits. If one is aware of this, one can deal with these through certain kinds of ceremonies.



Here in Dzogchen, especially in the Zhang Zhung, there are forms of self-healing that address particular parts of the body that have obstacles, or disturbances. Sometime in the future we will teach these—how one can heal these through the elements. These practices can be applied to such obstacles.

**INTERNAL:** External obstacles are difficult, but they are easier than the internal ones. Internally, problems of illness can arise. You can understand of course to go to the right doctor, using one's own intelligence. Though this is not part of the instructions from the eighth century, I am adding to do this. It is also important to have healing ceremonies.

When illness comes, that is the condition, and you have no choice about it. The problem of the physical substance is more difficult than the problem of the external situation. The latter can be solved

through strength of mind. The obstacles related to physical condition are more difficult.

**SECRET:** Then, the main problem, is internally, what we call obstacles of the secret meditative experience (gsang ba sgom pa rnyams kyi bar cad). These are the most subtle obstacles, and the most difficult to deal with. Sometime people are not even aware of them.

I bring up these obstacles during teachings about the 21 seals, which are a very important part of Dzogchen, Upadesha and Zhang Zhung, because it is important not to expect that progress will come just like that. It is important to recognize what obstacles may occur. If these are explained one can be more aware of them and one can take appropriate measures.

Regarding the secret obstacles: there are obstacles of the view (Ita ba), meditation, and behavior. In general all teachings are divided into these three categories.

**VIEW:** The view is the first thing. You cannot meditate if you do not have a view, and you cannot behave if you do not meditate.

What I am saying is, you might wonder what view means? View does not necessarily refer to a particular school of philosophy, but your own view, the attitude to which it gives rise, and the kind of behavior that follows. We are gathering here because we have the attitude to do this, therefore we have this kind of behavior, and this kind of attitude is within us because we have a certain view about life, spirituality, and what is important. The view makes the attitude, the attitude brought you here. That is our ordinary sense of view, attitude, meditation, and behavior.

In higher forms of practice, it is the same way. First one has to be concerned about the obstacles to the view. For example, in any teaching, any religion, even Buddhism, there are different teachings. One must discover what the view is in order to meditate or do anything. You need

to have a view. When you learn the view, you can be attached to the words of the view—by being attached to the words—creating a meaning from them.

It may seem in the process of understanding the view that you have understood, when you say you have understood. This kind of mind can be a big problem. It makes you believe that you have understanding. Perhaps you do. But, when you do not, this belief that you do can be a big problem.

Then, if you remain in that understanding, during the explanation you think, 'Oh, I understood.'

Oh, that sounds familiar.' People remain in such stages a lot, without having actual ex-

perience. They do not move from these descriptions to the actual experience. They just remain in that understanding. The third stage, which is experience, is missing. There is a gap between hearing, thinking and experiencing. The gap between thinking and experiencing is the greatest. It becomes this way through habit.

Another problem is thinking, 'Oh, I understood that, but I will practice later on.' And the time keeps extending.

These are all different parts of the problem of the view. I definitely know, in many people's cases this is true, People hear, do not ex-

perience, and then go on hearing. Sometimes they get worried and think, 'I didn't get it.' You become very precise at losing what you have heard, without even knowing how precise you are.

If you do not know what this condition is, the problem grows continuously. What will you do now? You add elaborations of thought,

will say, 'Yes, I have never understood that either.' That is good. You can work with it by finding a situation so that it will not happen again. But if everyone is quiet, keeping a secret, not knowing what they are supposed to know, then for whom is this a secret? One is cheating oneself, not helping oneself, and not accepting who one is.

As we have grown up in an intellectual culture, we definitely know how to create things, 'Yes, I have read something, I have heard something,' and then one can elaborate. People know how to say things. It is easy to elaborate in conceptual understanding.

### *A forest of 'Ah' Sticks*

because you do not have experience. You have heard one time. You have heard a second time. You did not experience it. You have an idea. You are thinking. But it is easier to add on more in thinking than it is to add on in terms of experience. Thought is elaboration. It can continue to elaborate and develop very much. Experience is free of elaboration.

Then you elaborate in this way. You do not want to say, 'I have been following dharma for ten years but I have not had experience.' Very few people would say this. Otherwise, it is beautiful to say, 'I did not understand that.' And others

ding. But the problem is still growing. It is not that you just thought of something, but now you are becoming very precise in your lack of understanding of something that you should have discovered in the right way. You don't want to admit anymore that you don't know. You want security and to just go on saying the same thing. It just becomes one precise mistaken view, that you have developed, belonging to you. The danger can increase further. You may lead other people too.

All this has to do simply with problems of the view. Problems which arise before you even meditate. You have not even arrived at

the place where you are starting to do something.

**MEDITATION:** The second problem concerns obstacles ('gegs) and interferences (bar cad) to meditation. At least you have arrived at the second stage to have this problem.

People can get very attached to how pleasant it is to just sit. This is attachment to bliss. Grasping bliss, attachment to it, and becoming biased towards it, is another problem.

Another obstacle is remaining in the non-thinking mind (mi rtog pa la mchog gcig). This is similar to the experience of falling into emptiness that we discussed yesterday. Without awareness or introspection, you can have experiences—without being aware (dran bzhin med pa).

Also, regarding the problems we discussed yesterday of obscured object and unclear mind—these obstacles bring lack of clarity. Or, with distraction/agitation (bdgod pa), one does not remain with the base. When you practice you are remaining there but you lose that base and are just moving everywhere (gnas cha med bar). There is no base to remain in because you are lost.

Lack of awareness regarding one's own progress in practice, not being concerned when your practice does not progress, and just remaining in those stages are all big problems of meditation.

**BEHAVIOR:** These obstacles can be related to the teaching, related with worldly things, fame, money, or business. Wrong behavior which becomes a cause of individual interest such as presenting something which is not true, dressing in some way, or behaving or presenting something which is not true are all dangerous forms of behavior.

Less dangerous forms are connected with oneself: for example, one's attitude of laziness. This is a problem with oneself but does not harm others very much. Or false modesty, making yourself less capable than you are, can be an ob-

stacle.

These are the problems, the gross obstacles of view, meditation, and behavior. It is very important to be aware of these. You might think why should I worry about these. Why not just teach the highest practices and let us do them? Why do we have to be reminded of these problems? Because we are the people who have to practice. It is like saying the trip of realization is a long trip. The higher the practice the more subtle the problems. This is a way to protect ourselves from every situation in order to succeed in what we want. This is being strong, protected, in order to achieve something very important.

These are very subtle and precise issues of which we need to be aware.

really. But, Rinpoche asked and, as it says in one of the Good Books, 'Ask and ye shall receive.'

The retreat took place on a beautiful ranch just outside of Katy, Texas. Serene countryside, Texas wildflowers in bloom—it was spring, and even the insects were mating. As Ben and I drove up to the ranch house, we noticed as small killdeer running frantically up and down the road, dragging her wing and peeping. She had a nest nearby that she wanted to protect from potential predators. Looking for some privacy in order to hatch her eggs, the poor killdeer and her nest was to become one of the main attractions at the Ranch.

During the first day of the retreat, people arrived all hours of the day.

### *Retreat Participants at the Live Oak Ranch, Katy, Texas*

#### **RETREAT AT THE LIVE OAK RANCH IN MAY 1993**

When Tenzin asked me to write something for the newsletter about the Live Oak Ranch retreat in Texas last May, I felt a little worried. After all, what does one say about a retreat? We slept. We ate. We meditated. We went swimming occasionally. We meditated some more. Not what you might call 'news,'

Some of the practitioners brought tents, and set up their outdoor bedrooms close enough to the house that they could sleep outside, but use the bathrooms inside when the need arose. Other practitioners chose to bunk in one of the two houses on the property... a slightly sounder idea, in retrospect, given how much it rained that week.

Rinpoche spent most of the re-

treat teaching the Preliminary Practices from the Zhang Zhung oral tradition. The Preliminary Practices, if you haven't read about this in one of the other newsletters, are nine meditations designed to prepare the meditator for higher Dzogchen teachings and practices. The nine meditations are divided into three sets of three. If memory serves me, the first set tames the mind, the second set purifies the mind, and the third set prepares the mind. Some of the practices involve visualizations, others use mantras, and still others involve complex hand maneuvers or mudras. Much of the work we did together focused on just understanding the mechanics of the practices.

But Rinpoche also gave some beautiful teachings on impermanence, compassion and the nature of the mind. Three times a day, in the morning, in the afternoon and in the evening, we sat together and listened to his teachings. Rinpoche discussed three prerequisites to sound practice. He said that, in order for the practice to be most effective, the meditator must be motivated by compassion, must be totally present during the practice (no planning what to do for dinner), and must dedicate the practice to the enlightenment of all sentient beings. Rinpoche also grounded us in the cultural tradition of Bön and the Dzogchen teachings. It seemed very important to him that we value the tradition, along with the teachings, themselves.

As I mentioned earlier, it rained a lot that week. Ben suggested we nickname the retreat 'Purification by Water' given how many thunder and lightning storms blew through. Auspiciously, the evening of the first day, a rainbow appeared in the sky just before sunset. We did what many sensible Americans do when they see a rainbow—we stood in front of it and had our picture taken. □

– Bernadette Gillece –

## TIBETAN YUNG- DRUNG BÖN MONASTERY IN INDIA

### I. THE TIBETAN BÖNPO FOUNDATION

Before and in greater numbers after the Lhasa uprising on the 10th March 1959, large groups of Tibetans, men, women and children fled Tibet and came to India. With the help of the Indian Government and several international organizations, a number of refugee camps were established in different places along the Himalayan Range and as far south as the State of Karnataka. It is estimated that the present number of Tibetan refugees in India and Nepal is about one hundred thousand. Approximately one per cent of this total are the Tibetans who profess the Bön religion and are known to other Tibetans as Bönpos.

Soon after the Tibetans came to India, a group of Bönpo Lamas (blama), monks and laymen gathered in Kulu-Manali where they were employed mainly as road workers. Due to climatic differences between India and Tibet, and the very little help they received from charitable organizations, their circumstances were very difficult. A fair number of them died including Sherab Lodro (Shes-rab blo gros 1935-1963), the abbot of Menri (sMan-ri), the chief Bönpo monastery in Tibet. From the mid-sixties a determined effort was made to establish a proper refugee settlement. The task of finding the land and funds was entrusted to Tenzing Namdak (bsTan-'dzin rnam-dag), once chief tutor (dPon-slob) of Menri monastery. With help and sponsorship from the Catholic Relief Service, he found and bought a piece of land at Dolanji, near Solan in Himachal Pradesh. In 1967 the settlement was formally established and registered with the Indian Government under the name of the 'Tibetan Bönpo Foundation'. About seventy families transferred from Manali and each received a house and a small piece of land, the size of which depended on family size.

The Tibetan Bönpo Foundation

from the time of its founding had its own constitution, and a group of men elected to handle administration, the abbot of the monastery acting as president. Their main concerns are the distribution of land, housing, family problems, disputes between neighbors, helping the poor and sick, and the education of children. The new settlement of Dolanji has been named Thobgyel Sarpa (Thob-rgyal gсар-pa) after the village Thobgyel which was near the monastery of Menri in Tsang Province (gTsang), Tibet. Most of the Tibetans in the settlement come from the area of Mount Kailash, Upper Tsang, Hor, Kongpo (rKong-po), Dege (sDe-dge), Amdo (Amdo) and Gyarong (rGya-rong).

Space for Artwork

After the death of Sherab Lodro of Menri the abbot of Yungdrung Ling (gYung-drung-gling), the second most important monastery in Tibet became the spiritual head of the Bönpo community in India. He came to Dolanji with a group of monks to found a new monastic community. He built several small houses for the monks and a small chapel for religious observances. In 1969 he arranged a ceremony to elect the successor of the deceased abbot of Menri. The names of all the Bönpo geshe (dGe-bshes) were written on paper and placed in a vase. At the end of the ceremony which consisted mainly of prayers and invocations to the Bönpo deities, the vase was churned until one name fell out. The lot fell upon Sangye Tendzin (Sangs-rgyas bstan-'dzin) Jongdong (lJong-ldong), born 1928, and at the time of his election working at the University of Oslo,

Norway. Soon after his election he was installed as 33rd abbot of Menri and received the name Lungtog Tenpe Nyima (Lung-rtogs bstan-pa'i nyi ma). For one year, he and the abbot of Yungdrung Ling worked together.

Since the death of the abbot of Yungdrung Ling in 1969, Sangye Tenzin (who continues to use his former name) assumed the spiritual leadership of all the exiled Bönpos. As abbot of Menri monastery in Tibet, he is also spiritual head of the Bönpo

monasteries in Tibet and Nepal. From the time he took charge of Dolanji monastic community, he erected more houses for monks, built a new library, the abbot's residence (bla-brang), new premises for the monastery kitchen and organized the monks into

a full scale religious community, based on the monastic rules ('dul-ba) as outlined in the Bönpo Canon and described in detail in the rules of Menri monastery. The main temple, the foundations of which were laid in 1969 was completed in 1978 and named Pelshenton Menri Ling (dPal gshen-bstan sMan-ri-gling).

The whole monastic complex is embraced under the name of 'Bönpo Monastic Centre', and forms a part of the Tibetan Bönpo Foundation. The main purpose of the Monastic Centre is the pursuit

of a strict monastic life, education of monks, and performance of religious ceremonies. Additional activities include publishing Bönpo texts painting thangkas (thang-ka), running two medical dispensaries, one based on traditional Tibetan and one on modern western medicines, cultivating their small piece of land, continuing the construction of accommodation and sending monks to help other Bönpo groups in India and Nepal with their spiritual needs. The Monastic Centre is maintained solely by voluntary do-

Among this group are several monks who in their lifetime have followed the special methods of spiritual perfection according to the Dzogchen (rDzogs-chen) and Cho (gCod) traditions.

The second group consists of 35 young men who took their religious vows in this monastery. They are being educated in the Bönpo doctrines and trained to live according to Bönpo monastic rules. If they attend to all their duties, the monastery provides them with a mid-day

meal, afternoon tea, and soup (thug-pa) in the evening.

Clothes and morning tea they provide for themselves.

The fundamental education

lasts for eight years and concludes with the geshe (dGe-bshes) examinations.

If successful they are awarded

the geshe degree, approximate

to a doctorate in religion in the Western universities. Their syllabus consists of dialectics (mTshannyid), logic (Tshad-ma), wisdom texts (phar-phyin), basic and gradual stages of inner progress (Sa-lam), philosophy of the Middle Path (dBu-ma) cosmology and metaphysics (mDzod-phug), monastic discipline ('Dul-ba), tantras (rGyud), Great Perfection (rDzogs-chen), history (Chos-'byung), poetry (sDeb-sbyor), astrology (rTsis) and Tibetan grammar.

*Yoga by the dawn's early light at the Live Oak Ranch Retreat—Katy, Texas*

nations and offerings received for the performance of religious ceremonies. The small profit from book publishing is used to publish the books required for teaching.

This monastic community, in fact the only Bönpo monastery in India, consists of three groups of men. The first group consists of twenty lamas and monks who came from Tibet. Their main activities are the religious ceremonies in the houses of laymen, private religious practices, and participation in all the rituals which take place in the monastery.

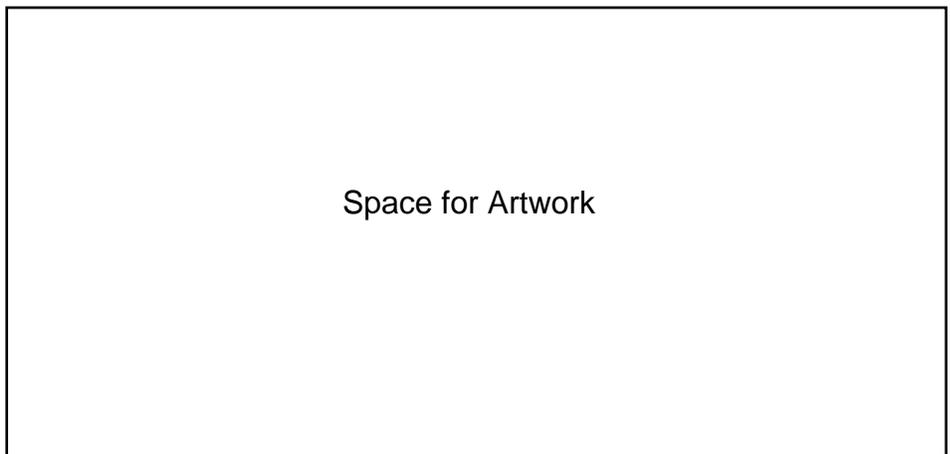
In 1967 when the first monks came to Dolanji, the teaching was done by Ponlob Sangye Tendzin (dPon-slob Sangs-rgyas bstan-'dzin), the former grand tutor of Menri, and his successor Ponlob Tendzin Nam-dak, the founder of the settlement. Due to various difficulties, especially the lack of basic books, the teaching was partial and consisted mainly of training the young monks in the practices of Dzogchen traditions, especially the Zhang-zhung Nyengyu (Zhang-zhung-sNyan-rgyud) which is considered of prime importance. One year later Ponlob Sangye Tendzin died and Ponlob Tendzin Namdak assumed full responsibilities for the education of the younger generation of monks. By 1978 a sufficient number of basic books was published and premises for use as a classroom were usable. In that year the full training in all the Bön doctrines began. The first group of monks will finish the cycle of studies by 1986.

The third group of monastery residents consists of boys between seven and fourteen years old. They receive primary education at the Central Government School in the village near the monastery. As well as the normal school syllabus including Hindi and English languages, they also study Tibetan grammar and history. Outside school hours they take part in all ceremonies in the temple, receive instructions in religion. Tibetan calligraphy painting, and music for religious use such as learning to play cymbals, drums and shawms. During the long winter-vacations they receive instructions which serve as a general preparation for the studies pursued by the second group of monks.

They have a separate kitchen and take responsibility for collecting wood and preparing their own meals. All boys, whether orphaned or not are maintained by the monastery. The parents are not obliged to pay for their sons subsistence but contributions are welcomed. When a boy joins the community he has his head shaved and receives a new

name in a short ceremony called Tshe-ring, which is a ritual for his well-being. After this ceremony he wears monastic robes when he attends ceremonies, and ordinary clothes for school and daily life outside the temple. This group is not bound by vows until the age of eighteen when they must either take religious vows or leave the monastery to continue life in the world. They are however free to take vows before eighteen if they personally wish.

by temples, cities and parks. To the south is the palace Barpo Sogye (Bar-po so-brgyad) where Tonpa Shenrab was born. To the west and north are the palaces in which lived the wives and children of Tonpa Shenrab. A temple named Shampo Lhatse (sham-po Iha-rtse) is to the east. The complex of places, rivers and parks with Mount Yungdrung in the centre constitutes the inner region (Nang-gling) of Olmo Lungring. The intermediate region (Bar-gling) consists of twelve cities,



Space for Artwork

## II. A SHORT HISTORICAL OUTLINE OF BÖN RELIGION

### THE ORIGIN OF BÖN

The Bönpos maintain that Bön originated in the land of Olmo Lungring ('Olmo-lung-ring), a part of a larger country called Tazig (rTag-zigs). 'Ol symbolizes the unborn; Mo the undiminishing; Lung the prophetic words of Tonpa Shenrab (sTon-pa gShen-rab) the founder of Bön; and Ring his everlasting compassion. Olmo Lungring constitutes one third of the existing world and is situated to the west of Tibet. It is described as an eight-petalled lotus under a sky which appears like an eight-spoked wheel. In the centre rises Mount Yung-drung Gutseg (gYung-drung dgu-brtsegs), 'Pyramid of Nine Svastikas'. The svastika is the symbol of permanence and indestructibility. The nine svastikas piled up represent the Nine ways of Bön. At the base of Mount Yungdrung spring four rivers, flowing towards the four cardinal directions. The mountain is surrounded

four of which are towards the cardinal directions. The third region includes the outer land (mTha'-gling). These three regions are encircled by an ocean and again by a range of snowy mountains. The access to Olmo Lungring is gained by the so called arrow way (mDa'-lam). Before his visit to Tibet, Tonpa Shenrab shot an arrow thus creating a passage through the mountain range.

This very sophisticated description of Olmo Lungring has been tentatively related by some scholars to different geographical locations. Some see it as a description of Mount Kailash (Mt Ti-se) and the four great rivers that spring from its base; China being the land to the east, India to the south, Orgyan to the west and Khotan to the north. To other scholars the description seems to resemble the geography of the Middle East and Persia in the time of Cyrus the Great. To a believing Bönpo the question of the geographic identification of

---

## Space for Artwork

Olmo Lungring does not come so much to the foreground as does its symbology which is clearly made use of to indicate the supramundane origin of his religion. Symbolic descriptions which combine history geography and mythology are well known phenomena in ancient scriptures. The description of the universe with Mount Meru supporting the sky and the four Chief Continents to the four cardinal points and this earth as the southern continent (jambudvipa) is another similar example. □

— *Dr. Tadeusz Skorupski* — *Excerpt from 'Kailash', Vol. VIII, Nos. 1 & 2, 1981*

## EXCERPT OF TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE'S DZOGCHEN TALK IN BOSTON MAY 7, 1993

First, I want to say a little bit about myself by way of an introduction. I was born in India of Tibetan refugee parents. In my early years, my father was Buddhist and my mother was Bön. I lived in a Buddhist community, a Tibetan settlement in northwest India, until I was five or six. After that I went to a Christian school, but I did not manage to stay there very long. When I was ten, my parents brought me to a monastery of the Bön tradition. There I met my teacher, Lopon Tenzin Namdak, who gave the nature of mind teaching at the Kalachakra Initiation in New York.

## Space for Artwork

When I finished my monastic education in 1986, I went to Tibet and returned to India. I worked in the library in Dharamsala, where I was appointed as a member of the Assembly by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, but I did not decide to do that and wanted to pursue my studies. Norbu Rinpoche invited me over to Italy to do some work at the Institute there. I was also invited by some professors to give talks in Sweden and so spent time in Scandinavia.

I did not originally plan to come to the West to teach. I came to learn, not to teach. But, while I was in Italy, many friends who knew about my practice asked me to teach. And this has continued all over the world for the past five years. I am not learning as much as I wanted.

## Space for Artwork

I first came to the United States in 1990 at the invitation of the Dzogchen community in Conway, Massachusetts to teach. While teaching as the guest of various organizations I ended my trip in Houston, Texas, where I had no plan to spend time. But that has changed my life here. Professor Anne Klein of Rice University asked me to give a couple of talks there. Then they wanted me to come back for two weeks, all the way from Italy. Then they asked me to apply for a Rockefeller Fellowship and I got that and spent a year there doing research and teaching. I felt that I could learn more about western cultures in that setting, since I feel now that there is a mission for me in the West and I want to do it. I want to learn the best way to communicate with westerners. It is a great challenge to grow up in one culture and then try to transplant the teachings

in the West.

It is not always easy to get people to understand, really understand. In the West, it is not difficult to get people excited about it, people get easily excited in the West. The problem is to continue with it and make a deep space in themselves, where, no matter whether there is a teacher there or not, it will always be there and always grow. Making that kind of connection and making that kind of space in people seems much more complicated unless you really know how to communicate with people.

While I did not plan to teach in the West, and when I taught I was not sure if it was right or important for me to teach, now I do feel that it is important for me to do and that this is a mission. It is like a secret that had been kept from me and is clearer now.

Now I am sure because I am a Bönpo. I do not know how much you know about Bön or if what you know is very good. As I mentioned, my father was a Tibetan Buddhist, but generally I believe that every Tibetan is a Bönpo. There are no Tibetans who do not practice Bön, even if they do not call it that. It is not a question of what one calls oneself, but what one actually believes. Tibetan Buddhism has a character which cannot be separated from the indigenous tradition of

## Space for Artwork

Bön. The beliefs of that tradition are rooted in their Bönes, blood, mind and brain—every part of their existence. So that on an official level, my mother was Bön and my father was Buddhist and as I told you I also went to a Christian school. So I have a lot of combinations.

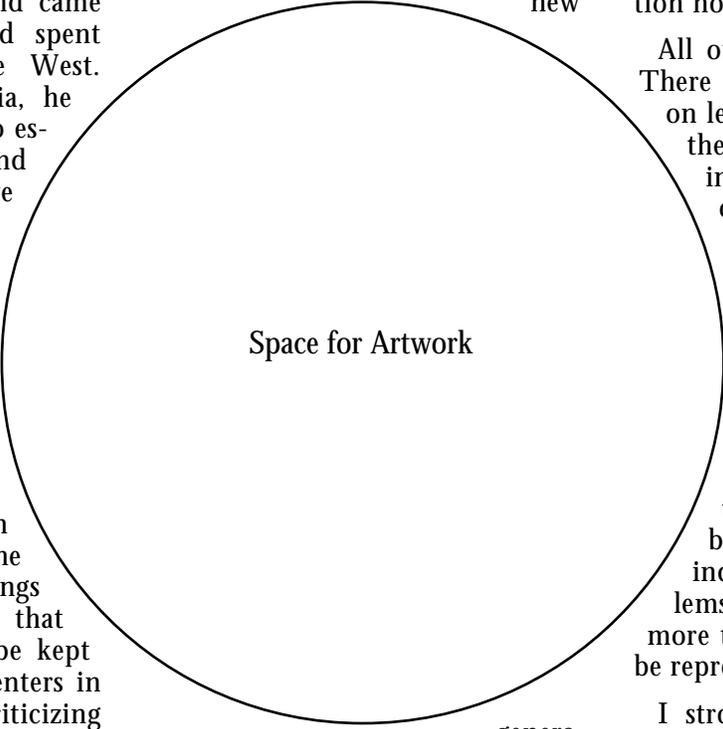
Growing up and being trained in my monastic community and being very close to my teacher, I know how much responsibility he took on his shoulders in coming all the way from Tibet and coming to the West years ago. He also was sponsored by a Rockefeller Fellowship and came to the West in 1961 and spent about three years in the West. When he returned to India, he took on the responsibility to establish a community and monastery which keeps alive the word, the believers, and the faith of the Bön tradition. He preserved a very important part of Tibetan culture.

While I was growing up with him, I did not see that aspect of his responsibility. I just saw what I needed to learn from him for me. Now, coming to the West and seeing a lot of things that happen here, I realize that the Bön teachings should be kept alive. There are so many centers in the West—I am not criticizing them—that it would not make much difference if one of them were not there, since there are so many others. But it would make a lot of difference if what I don't do what I am doing. Nobody else is going to do it. Being here in the West, I see my face everywhere I go and say to myself, if you do not do it, who is going to do it.

Even though I could easily come here and teach in the university and survive myself, I cannot leave this other important responsibility that I feel to preserve the Bön tradition. It is not that I need to spread the Bön religion as a form of religion, it is a form of knowledge, an important tradition, that has many things to

offer for this time and period, as many native traditions do, if people in the modern world have the ear to listen to it and the mind to think about it. There are so many things to learn from them. There is important value and wisdom there. If the few of us who know these traditions do not try to bring it out, it won't be there and won't grow, instead it ends.

My teacher, when he finished giving us the teachings and transmissions, said to us: 'Now I have produced a new



generation. It is up to you. I did not want to make a gap.' He did not make a gap, he produced teachers. So I feel very responsible, particularly when it difficult to do it.

As I said, it would not make any difference not to have another dharma center in the West. Every master from the east has done it. But preserving Bön is very important. Every Tibetan knows that the Bön is a very important tradition and is the root of Tibetan culture. There is no way to explain Tibetan culture unless you know something about Bön. Even among scholars, they have so much training in this tradition and used it in their daily life, but they have not thought about

what it really means. They do not look back into their roots.

The Buddhist way of looking at Tibetan history is not realistic. It is important to realize how much benefit it brought into Tibetan culture. All the parts of the tradition—the texts, the beliefs, the rituals, the mythology—are disappearing. For example, the Bön Canon has over 170 books. Scholars in the West and many Tibetans do not know about these texts, because they are not open in that way. I am trying to speak realistically about the situation now.

All our literature is disappearing. There is only one copy of the canon left in Tibet. Eight people hid the texts in the mountains during the Chinese cultural revolution. Half of those were killed by the Chinese but they would not tell where the books were hidden. These books are lost.

It is not like losing the books that are written here in the universities and in bookstores. It is not about the confusion of individuals but it contains the wisdom of individuals. Not about problems in childhood. It has much more to offer. Those books cannot be reproduced.

I strongly feel my responsibility toward these things. A year and half ago, I founded the Ligmincha Institute. Ligmincha is the name of the king of Zhang Zhung. Zhang Zhung is the place where most of Tibetan civilization starts.

I have a plan and a form to teach continuously over the next many years. The dream is there; I dreamed it clearly. To manifest it takes time. Everything will manifest when it needs to manifest. If you want to collaborate with me in all of these plans that I have been making, you may do so in whatever form suits you. This is written in our newsletter. Please take and if you have thoughts, let me know.

Tonight, as a formal introduction to Dzogchen, in the first place it is very difficult to say anything about Dzogchen. It is difficult to talk about something that you cannot talk about. But you can always talk about it. What I am really saying that you can talk about Dzogchen in a way that will not make much sense, you can talk in a way that wont make much sense.

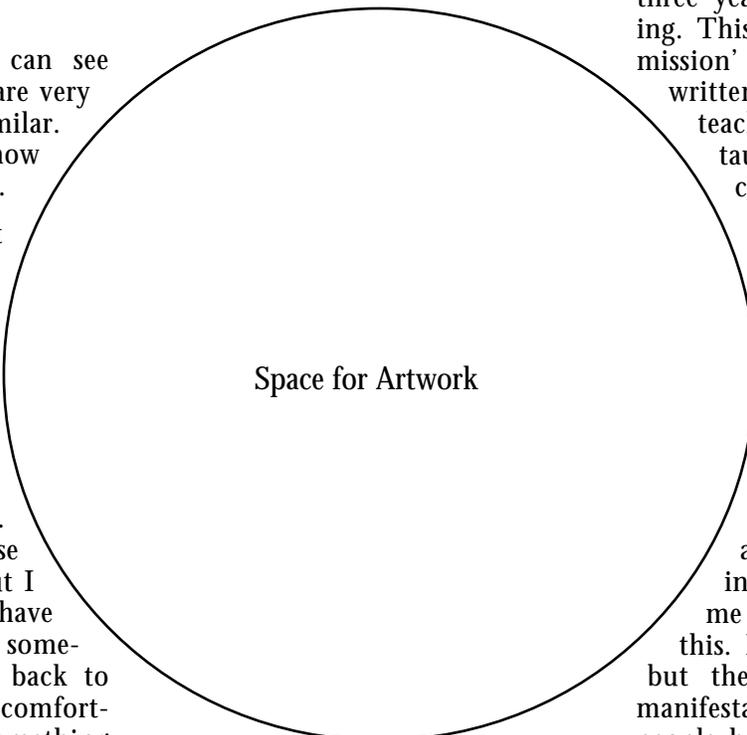
In the same way, you can see books on emptiness. They are very thick books. It is very similar. You can talk a lot about how very difficult it is to explain.

I want to say a little bit about the tradition of Dzogchen as far as it is connected to me. The reason is that in the Tibetan tradition, it is a very important part of the teaching and preserving teaching is to trace back the tradition of the teaching. We say 'I am giving these teachings to you people, but I have been practicing and have received this teaching from somewhere.' I need to trace it back to make it authentic and feel comfortable with it. If it is not something that is connected with the transmission, it is different. It is not a thought, it is not like going to a holistic bookstore to read ten books on it giving me now something to talk about.

Tracing the roots in the tradition is considered an important part of the tradition, the fact that it goes way, way back. One of the reasons it is preserved until today is because of that tradition.

If the way to deal with the teaching is the way it is generally treated in the West, it wont last as it has been kept until this time. Because people within the tradition know how to live in the tradition and follow it up and preserve it. Preserve it by not confusing it with other traditions, but respecting its nature and giving value to its continuity in the future.

My teaching is connected with the Bön Dzogchen. In the tradition of Bön, the first person to teach Dzogchen was Shenrab Miwoche. He lived 17 thousand years ago. It is not important to prove whether he was an historical person or not or where he really lived. This belief has come down through centuries among



Space for Artwork

practitioners of Dzogchen that Dzogchen was taught seventeen thousand years ago and that lineage has been unbroken until today. The form of this lineage is fresh and vivid. I feel that it is my responsibility to see that this lineage continues. It has to continue. I cannot decide that in my generation to just let it drop, after it has been brought to the present time after seventeen thousand years.

This is particularly true for what is called the 'oral transmission of Zhang Zhung' that came from Shenrab Miwoche. From him there has come many masters through whom has come what is know as the 'single transmission' (gcig rgyud), transmission from the master to one single disciple. This particular lineage was kept through only a few people. There are other lineages of Dzogchen. One is called 'Ati' and

another called 'Dzogchen'. These have more followers in them. This one I am talking about is a very tiny lineage, kept as very private.

When I was about thirteen years old, I received these teachings from my first Master Sangye Tenzin, who was a teacher of Lopon Tenzin Namdak, my second teacher. For three years we received this teaching. This was called an 'oral transmission' because it had never been written down before. These teachings were meant to be taught initially in what is called 'mental transmission'—transmission that occurs mind to mind. Then it came to oral or spoken explanations.

There was no reference point of written literature in this oral transmission but each master would explain 'this is my experience and what it is about.' This form of teaching that my master taught to me and I have been practicing this. Now I explain it this way, but there is a slightly different manifestation of experiences. Some people have more experience of the bliss part. Some people have more experience of the void part. Some people havemore experience of the unity part. Some people have more experience of the inseparability part. So there are many aspects of the nature of mind that one can experience. For whatever reason—biological or psychological—some people have stronger experiences of one aspect of it and other people have stronger experiences of another aspect of it. It is always one. But when they do have slightly different experiences they write it down. And one of those lineages of transmission is called the 'experiential transmission.' In this form, the master would write down about four to eight lines about what they have experienced. They would write in very simple language, not poetic, a simple direct form of communication. □

# WONDERS OF THE NATURAL MIND

TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE'S  
NEW BOOK-' WONDERS OF THE  
NATURAL MIND' - AVAILABLE  
JULY 10, 1993 FROM LIGMINCHA

*This is a very special and wonderful  
book filled with both Rinpoche's per-  
sonal experiences as well as descriptions  
of the very profound methods of Bön.*

*Compiled and edited by Andrew  
Lukianowicz.*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface

1. My Life and Experiences of the Teachings
2. Tonpa Shenrab Miwoche and History of Bön
3. Bön Doctrine
4. Bönpo Dzogchen
5. How and Why to Practice
6. Zhiné
7. Nyamshag: Contemplation
8. Integration
9. Kunzhi
10. Ma—the Mother
11. Bu—the Son
12. Tsal—Energy
13. 'Od Lnga—the Five Pure Lights
14. Tri Kaya
15. Thekchod and Thögal
16. Sutra and Dzogchen
17. Bardo—the After Death State

**Rinpoche's book is now available  
at Ligmincha for immediate  
shipment. Call for the price  
which will be around \$15 or \$16  
plus \$2 Shipping & Handling.**

Space for Artwork

## REGIONAL CONTACT PERSONS FOR LIGMINCHA INSTITUTE INFO

Suzanne Meyers & Michael Riley  
620 East 11th Street, Apt. 17  
New York, NY 10009  
Tel: (212) 529-4307

Mudita  
Austin, Texas  
Tel: (512) 476-7310

Whitney Randolph  
2231 Bissonnet  
Houston, TX 77005  
Tel: (713) 524-9710

Jill Sidford  
1989 Rose Villa Street  
Pasadena, CA 91107  
Tel: (818) 449-2210

## Audio Cassette Tapes for Sale

Kunzhi Tape I, Kunzhi Tape II  
Rigpa Tape I, Rigpa Tape II  
Guided Practice & Chanting Tape  
Unification of Ultimate Space Tape

\$9.00 U.S. per tape plus \$2.00 U.S. shipping  
per order. Please write & enclose check or M.O.

## Video Documentary

Ani Tenzin Yeshe (Mary Coleman) has produced a video documentary on the human-rights abuses inflicted upon the Tibetan people featuring a lengthy commentary from His Holiness the Dalai Lama. A special price of twenty-five dollars, which includes shipping and handling, is offered to readers of this newsletter. Outside the U.S. shipping charges will be added. Call the Dharma Institute at (703) 832-5282 to order. Ani Tenzin recently opened the Dharma Institute which is near the town of Ruckersville about twenty miles north of Charlottesville, Virginia.

Video Documentary

## NEW BOOK ON DZOG- CHEN ' HEART DROPS OF DHARMA- KAYA' - TEACHINGS ON THE KUNZANG NYING - TIG BY SHARDZA TASHI GYALTSEN: AVAILABLE AT LIGMINCHA

*The Teachings of the Progressive Great  
Perfection called the Heart Drops of  
Dharmakaya ('od gsal rdzogs-pa chen  
po'i lam-gyi rim-pa khrid-yig kun-tu  
bzang-po'i snying-tig shes-bya-ba  
bzhugs).*

Translation and commentary by Lop-  
on Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche:

Introduction by Per Kværne:

Edited by Richard Dixey:

180 pages: Available now at the-  
Ligmincha Institute: \$16.00

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface

Introduction by Per Kværne

Biography of Shardza Tashi Gyaltzen  
(1859-1933)

*Heart Drops of the Dharmakaya: The  
Text*

Book 1: Preliminary Practices

Book 2: The Practice of Trekcho

Book 3: The Practice of Thögal

Book 4: Phowa & Bardo Practices

Apdx. 1: The Rainbow Body

Apdx. 2: A Short History of Bön

Apdx. 3: Biography of Lopon Tenzin  
Namdak Rinpoche

Notes

Bibliographic Essay

Tibetan Text

**Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche's  
book is now available at Lig-  
mincha for immediate shipment.  
The price is \$16 plus \$2  
shipping and handling.**

Space for Artwork

**CURRENT 1993 SCHEDULE FOR  
TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE**

• **August 6 – August 14** •  
Summer Retreat at 6 Kierkepolden Street, Gjerrild, Denmark (near Grenå and Århus) —Contact Kristine Krogstrop at tel: 86-38-4433.

• **August 16** •  
Evening talk in Copenhagen, Denmark —Contact Jens Rasmussen at tel: 32-52-1840.

• **August 21 – August 23** •  
Weekend Retreat at Digung Center in Vienna, Austria—Call at tel: 1-512-3037 or 749-8158.

• **August 27 – September 5** •  
(Bön Shamanic Teachings: Aug. 27 – Aug. 30), (Dzogchen Teachings: Sep. 1 – Sep. 5) with the Dzogchen Community in Gras, Austria —Contact Oliver Leick at tel: 31-12-5431.

• **September 7 – September 8** •  
Contemplation in Dzogchen in Gras, Austria —Contact Andrea Loseries at tel: 316-316-29.

Space for Artwork

• **September 11 – September 12** •  
Bön Shamanic Teachings of 'Soul Retrieval' at the Ligmincha Institute located at the corner of 1126 Forest Hills Avenue and Cherry Avenue in Charlottesville, Virginia —Contact the Institute at tel: (804) 977-6161 or by fax at (804) 977-7020 for information. Please send all mail to The Ligmincha Institute, PO Box 1892, Charlottesville, VA 22903 and no mail to Forest Hills Avenue.

• **September 25 – September 26**  
Bardo Teachings on Death and Dying sponsored by the Dharma Institute of Ani Tenzin Yeshe (Mary Coleman). The Dharma Institute is located near the town of Ruckersville which is about twenty miles north of Charlottesville, Virginia. —Contact Ani Tenzin at tel: (703) 832-5282 for location of teachings and other information.

• **October 28 – November 2** •  
First week of the new eight week series of experiential teachings from the Zhang Zhung sNyan rGyud in Boston, Massachusetts —Contact Martin Lowenthal at tel: (617) 332-4967.

• **November 5 – November 7** •  
Bön Shamanic Teachings of 'Soul Retrieval' in Norwalk, Connecticut —Contact Tina Smith at tel: (203) 845-0810.

• **November 20 – November 21** •  
Weekend Practice Retreat at the Ligmincha Institute, Charlottesville, Virginia —Contact the Institute at tel: (804) 977-6161.

The Voice of Clear Light  
P.O. Box 1892  
Charlottesville, VA 22903

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Tel: (804) 977-6161  
Fax: (804) 977-7020

