

# The Voice of Clear Light

THE LIGMINCHA INSTITUTE NEWSLETTER

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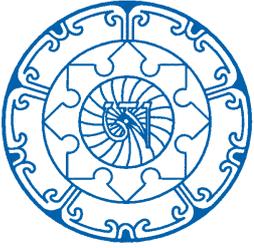
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# The Voice of Clear Light

Volume V, Issue 3

THE LIGMINCHA INSTITUTE NEWSLETTER

Fall 1996

## Publication of the *Twenty-One Nails*



*Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Lopon Tenzin Namdak with Ma Gyud Mandala thangka at 1996 summer retreat teachings*

By the time you read this the commentaries of Lopon Tenzin Namdak and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche on the *Twenty-One Nails* will be in print. Though the publication of the book took longer than initially expected (as most things do) we have printed not only a text extremely useful to practitioners and important to the preservation of the Bön tradition, but also launched Heartdrop Editions, Ligmincha's new series of self-published materials.

So let's step back in time to find out how all this happened. During the 1995 summer

retreat Lopon Tenzin Namdak and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche gave transmission and teachings on the *Twenty-One Nails*, a text from the fourth and final part of the *Zhang Zhung Nyan Gyud*, a text that clarifies all the final questions concerning the view of Dzogchen. This was a very rare occasion, the first time that the text had been taught in its entirety outside of Tibet, India or Nepal. The text is profound in the deepest sense of the word, requiring lengthy study and contemplation to reveal its many subtle meanings. We all realized that we were just touching the surface of its potential during the retreat, and would have to devote the rest of our lives to reveal its essence. But how could we do this without an English translation of the text?

Enter the dancing dakini fingers of Anne Klein. Anne entered into her zhine practice during the teachings and transcribed all of the teachings on the fly, albeit with a typo here and there. At a hastily gathered meeting during the retreat, Anne Klein, chair of the department of Religious Studies at Rice University,

Steven Tainer, editor of several books on Buddhism, and Annette Jones, Ph.D. candidate in Religious Studies at Rice, agreed to edit the transcripts into grammatical English and make them available to everyone who attended. While Steven and Annette tackled Lopon's and Tenzin Rinpoche's transcripts respectively, Anne also started work on the translation from Tibetan of the root text. Their work is nothing short of inspirational. As Tenzin Rinpoche looked over it he real-

Lopon Tenzin  
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Tenzin Wangyal  
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*Twenty-One  
Nails*, a text  
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and final part  
of the  
*Zhang Zhung  
Nyan Gyud*.

It is a wonderful meritorious act to sponsor a text, on par with building a stupa or providing for a monk.

ized that this is book quality material, and decided it should be published as a high quality paperback. And with Anne's rapid progress on the root text we decided to publish a matched set. Volume I will be the root text, and a written commentary by Nangsher Lopo (sNang bzher lod po), and Volume II is the oral commentaries of Lopon Tenzin Namdak and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. Each will be 6"x 9", over 200 pages in length, professionally printed and bound, with a color reproduction of Tapihritsa on the cover. Volume I should be available this winter.

But this text is quite secret and only available to those who have received transmission and teaching. Who would publish it?

Enter the centuries old tradition of book sponsors. Tibetan sacred texts have always been sponsored by individuals of strong devotion to the teachings. It is a wonderful meritorious act to sponsor a text, on par with building a stupa or providing for a monk. Mark Hoyer stepped forward to organize a group of donors, including Peter Harcy, John Carlton, and himself, to cover the cost of the publication of Volume II, due

to be printed first. During the summer retreat this year, Andreas Wehowsky contributed toward publishing Volume I, but we still need additional donors to cover the \$3,500 printing costs of this text later this fall. Any interested parties should contact Mark Hoyer or John Jackson for information. These two texts are the cornerstones of Heartdrop Editions, a series of sacred books from the Bön tradition that will only be distributed within our community.

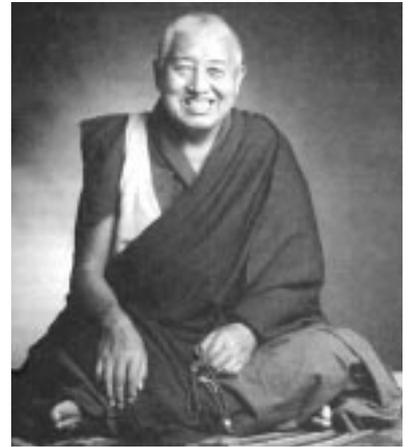
By the time this newsletter reaches your mailbox Volume II, the oral commentaries by Lopon and Tenzin Rinpoche, should be off the press. Everyone who attended the retreat can order the text through the order page in the back of this newsletter. The text is restricted to only those who have received these teachings, but Tenzin Rinpoche plans to teach from this text many times in the future. We are deeply indebted to Lopon and Tenzin Rinpoche for teaching from this wish-fulfilling gem, and to our editors and sponsors for making it available in beautiful, written form.

—John Jackson

### Poem in Gratitude to Lopon Tenzin Namdak

Delusions, Illusions  
Mother Creator  
Clear Light from within  
Ma Gyud

— Cindy Allred-Jackson



### Voice of Clear Light

Editor: Nan Chapman  
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Sue Anna Harwood, Cindy Allred Jackson,  
John Jackson, Clay Moldenhauer, Ida Smith,  
Polly Turner, Alicia White

### NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

People who want to send articles to be published in the winter issue of VOCL should send their articles on a disk no later than November 1, 1996. For the spring issue, the deadline is January 1, 1997. You may also e-mail articles to [nchapman@mindspring.com](mailto:nchapman@mindspring.com).

# SCHEDULE OF TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE & OTHER EVENTS - 1996

**OCT. 3, BOSTON, MA**  
Intermediate States of Living and Dying: The Bardo. First Unitarian Soc. of Boston, 7 to 9 pm. Contact Dedicated Life Inst. at (617) 527-8606.

**OCT. 4-8, BOSTON, MA**  
Experiential Transmission Part 4. Contact Martin Lowenthal at (617)332-4967 or LowenthalM@aol.com

**OCT. 9 - DEC. 11 HOUSTON, TX**  
(Wednesdays) - 'Phrul 'Khor: Tibetan Yoga - This will be a 10 week program on the spiritual and physical practice of this ancient Tibetan form of yoga. Please call for further details at (713) 523-7330.

**OCT. 11-13, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA**  
Dream Yoga Teachings and the Bardo. Contact Ligmincha Institute at (804)977-6161 or Ligmincha@aol.com

**OCT. 18, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA**  
Public talk at the Dogwood Institute, 7 pm. Free. Contact Ligmincha Institute at (804)977-6161 or Ligmincha@aol.com

**NOV. 1 CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA**  
Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche will give public talk and slide show to raise funds for Aid to Bön Children. Call Ligmincha for confirmation of event.

**NOV. 1-3, SAN FRANCISCO, CA**  
Teachings on the A-khrid tradition. This is a complete system of Dzogchen meditation and will be taught during four weekends spanning the next year. Contact Mark Dahlby at (415) 824-7596 or writers@writers.com

**NOV. 2-3 CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA**  
Two-day workshop with Nyima Dakpa. Call Ligmincha for confirmation of event.

**NOV. 5-10, HOUSTON, TX**  
Parts 1 and 2 of the Experiential Transmission. Contact the Houston Khyung Dzong at (713)523-7330 or Edouard Philippe at eddy@hti.net

**NOV. 15-16, HOUSTON, TX**  
Tibetan medicine: Eastern/Western Healing Traditions: Dialogues and Synthesis - Dr. Dickey Pelden, a doctor of Tibetan medicine, will present Tibetan medical practices in theory as well as practice. Contact the Houston Khyung Dzong at (713) 523-7330 or Edouard Philippe at eddy@hti.net

**NOV. 22-24, PARIS, FRANCE**  
Introduction to Dzogchen and Dream Yoga. Contact Sebastien Doerler at 331-44935924, Fax 331-43733344.

**DEC. 7-8, HOUSTON, TX**  
Ancient Tibetan Healing Traditions: Teachings on and practice of 'Phrul 'Khor, chigong and other related systems. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will teach different healing methods from the ancient Bon tradition. Contact the Houston Khyung Dzong at (713)523-7330 or Edouard Philippe at eddy@hti.net

**DEC. 26-31, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA**  
Experiential Transmission, Parts 2 and 3. Contact Ligmincha Institute at (804)977-6161 or Ligmincha@aol.com

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## SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

### *The Voice of Clear Light*

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# 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 Gyaltsen'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

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# Excitement at the Auction

The auction at this summer's retreat was tremendous theater. Jim Manganiello (forever to be pronounced as Antimo emphatically enunciated) was a sublime Master of Ceremonies, both dramatic and droll. The stars of the event on the dias before us, Tenzin Rinpoche and Lopon-la, were as captivating as the unfolding events. The excitement of the sangha steadily built up to the amazing sale of the Ma Gyud Mandala thanka to, surprise!, Ligmincha itself.

Riding the crest of this wave, Jim then led us into a deepening awareness of the need for money for both the purchase of land for Ligmincha Institute and to support the increasing needs of Tritan Norbutse in Nepal. He noted the importance of our supporting the monks who are devoting their lives to preserving the teachings we value so much. And to our amazement he pointed out that a \$250 yearly donation will not only feed and clothe one monk, but will also buy his educational supplies.

It started with a single donor, and then before we caught our breath, there were 24 monks sponsored and numerous donations to the Land Fund. Later, more people climbed

aboard and at the present time we have pledged to support 30 monks! Currently there are about 80 monks at the monastery.

Tritan Norbutse is under tremendous pressure to service refugee monks, who, because of desperation are showing up in number's beyond Tritan Norbutse's capacity to provide for them. The Northeast region of Nepal, Dolpo, is where a large Bön community has existed since the tenth century. They are facing immense hardships and so they are going to Tritan Norbutse for refuge. The winter was severe and water even at Tritan Norbutse was in short supply.

Tritan Norbutse provides for other Bönpo people as well as residents of the monastery. The demand for assistance outstrips the resources available. The money collected to support the monks is meant to strengthen Tritan Norbutse's resources to provide assistance.

We really appreciate everyone's pledges. It feels very good to be able to help in this way. Please send Ligmincha the amount you have pledged as soon as you can so that we can get the money to Tritan Norbutse.

— Ida Smith



*The Ma Gyud  
Mandala was  
donated by  
Lopon Namdak  
Rinpoche for  
the auction and  
purchased for  
Ligmincha by  
the sangha .*

## Ligmincha's Cyber Sangha

Ligmincha has started three mail lists. The first is "Ligmincha" and delivers the teaching schedules of Tenzin Rinpoche and Lopon Tenzin Namdak once a month to your e-mail address. The list is available to anyone.

The second, "Garuda," is open only to students of Tenzin Rinpoche or the Lopon. It is a general discussion list in which conversation about any aspect of the teaching can take place. This can be questions about practice, philosophy, or any other relevant topic. The list serves as a cyber sangha and it is to support us all,

however isolated we may be. Both of our teachers are quite happy with the list and Tenzin Rinpoche has asked that we encourage other students with e-mail to join.

The third list is for people who are working on the dream or sleep yogas. Rinpoche has opened the list so that any student can subscribe, even if he or she has not had the transmission. It is hoped that those interested will start the practice and then ask for the transmission when they have the opportunity. The intent of this list is to support practitioners actively engaged in the practice.

To subscribe to the lists:

For the announcement list send mail to listproc@serve.com. Do not put anything in the subject line and turn off your sig if you have one. In the body of the message type: subscribe ligmincha Your Name

For the Garuda list do the same but type in the body of the message: subscribe garuda Your Name.

For the dream list send mail to Mark Dahlby at writers@writers.com with a note saying you wish to join the list.

— Mark Dahlby

## Where Sky meets Earth

Where Sky meets  
Earth  
Fire arises and  
descends,  
Who knows why?

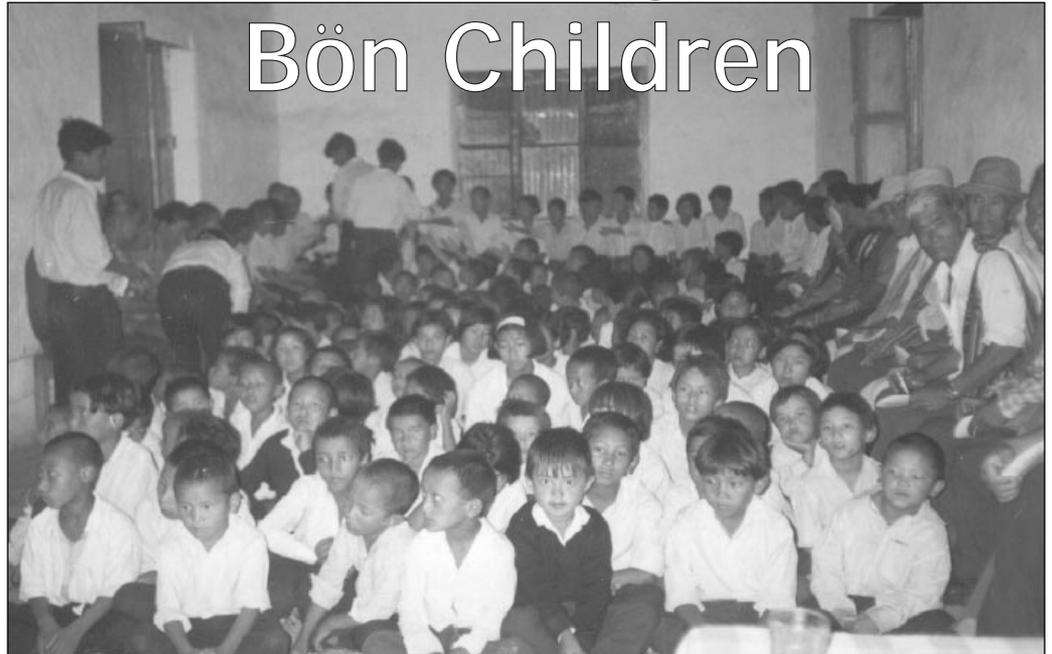
Bellowing white  
Spaces  
Fill the blue above,  
And turning darker,  
Water the dirt into  
mud,  
But on whose  
authority?

Clear light washes  
the rock cliffs  
With rainbows  
of color.  
And stones,  
empty and wise,  
Bow to the  
presence  
of Compassion,  
But where is it?

— Clay Moldenhauer  
© 1996

*Children gathered in the  
Bön Children's Home dining  
hall at the celebration of the  
home's 8th anniversary.*

# New Opportunity to Assist Bön Children



**A**id to Bön Children, Inc., a non-profit organization, has been formed to support projects dedicated to the health, education and welfare of the children of the Tibetan Bön culture. A new project, which has the blessing of Tenzin Rinpoche, will show how you can make a happier, healthier life possible for these children.

The orphaned boys who live at Menri Monastery in Dolanji, India, eat mostly tea and starch. Their diet contains no meat, vegetables or fruit. There is so little money available that the food fund must also pay for health care. This results in less money for food, a compromised immune system and the corresponding need for more health care. Cramped living quarters make the prevention of communicable disease almost impossible. As many as four children share one bed. In the very cold winter, the boys lack warm clothing.

The population of the Bön Children's Home in Dolanji has more than doubled in the past few years. The living conditions are extremely difficult because of severe overcrowding and lack of funds. Not only are food and health care problems, the children use ditches for latrines, and the kitchen is very inadequate. Still,

many children are waiting for admission to the home so they can attend the nearby Central School for Tibetans. This school currently is the only one in the world where these children can receive an education consistent with the Bön culture.

The Bön children in Nepal also need help. The orphans who live at Tritan Norbutse Monastery in Kathmandu and the children in the Bön communities of the Dolpo region lack proper food and health care.

The good news is that you can make an easy and significant contribution to the children by signing up for the project outlined here. The program is simple. You can participate in supplying food and medical care for the children of the Bön culture while receiving savings of up to 50 percent on top quality long distance through UniDial.

When you switch your residential long distance service to UniDial, nine percent of your total long distance telephone usage each month will be donated directly to Aid to Bön Children, Inc. You will pay only a flat \$0.135 per minute for long distance interstate telephone calls any time of the day or night. That is a savings of up to 50 percent over the three major long distance services.

# Charlottesville

The lull in activity at Ligmincha, while many members of the Charlottesville sangha traveled to Jemez Springs for the summer retreat, was followed by the completion of preparations for an eagerly anticipated visit from Lopon Namdak Rinpoche. Lopon gave both a public talk and a weekend retreat on Transforming Emotions into Bliss and gave a Long Life and Wealth Vase Empowerment and Blessing. We felt especially blessed with Lopon's presence at our practice during his stay.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

We welcome Tenzin Rinpoche home for several weeks in October while he leads a three-day retreat on Dream Yoga and the Bardo and gives a public talk at Dogwood Institute. He will return again in December to lead the winter retreat in Charlottesville. Although we feel Rinpoche's presence wherever he is living, traveling and teaching, it is always wonderful to know that he is immediately with us, a treat to wave to him at a chance meeting on the downtown mall and a well-appreciated privilege to have him with us at practice each Wednesday and Sunday.

## ONGOING PRACTICE

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

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

*RETREAT continued from page 7—*

There's one cloud in the vast sky that keeps changing hues as the sun goes down. It looks like a soft explosion behind another, more defined fluff of cloud. Then I hear a honking call—it's a peacock who, they say, lives next door. I recognize its voice. At my grandmother's house, years ago, a peacock announced the arrival of all visitors from its treetop perch.

Silently, I remember to give up all these gifts to the Buddha, for the benefit of sentient beings.

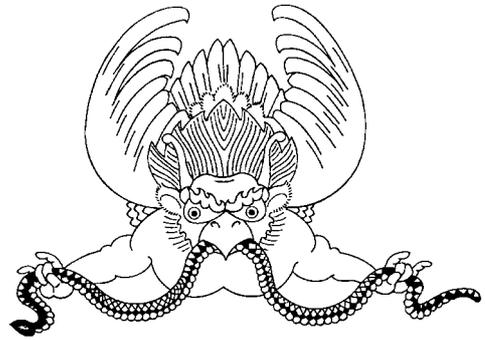
Outside, on cushions on the grass, we eat the meal our hosts prepared for us. The sun goes down, the temperature drops.

Lopon is sitting by himself now, and I think about approaching him. Would it be an impropriety?

I won't have another chance.

I go over to him, sit down beside him, and brazenly, tentatively, put one arm around Lopon to hug him.

"May I do this?," I ask. "Yes," he says.



## A Volunteer Speaks from Experience

I would like to offer a few thoughts regarding volunteering at this point. It is almost a year that I have acted as one of the officers of the California Khyung Dzong. In looking back, I realize as I accepted the position that I naively held a belief that I would do the task before me step by step—and hopefully make a positive contribution along the way. Well, that has happened, but surprisingly much more has been going on for me personally. I found out that when you intentionally place yourself in a challenging way, you find that many obscurations that are unknown before, now present themselves and are in your face. But, you also realize you are not alone. Not only do you have the assistance of your teacher and his blessings, but you are open to the blessings from the Deities. As though taking the risk, relying more on the blessings, actually invokes more blessings. The result is the dissolving and removal of the obscurations. There is a deeper level of commitment in you, so you receive the blessings at a deeper level.

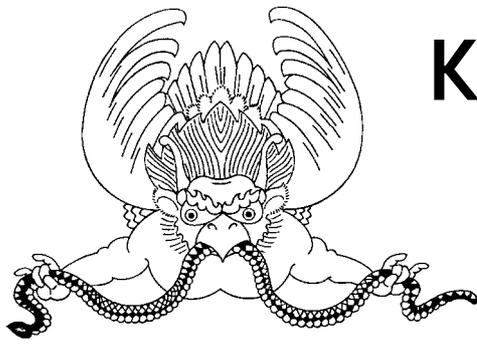
I encourage everyone who still may be fence-sitting around the issue of volunteering to jump into it with all the commitment that you can muster and then joyfully watch the beneficial results. It may seem to be overwhelming at times, but isn't that the point? Reliance on the Teachings, the Deities and yourself.

—Alicia White

We exchange quiet words. There on the grass, Lopon gives me a little teaching, about the importance of compassion. I've never heard such gentle words in my life.

The gentleness accompanies me to my tent that night. Again, I'm afraid to fall asleep—not because of what might be revealed to me, but because of what I might forget.

—Polly Turner



# Khyung Dzong News

## California

*It's late July in Los Angeles as we send out greetings of prosperity to all!*

**W**e are in the midst of preparing for the five-day Labor Day intensive of Experiential Teachings, Part 1 and Part 2. The energy is gathering to welcome back Lopon La and Tenzin Rinpoche to the Los Angeles area. Bob Anger and Kallon Basquin are preparing shrine room thrones for the two master teachers, who will be teaching in the separate shrine rooms. We are fortunate indeed to be associated with the Shambhala Center for these exquisite teachings.

Hurray! We are now officially called Khyung Dzong of California. While both Northern and Southern California groups will continue to present the Bön teachings in their area, we are now all part of a larger Khyung Dzong of California. We look forward to together building a stronger Khyung Dzong on the West coast.

"So long, but not good-bye" was the motto for July. Linda Buxell relocated to her 1,000-acre farm in Wisconsin, and Gayatri and Hermes Horan relocated to Florida. We will miss the warmth of their dedication and devotion as well as the closeness that comes from practicing together. We know they have moved away in location, but not moved out of our hearts since we have built a strong bond from practicing our Bön teachings together.

We are already planning the spring teachings when our beloved Tenzin Rinpoche will be back here in Los Angeles.

—Alicia White

For more information, call or write:  
Khyung Dzong of California  
P.O. Box 1607; Temple City, CA 91780-7607  
Alicia White, (818) 248-1828

## Upcoming Events at the Khyung Dzong Center

**OCT. 9 - DEC. 11 (WEDNESDAYS) - 'Phrul 'Khor: Tibetan Yoga** - This will be a 10-week program on the spiritual and physical practice of this ancient Tibetan form of yoga. In addition we are arranging for courses in Hatha & Kundalini Yoga and Chi Gong.  
**Experiential Transmission Parts 1 & 2, November 5-10, Thursday-Sunday, 9 to 5, Cost: \$200, Khyung Dzong Center**

Rinpoche will give transmission, teachings and practice instructions from the first and second chapters of the Experiential Transmission from the *Zhang Zhung Nying Gyud*—a cycle of teachings offering a complete path to enlightenment. This is the oldest and most sacred wisdom of the pre-Buddhist indigenous religion of Tibet, known as Bön. The retreat will be divided into two parts. Part One will be preliminary teachings and practices which are fundamentally important in order to prepare and ripen oneself to receive further instruction within the Dzogchen tradition. These preliminary teachings ground one in the basis of Bön/Buddhist religious beliefs: refuge, impermanence, compassion, the altruistic mind of enlightenment (Bodhicitta) and guru yoga. Part Two will be taught to those who have already received the preliminary practice teachings. The teachings will be interspersed with times for group practice as well as time for discussion.

**NOV. 15 & 16 - Eastern/Western Healing Traditions: Dialogues and Synthesis** - Dr. Dickey Pelden, a doctor of Tibetan medicine, will present Tibetan medical practices in theory as well as practice, diagnosing and administering to participants during this workshop. Practitioners of healing techniques that synthesize Western and Eastern healing practices will discuss the merits of combining these different traditions from their own practice.

**DEC. 7 & 8 - Ancient Tibetan Healing Traditions** - Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will teach different healing methods from the ancient Bön tradition. These will include 5 sessions of 2 hours each in which teachings and practices will be combined.

For more information, please call  
(713) 523-7330, FAX (713) 523-3172



*Boys and girls do prayers before a meal celebrating the 8th Anniversary of the Bön Children's Home*

UniDial long distance service will transmit your calls through the WilTel fiber optic network. WilTel is one of the largest long distance carriers in the United States. Its customers include IBM, NBC, ABC, Fox and Perot, Inc., and it has transmitted the last six Super Bowl games. The Harwood offices switched to UniDial and have experienced both excellent service and significant savings over their previous carrier. Customer satisfaction is guaranteed by UniDial, and the rates offered are a very good deal.

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To sign up for residential service, simply fill out a "Residential and Small Business Service Agreement" form. The numbers on the service agreement, Plan 155 and IN0120, guarantee that Aid to Bön Children, Inc. will receive the 9 percent commission. To change your business long distance service to UniDial, fill out a form entitled "Business Long Distance Service." A representative will call to answer any of your questions and to enroll you in the program.

To obtain the necessary forms, call (512) 882-9221 or check the Ligmincha Web page: <http://www.comet.chv.va.us/ligmincha>. Return the forms along with the summary page of your local telephone bill and any other long distance company you use to the address indicated on the form.

Please take a few moments of your time to consider using UniDial as your long distance carrier. The value is one of the best in the business. This unique opportunity allows you to save money while helping the Bön children have a better life.

—Sue Anna Harwood

If you have any questions, contact  
**Sue Anna Harwood**

TELEPHONE  
(512) 882-9221

FACSIMILE  
(512) 882-8732

E-MAIL  
[sharwood@mail.interconnect.net](mailto:sharwood@mail.interconnect.net)

You may also write to:  
**Aid to Bön Children, Inc.**  
720 N. Mesquite St.  
Corpus Christi, TX  
78401.

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# A River to the Ocean

## Diary from a Summer Retreat

*Sangha attending the summer retreat  
at Bodhi Manda  
in Jemez Springs,  
New Mexico*



❖

All day I've been moved from here to there, like a suitcase on a treadmill: in a car from my mother's home, where I had dropped off my kids; to the airport; onto a plane; to another airport; along moving walkways and escalators; onto another plane.

The second plane touches down at Albuquerque airport, where Clay Moldenhauer loads me and a few other weary retreat-goers into his rented van, then ferries us past New Mexico mountains and plains to the retreat center, where Ida Smith directs me to my tent.

My first act after unrolling my sleeping bag is to wander down to the river behind the men's dorms, just past some bathing pools formed by hot springs. As day fades toward darkness, I sit back in some reeds and watch the water rushing over rocks: ever coming, ever going, ever the same.

The water is being ferried past me now. It feels right. ❖

The next day, I learn that there are 49 others attending this last week of a three-week retreat, down from 65 during the previous weeks. I know some of them, like Clay and Ida. But most faces are new to me. Nearly everyone seems to know their way around. Several people mention the intensity of last week's initiation into the Ma Gyud (Mother Tantra). I don't know what that means. But I've learned through experience that everyone meets the Tibetan Bön and Buddhist teachings at their own place on the path. I just have to pick up where I left off, and where today's teachings are beginning.

Our teachers, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Lopon Tenzin Namdak, are winding up their instructions on sleep practice. Among other things, they explain that at night, when falling asleep, a practitioner is to imagine all his or her thoughts and experience flowing like rivers into an ocean of clear light.

After dinner, after dark, as I lie in my sleeping bag that single provocative instruction returns to me. I contemplate what it means to let my world drift into rivers and oceans.

I know I shouldn't even try—I don't have the required knowledge or experience—but I do anyway. The only result of this experiment is I can't fall asleep for the rest of the night. My strongest stimulant, oddly, is fear of actually glimpsing this "clear light."

I've set the stage: For five days to come, I will average about two hours' sleep per night. Many of those nights, lying alert in the deepest hours, I finger my new mala, a loop of strongly scented sandalwood beads, and listen to the steady swishing of the river. The river is always there. ❖

The eyes of Buddhist practitioners often surprise me at a glance: there are deep brown forests; pale-blue reflecting pools; penetrating pinpoints; and sometimes, doorways that connect heart to heart.

In the teachers, not just the eyes, but also their whole presence makes me alternately want to slip into the safety of the shadows or—just as often—want to peek out from my hiding place to share the glow.

Just being in a master's presence, they say, is the best teaching of all. This full week in Jemez Springs, New Mexico, gives me plenty of time to be near my primary teacher, Tenzin Rinpoche, both in teaching and practice sessions and during welcome informal occasions.

Ligmincha  
Institute's  
Fourth  
Annual  
Summer  
Retreat



Another visit by Lopon from India, too, is so precious and possibly rare. I feel a special connection with him. I try to obtain a private appointment with him, but at this late date, his schedule is already filled.



The remainder of the week is devoted to instructions in the Chöd practice, which I'm familiar with through my experience in the preliminary practices of the Ngondro.

With Chöd, we confront our most fearful demons, then visualize giving up our lives in order to bring these beings what they need to be completely satisfied and at peace. Fear is our true demon, Rinpoche explains. Fear is "the net that binds us to our minds." Learning to confront and ultimately satisfy our demons brings us to a place where we have nothing left to fear: to our single nature.

We learn a ritual practice that incorporates the visualization, using bone horn, ceremonial drums and singing.

Chöd teachings are given daily, just after morning meditation and breakfast, and again later, following Ma Gyud practice, lunch, group discussion and Phrul Khor yoga. Each day is capped off by an outdoor meditation with our teachers, then dinner.

As retreat progresses, the morning meditations remain the most powerful part of my day.

On the fifth day, after a wake-up shower at dawn, I again carry my cushion to my spot on the riverbank and do the preliminary Ngondro practices: generating experiences of impermanence; confessing my transgressions; evoking compassion, devotion, and purification; followed by the Chöd practice and the Guru Yoga.

This is not my living room. The more I do the practice here, by the flowing water, the more each visualization seems to culminate in the same experience—the one that seems bound up in the simple act of prostration: Raise hands; give up to the Buddhas all that is precious, even life itself; receive blessings and empowerment.

This morning, between visualizations I glance up. A glistening, dark-brown mass is undulating through the turbulence, and suddenly the form of a fat beaver pulls itself onto a large round river rock. It's more massize than any beaver I've imagined, as big as a medium-to large-size dog.

The power of his size and wildness scares me. I even imagine he might attack. But he only sits there, then slides back into the water and pulls himself up onto the bank opposite, where

he licks his paws. His nose looks pink and mottled with age.

I bravely flap my hands around to see how he'll react to this human presence, but he doesn't notice or doesn't care. In a minute, he slips back into the sparkling water, flows a yard or two downstream to, it appears, a more favored location—the spot precisely where my meditation has been facing—and crawls up there under some overhanging leaves.

As I return to my practice to begin the Chöd session, Grandfather Beaver is the first being to be satisfied. A shaking tree branch reminds me he's still there, through the rest of my practice.



That night we practice Chöd outdoors, by the hot springs, as we did the night before. One of the participants learned recently that his mother has cancer and will be entering surgery upon his return from retreat. The practice, led by Tenzin Rinpoche, is dedicated to her.

Last night I sang with the others. Tonight, I'll watch. Already in my bathing suit, I slip unseen into the dark waters of the adjacent pool, under the Milky Way.

The participants beat their drums and mouth the syllables of the mantra, reading along by flashlight and candlelight. From my low vantage point, Jupiter or perhaps Saturn shines brightly just over the head of my friend with the ailing mother. Ahead of him and the others, lit from below by a small flame, Rinpoche no longer appears as the social, energetic trail leader he was at an impromptu hike earlier this afternoon. Now, his head is tilted to the side in sacred concentration. He leads the melodic chant and beats the drum.



The next morning I again begin my day at the spot by the river, below the springs. Only then does the memory of the beaver return to me, like a forgotten dream. But the tree branch is motionless.



Later, in the evening, a group of us goes out to dinner with our teachers at the home of a local practitioner. On the back screen porch overlooking a broad vista, I sip Tibetan buttered tea—too bitter for my taste—and catch sights of hummingbirds flitting to the feeder just below Tibetan prayer flags that hang from the eaves.

Goodbye  
Lopon

Our  
master

flies

away

leaving

only

empty

nature.

My heart

aches

with

fullness.

— John  
Jackson

