



GYALSHEN INSTITUTE

FOR THE STUDY OF ZHANG ZHUNG AND TIBETAN CULTURE, INC.

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NEWSLETTER : : First Quarter, 2012

LOSAR ISSUE

Volume 1, No. 1



this issue

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NEWS UPDATE!

GYALSHEN INSTITUTE OFFICIALLY RECEIVES NON-PROFIT STATUS

In late January, 2012, Gyalshen Institute was notified by the Internal Revenue Service that our application for non-profit status as a public charity was approved. Gyalshen Institute is now recognized as exempt from Federal income tax under section 501c(3)k of the Internal Revenue Code. This award of status is retroactive to the initial incorporation of Gyalshen Institute with the State of California as a religious charity on January 21, 2011.

The achievement of the 501c(3)k status establishes the legal basis for contributions to the programs and events of Gyalshen Institute to be tax deductible.

As a result of this news, donation letters for those persons who have contributed more than \$100 in the 2011 calendar year will be in the mail shortly. We want to thank everyone who gave such generous financial support during 2011 while the application process was underway.

Just a reminder, donations for registrations at teachings are considered as admissions and are not deductible.

A MESSAGE FROM GESHE CHAPHUR

At this time we are completing the first year of effort to establish programs and projects for Gyalshen Institute. Although Gyalshen Institute is a new enterprise I am happy to tell you that with everyone's support and cooperation we had a successful beginning. I want to thank all the Gyalshen officers, board members, and supporters for your unwavering and unstinting support for the smooth running of our organization. Starting an institution is not as important as continuing and making something out of it that will benefit society. Let us keep going together.

There are two main goals in creating Gyalshen Institute. The first is to share the unique ancient traditions and cultures of Zhang Zhung and Tibetan Bön with the rest of world. To accomplish this we hope to publish many ancient Zhang Zhung and Tibetan Bön texts that are yet to be translated. To my view it appears that some of the traditional ways of teaching are neglected to give way to modern way of approaching things. That is not to say that I am against modernizing methods of teaching but rather that incorporating these two ways could be more authentic as well as more accessible to students. Both ways have value for our mission.

The second goal is to help sustain the institutions in Tibet and other countries that keep these traditions alive through financial and mentoring support when we are in position to do those things. I have faith that we will be able to accomplish these goals with your continued support. I value greatly the karmic forces that brought us all together in this life to do something useful to society and will always keep you all and your loved ones in my prayers.

A LOOK BACK TO THE BEGINNING

In 2011, Gyalshen Institute presented a series of teachings and celebratory events quite remarkable for a brand new organization. Of course, all that wonderful Bön programming happened because of the tireless efforts of Geshe Chaphur, Lama Youngtong, and the many supporters who stepped forward to help launch the public presentations of Gyalshen Institute.



GYALSHEN INSTITUTE MANDALA

The first public event was the official consecration of Gyalshen Institute, held with a ritual ceremony on February 5, 2011. More than 25 people gathered in the presence of a three dimensional mandala handcrafted by Lama Youngtong, President of Gyalshen Institute, for a traditional blessing to dedicate this auspicious moment.



CONSECRATION CEREMONY GROUP

With such a wonderful number of supporters showing up for the consecration, the need for a larger space to accommodate students at teachings became quickly apparent. Luckily, Gyalshen Institute was able to establish a rental relationship with Dondrup Ling, also known as Dzögchen Community Center, in Berkeley. During the past year Gyalshen Institute has presented monthly events at that location, beginning with a celebration of the birthday of Buddha Tonpa Shenrab.

Following a series of instructions by Geshe Chaphur on the Dzögchen yogas called Trulkhör, Gyalshen Institute was privileged to host our first visiting teacher.



GESHE CHAPHUR (L) WITH GESHE TENZIN YESHE (R)

In July, Geshe Tenzin Yeshe blessed us with the first portion of the transmission of the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud scripture. Geshe Chaphur completed the transmission shortly thereafter at a subsequent event.

At the request of Geshe Chaphur, His Eminence Menri Lopon Trinley Nyima Rinpoche came to Gyalshen Institute in September to bestow the blessing and empowerment of the Ma Gyud tantra, a root scripture in the Bön tradition (see following page). To have enough space for the more than 80 people who attended, Gyalshen Institute hosted this two day event in the main sanctuary at Rudramandir Center in Berkeley.

Throughout 2011 Gyalshen Institute has continued to grow through the sustained interest of many good spirits.

THANK YOU!

GESHE CHAPHUR KEEPS BUSY!



HIS HOLINESS AT YUAN YUAN
EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

In his vigorous efforts to develop Gyalshen Institute, Geshe Chaphur has reached out to other Bön groups and practitioners in the Bay area and beyond. A wonderful synergetic relationship has arisen with Yuan Yuan Educational Foundation, directed by Teacher Ho Lynn (Jetsun Darma).

In October, Gyalshen Institute supporters joined with the Yuan Yuan Foundation community to welcome the spiritual head of the Bön religion, His Holiness, Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, Abbot of Menri Monastery, to the Bay area.

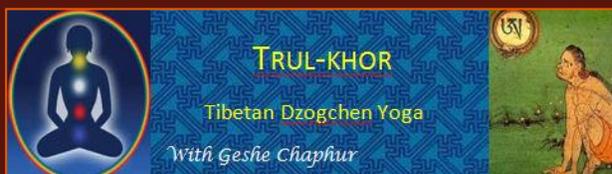


Geshe Chaphur has also established a separate study group, the Gyalshen Modesto Sangha in the San Joaquin Valley. Geshe la visits this group twice yearly to provide Bön instruction to students there, some of whom may not be able to attend Gyalshen Institute events in the Bay Area.

Geshe Chaphur has also connected with the local Tibetan community in the Bay area. May all his many endeavors flourish!

A GALLERY OF FAVORITE MOMENTS

These are just a few images from a year of wonderful events and special teachings in 2011.



↑ VISITING TEACHER GESHE TENZIN YESHE TRANSMITS THE ZHANG ZHUNG NYEN GYU

↓ TREASURE VASE RITUAL (YANG BUM)

DECEMBER 10, 2011

ACCUMULATING MATERIAL AND SPIRITUAL WEALTH FROM NYAMPAR GYALWA



↑ GESHE CHAPHUR DEMONSTRATES A DZÖGCHEN YOGA FORM



↑ PREPARATIONS FOR WEALTH VASE RITUAL



↑ GESHE CHAPHUR (L) AND LAMA YOUNGTONG (R) PERFORM THE BLESSING OF THE TREASURE VASES

A GALLERY OF FAVORITE MOMENTS, continued



September 24-25, 2011

MA GYU EMPOWERMENT

Menri Lopon Rinpoche



MENRI LOPON RINPOCHE EMPOWERS WITH LINEAGE



LAMA YOUNGTONG (L), GESHE CHAPHUR (C), GESHE TENZIN (R)



THE MANDALA



OFFERING TO THE MANDALA



GESHE CHAPHUR GIVES WATER BLESSING



MA GYU GROUP

UPCOMING EVENTS CALENDAR

For 2012, we are want to plan ahead better than was possible during 2011. We are a new organization, learning as we go what is the best way to make announcements available. We also understand that Westerners have many obligations amid busy lives, and need to be able to plan ahead to attend teachings and events. Yet, we have a Dzögchen master as Spiritual Director! Always check the web site for the most up to date information.

MARCH WILL BE AN AUSPICIOUS MONTH FOR GYALSHEN INSTITUTE EVENTS!



BUDDHA TONPA SHENRAB

MARCH 11

TONPA SHENRAB BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

LOCATION:

YUN LIN TEMPLE
1727 Euclid Ave,
Berkeley, CA

This year Gyalshen Institute joins with Yun Lin Temple for the second annual Birthday Celebration of Tonpa Shenrab! Geshe Chaphur and Lama Youngdrung will conduct a traditional Tibetan ritual ceremony, blessing, and Tsok offering, as we commemorate the birth of the founding Buddha of the precious Bön teachings. We look forward to the joyous sharing of community that is at the heart of this event. *For time of event, please check for further details at Gyalshen.org.*

MARCH 17

BUILDING A BRIDGE BETWEEN TIBETAN SPIRITUALITY AND MODERN SCIENCE

LOCATION:

GYALSHEN INSTITUTE
5627 Madison Avenue
Richmond, CA

The past five decades have seen a growing collaboration and dialogue among the scientists, psychologists and the Tibetan spiritual practitioners. Gyalshen Institute is proud to bring Ven. Yungdrung Konchok to the Bay Area to hear his first-hand accounts on exploring the integration of science and spirituality for the betterment of humanity. Ven. Konchok stresses that this convergence of modern science and Tibetan spiritual knowledge can contribute both to the greater well-being of humanity, and to the enrichment of the Tibetan spiritual itself. *Afterwards, join us for lunch and conversation.*

10:30 AM – NOON



VEN. YUNGDRUNG KONCHOK

MARCH 24-25

REALIZATION OF THE ZHANG ZHUNG MASTERS

LOCATION:

DONDRUP LING
2748 Adeline Street
Berkeley, CA

During this TWO DAY teaching, Geshe Chaphur will guide us through the lives and experiences of the 24 most renowned Dzögchen Masters of Zhang Zhung Nyen-Gyu who attained the ultimate state of rainbow form. The various stages in the realization of these masters are laid out in their life stories. Zhang Zhung is the region from where Bön faith first flourished, and *nyen gyu* means the unbroken oral transmission of this poetic form of teaching which Geshe la will present using the traditional methods. To make it more relevant to our present times, Geshe la will also talk about his own experiences as a student and a practitioner of Dzögchen for fifteen years. *Suggested donation \$100. See details at Gyalshen.org.*

10:00 AM – 4:30 PM



LINEAGE MASTERS

UPCOMING EVENTS CALENDAR, continued

But wait, there's more!

WE ARE ALSO LOOKING FORWARD TO THESE WONDERFUL TEACHINGS AND ACTIVITIES IN 2012!

APRIL 28, 2012 FIVE ELEMENTS PRACTICE



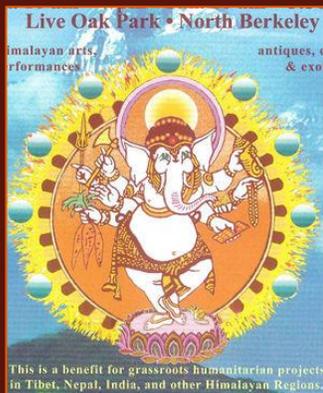
LOCATION:

DONDRUP LING
2748 Adeline Street
Berkeley, CA

**10:00 AM –
4:30 PM**

Understanding the five primordial elements of space, air, fire, water, and earth is a fundamental wisdom of Bön teachings. The interactions of these essential forces gives rise to all phenomena, and awareness of these relationships forms the basis for much of Tibetan culture, including medicine, astrology, the calendar, and, of course, spiritual practice. Geshe Chaphur will guide students in practices to develop awareness of the various ways the Five Elements manifest, and discuss how their effects can be activated or healed. *Suggested donation \$60. Visit Gyalshen.org for additional details.*

MAY 19-20, 2012 HIMALAYAN FAIR



LIVE OAK PARK
Berkeley, California

May 19th, 10am-7pm

May 20th, 10am-5:30 pm

Gyalshen Institute is delighted to participate for the first time in the world famous Himalayan Fair! Held in Berkeley each year since 1984, the Fair is a unique charity festival showcasing Tibetan, Nepalese, and Indian cuisine, crafts, and cultural performing arts. Gyalshen Institute will have a booth to represent the Bön spiritual tradition and the programs of our organization, as well as an array of wonderful selections from the Gyalshen Store. Please show your support of Gyalshen Institute and the Himalayan heritage by joining us over the weekend. *Admission to the fair is FREE.*

JUNE 23, 2012 OPENING THE DOOR TO YUNGDRUNG BÖN



LOCATION:

DONDRUP LING
2748 Adeline Street
Berkeley, CA

**10:00 AM –
4:30 PM**

During this event, Geshe Chaphur will continue his exploration of the foundational beliefs, importance of rituals, and methods of practice that have endured in the Bönpo community, and discuss the spiritual insights and healing properties that can accompany training in this tradition. He will outline the Bön philosophical perspective that explains how various cosmic forces emanating from the dawn of existence express the phenomenal realm we encounter every day. In addition to giving a brief overview of the historical progression of the Bön tradition to present times, Geshe-la will offer helpful guidance on various methods of meditation and ritual supports such as 'How to Build a Shrine'.

THE PRECIOUS BÖN TEACHINGS ARE FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL BEINGS. IT IS THE MISSION OF GYALSHEN INSTITUTE TO PRESENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR THEIR TRANSMISSION. PLEASE DO NOT LET FINANCIAL LIMITATION PREVENT YOU FROM ATTENDING A TEACHING. WE WELCOME WORK/STUDY, AS WELL.

UPCOMING EVENTS CALENDAR, continued

And even more!

FOR UPDATES, THE GYALSHEN INSTITUTE SCHEDULE CAN BE ACCESSED AT OUR WEB SITE: GYALSHEN.ORG

**JULY 19-22,
2012**

SAND MANDALA OF SADAG NYELAM

Over four days in July, Gyalshen Institute will host a visit by Geshe Tenzin Yangton, who will join with Geshe Chaphur and Lama Youngtong in the creation of the Sadhag Nyelam Mandala, representing the world of Earth-owning spirits, spirits of water bodies, spirits of trees, and the spirits of rocks and boulder. Along with traditional rituals and blessings, the creation of this mandala will bless the Bay area with balance in the Five Elements and provide many other benefits. This is a unique opportunity to follow the creation, dedication, and dissolution of a Bön mandala, and Gyalshen Institute is delighted to host this event. *Further details will be posted at Gyalshen.org as they become available.*

**LOCATION:
To be determined.**



**SEPTEMBER
22-23, 2012**

ZHANG ZHUNG NGONDRO

Ngondro is a term used in all the traditional schools of Tibetan spirituality to describe the preliminary practices that establish a stable basis for a productive meditation. Geshe Chaphur will teach the forms of *ngondro* handed down in the most ancient Zhang Zhung lineages of Bön. *Suggested donation \$100. More description of this teaching event will be available at Gyalshen.org.*

LOCATION:

DONDRUP LING
2748 Adeline Street
Berkeley, CA

**10:00 AM –
4:30 PM**

REGULARLY SCHEDULED TEACHINGS FROM THE BÖN BUDDHIST TRADITION WITH GESHE CHAPHUR

**EVERY SECOND WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH:
TEACHING AND MEDITATION RED GARUDA**

The Red (*Mar*) Garuda (*Khyung*) is one of the wrathful deities of Bön. It is a very powerful tantric teaching especially for overcoming health problems. The Red Garuda is practiced as an antidote for Naga and land owning spirits that can cause infection and disease.

**EVERY FOURTH WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH:
DZÖGCHEN NGONDRO PRELIMINARY TEACHING AND
PRACTICE**

The Preliminary (Ngondro) Teaching is most essential for our understanding of Bön. It is the foundation needed to receive the advanced teachings of Sang Nag (Esoteric) and Dzögchen (Great Perfection). In this Preliminary Practice we learn how to receive teachings properly and to apply the essence of Bön teachings in our day-to-day life.

LOCATION:

**GYALSHEN
INSTITUTE**
5627 Madison
Avenue
Richmond, CA

7:00 PM – 8:00 PM



PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE: GOALS FOR 2012

Gyalshen Institute has made tremendous progress in just one year. We want to thank everyone who joined our fast growing community at cultural celebrations and teaching events. We look forward to strengthening our organization to achieve even more in 2012, but we have evaluate what is needed, and then make decisions about what is possible. HERE'S WHERE YOU COME IN!



WE HAVE THESE GOALS IN MIND

ONE: A PLACE TO CALL HOME BASE

With such a strong response to events this year , the need is clear for Gyalshen Institute to have a dedicated teaching and practice space where we can install a permanent shrine. We cannot start looking at potential spaces, including determining how to provide residential space for Geshe Chaphur and visiting teachers, until we have the financial resources.

TWO: PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR GESHE CHAPHUR

This past year a generous donor has enabled Gyalshen Institute to present Geshe Chaphur with a modest monthly amount for personal expenses. The income received from teaching events was *just* enough to pay for rented space and basic operating expenses such as utilities. We want to strengthen financial support of our resident teacher to give him better compensation.

THREE: START GYALSHEN PUBLICATIONS

One of the primary missions of Gyalshen Institute is the publication of Bön books, including translations of scriptural texts and outreach educational materials. Undertaking such a program has many upfront costs. We want to develop a fund that can start the ball rolling.

FOUR: SUPPORT BÖN MONASTICS IN TIBET

The precious Bön legacy remains under stress in Tibet. Monks and nuns continue their education and practice in conditions of great need. Gyalshen Institute would like to offer a program of sponsorship for those in Bön monastic communities, including younger children learning to read and write.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

MAKE A DONATION

The presence of a highly trained and accomplished geshe resident in the Bay area is a rare blessing. Many Bön groups in the United States rely on visiting teachers, who may not be able to come every year. Thanks to Geshe Chaphur, the Gyalshen community has ready access to both. We need to find a place to host this precious opportunity.

Geshe Chaphur has worked tirelessly not only to bring his vision for Gyalshen Institute into being, but has done so in an environment of financial uncertainty.

To expand our programs into a dedicated teaching space and provide for the living expenses associated with having teachers, Gyalshen Institute asks you to make a commitment of financial support.

We have established a PayPal account where you can send a one-time or regular monthly donation. We encourage you to consider offering a monthly amount so we can plan ahead. If, for example, 25 people commit to donating \$50 a month, we have the real possibility of making progress!

As we develop publications, individual donors can subscribe as supporters of translated Bön texts or other teaching materials, credited in the publication.

We will advise in the future about a program for sponsorship for individual monks, nuns, and Tibetan children.

To support these goals, you can send a donation via PayPal.com to Donations@Gyalshe.org, or mail a check to Gyalshen Institute. THANK YOU!

ALSO, YOU CAN VOLUNTEER!

Many hands make light work!

Geshe Chaphur has been assisted this past year by a small group of hard working and dedicated people. Due to the vigorous success of Gyalshen Institute, we are seeking more people to lend a hand with both program events and the backstage administrative tasks that keep a non-profit organization at work.

Let us know what time you have available and what you are able to do.

If you would like to consider joining our endeavor as a regular volunteer, please contact us!



We will be posting individual positions on the Gyalshen.org web site as they are defined, but we are already looking for help with:

Assistant, GYALSHEN STORE

We are about to launch an on-line store to make available Bön ritual practice items, artworks, calligraphy, books, and other materials to support practitioners. In addition, Gyalshen Store also makes appearances at Gyalshen Institute teaching events. We are seeking someone who can work with the store manager to keep inventory, fulfill orders, and help with customer service.

Booth Staff, HIMALAYAN FAIR

On May 19 and 20, 2012, Gyalshen Institute will have a booth at Himalayan Fair in Berkeley (see Calendar, above). We would like to have one or two additional people there to help with the Gyalshen Store and present a friendly and welcoming presence at the Fair. We will need help with set up and take down of our space, as well the meet and greet. This will be more fun than work!

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HELP, send an email to INFO@GYALSHEN.ORG



A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Until next time...

Thanks for reading our first Newsletter. As you can see, Gyalshen Institute is off to a great start and, with your continued interest and support, we trust in more progress. The mission statement says it all:

"The mission of the Gyalshen Institute for the Study of Zhang Zhung and Tibetan Culture is the preservation, translation, public presentation, and scholarly assessment of the origins, history, texts, and practices of the Bön religious tradition that descends from the ancient kingdom of Zhang Zhung and present day Tibet."

We are just beginning what we pray to be a long and happy journey. Geshe Chaphur is extraordinarily energetic and engaged with this tremendous undertaking. We are profoundly grateful to him for all he is doing, and take refuge in our fortunate karma for his presence.

There is, also, someone else whose contribution to the mission and success of Gyalshen Institute needs to be acknowledged and our deep thanks offered.

Lama Youngtong holds the office of President of Gyalshen Institute and has worked ceaselessly on behalf of the programs and events held by our organization. It is my understanding that Lama la and Geshe Chaphur are from the same village in Tibet, but Lama la came to the United States many years ago. He is now a United States citizen and recently was able to return to his homeland for a visit and pilgrimage.

While I am already feeling that Lama Youngtong will look askance at my mention of him, I feel urged to recognize and offer heartfelt thanks to him for all he has done to support the creation of Gyalshen Institute. We are blessed in vast measure by his presence, his intelligence, skills, and dedication to helping Westerners open the door to Bön.

Individually, Lama Youngtong and Geshe Chaphur are each a formidable force. Together, they are contributing to the phenomenal purpose of saving a threatened culture and a precious spiritual tradition.



LAMA YOUNGTONG, AT THE MA GYU EMPOWERMENT

The situation in Tibet is growing worse. As I write this, terrible reports of further tragedy and loss are in the news. Perhaps we cannot change what is already done, but we can act here and now to keep safe and extend the benefits of the Bön teachings in the United States.

You make a real difference when you act to support the mission of Gyalshen Institute. In whatever capacity or degree of generosity, your contribution helps. Please consider the opportunities presented above to make a financial donation or volunteer your time. We have much to do, for Bön is vast. Please join us!

Mark Hammons
Executive Director
Gyalshen Institute