



From the VOCL Archives: Sharing the Timeless Joy

Cutting Through One's Fear



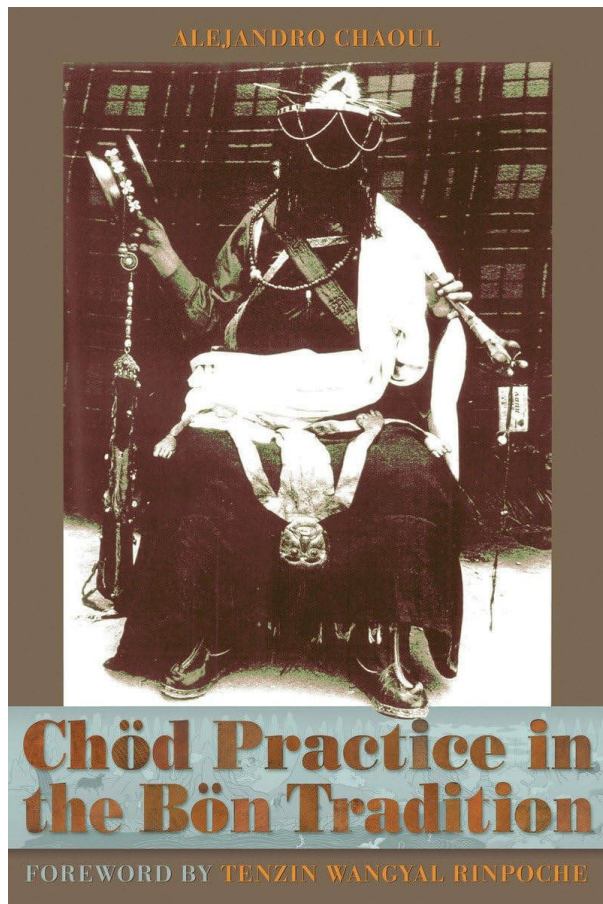
This article invites us to look at the meaning of Chod, a practice in the Tibetan Bon tradition. The Chod practice will be the focus of the fall retreat with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. [Chod: Awakening Confidence by Taking Fear as a Path](#) will be held in Kathmandu, Nepal in October, 2024. Previously published in Voice of Clear Light, August 2016.

The meaning of **chod (Tib: chod)** Literally, to cut off, to cut through. Also known as the "expedient use of fear" and the "cultivation of generosity." Chod is a ritual practice meant to remove all attachment to one's own body and ego by compassionately offering all that one is to other beings.

In the Foreword to Alejandro Chaoul-Reich's book, *Chod Practice in the Bon Tradition*, Geshe

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche writes:

The core purpose of chod is to turn fear into a path to liberation. The practitioner actively seeks out fearful experiences, using fear as an opportunity to visualize cutting apart one's own physical body, symbolizing the cutting of the ego, and thus cultivating wisdom. The practitioner further visualizes transforming the body into an offering that satisfies all beings, thus cultivating generosity and detachment. Through this ancient and profound practice, anyone who is able to recognize their own fear, whether its source is external or internal, can face that fear, challenge it, and overcome it. Ultimately, fear becomes a tool to cultivate enlightened qualities.



Further, Yongdzin Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche writes in the Foreword:

In the Bon tradition, all practices, regardless of whether they pertain to Sutra, Tantra, or Dzogchen, lead one towards the path of liberation. Chod, however, is a special method with particular characteristics for this. Although Chod is common to both Tibetan Bon and Buddhist schools, the original basis of this practice in the two traditions is quite different. The Chod practice according to Buddhist tradition is said to be originally based on the Prajnaparamita while that of Tibetan Bon rests upon Tantric practices. However, in both traditions the Chod practice is performed in a manner which has more in common with Tantra than Sutra, and in both traditions it is known as a very effective and powerful practice bringing the practitioner a strong experience of profound generosity as well as liberation from self-grasping, the root of Samsara. It is, then, a forceful tool for developing one's practice and as such, makes up one of the Four Generosities of the Bon tradition which are practiced on a daily basis.

Alejandro's book, *Chod Practice in the Bon Tradition*, published by Snow Lion in 2009, is available through Amazon, as is *The Nomadic Sacrifice: The Chod Pilgrimage Among the Bonpo of Dolpo* by Martino.