

Voice of Clear Light

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A Letter from the Ligmincha International Board Chair: On Coming Together to Support Rinpoche and Bon Worldwide



Rob Patzig

During the first week of summer retreat, the new Board of Directors of Ligmincha International met at Serenity Ridge. Accepting Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's invitation to join him on this new international board are Anneke Dekkers from the Netherlands, Nathalie Duchanois from France, Carlos Madero from Mexico, Robert Patzig from the U.S, Justyna Przondo from Poland, Pam Rodeheaver from the U.S. and Oliver Wirtz from Germany. Gabriel Rocco, who has served on the board of Ligmincha Institute for 18 years, will continue to serve on the new International Board. While Nathalie and Oliver had to participate via Skype, all other members were able to come to retreat and participate in person. H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, who has been on the board of Ligmincha Institute since Ligmincha was founded, is now an emeritus member of the Ligmincha International Board of Directors.

The formation of the new board is only one of many steps in the process of Ligmincha's becoming a truly international organization. Over the last three years, a group of volunteers have worked with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche to write new bylaws. The bylaws describe the purpose of Ligmincha and, broadly, the organizational framework for accomplishing our mission. The mission is threefold: to preserve the traditions and teachings of Tonpa Shenrap and the lineage of Bon; to support the work of our Spiritual Director, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, in all ways; and to provide support and resources for practitioners and students of Tibetan Bon Buddhism.

Organizationally, Rinpoche is the center of an expanding mandala of (currently) 40 practice centers and communities around the world. The International Board's mission is to understand Rinpoche's vision for the community, as well as the needs of practitioners and centers, wherever they may be located, and to create a plan to ensure that the vision can manifest and practitioners be supported.

There is far more work to be done than the board can accomplish on its own, and so two councils will provide support. One is the Mandala Council: a group of leaders (chosen by Rinpoche) from many different sanghas who will come together to share the successes, challenges, knowledge and needs of the communities they represent. The goal of the Mandala Council is to provide greater independence and more opportunities for growth for each center by supporting one another. Just as we come together to practice in part because we can find more support for our own progress by asking questions, sharing our experiences and supporting one another, so too can each center support and nurture the others. More details will be shared soon when this group is formally created.

The second council is the Ligmincha International Council. This will consist of sangha members selected by Rinpoche, nominated by the board or by regional sanghas because of their expertise and experience in particular areas. The purpose is to provide the skills, time and resources to ensure that Ligmincha International can meet its mission. The activities of this council will change over time based on the needs of the organization as a whole, but it will include activities as diverse as developing practice and educational materials, monitoring the financial status of Ligmincha, marketing and social media development, fundraising, etc.

Coming together to work and support Bon, our Spiritual Director and our international community of practitioners is an evolving process. As we continue to implement and refine this new structure, it is important that we hear from many different voices and consider different perspectives within our community. I look forward to working with each of you, to listening to your ideas, needs, concerns and advice, as we work to build an enduring home for Bon in the Western world under the guidance and direction of Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

Yours in Bon,

Rob Patzig, Chair

Ligmincha International Board of Directors