



Cutting Through One's Fear

On the Meaning of Chöd



Kalsang Ma, Khandro of Chöd

The meaning of chöd as explained in the [Glossary of Bön Terms](#) on Ligmincha's International website:

chöd (tib: gchod) Literally: to cut off, to cut through. Also known as the "expedient use of fear" and the "cultivation of generosity." Chöd 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, *Chöd Practice in the Bön Tradition*, Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche writes:

The core purpose of chöd 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 Bön tradition, all practices, regardless of whether they pertain to Sutra, Tantra, or Dzogchen, lead one towards the path of liberation. Chöd, however, is a special method with particular characteristics for this. Although Chöd is common to both Tibetan Bön and Buddhist schools, the original basis of this practice in the two traditions is quite different. The Chöd practice according to Buddhist tradition is said to be originally based on the Prajnaparamita while that of Tibetan Bön rests upon Tantric practices. However, in both traditions the Chöd 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 Bön tradition which are practiced on a daily basis.

Alejandro's book, *Chöd Practice in the Bön Tradition*, published by Snow Lion in 2009, is available through [Ligmincha's Tibet Shop](#) .

Other works of interest: *The Nomadic Sacrifice: The Chöd Pilgrimage Among the Bönpo of Dolpo* by

Martino Nicoletti.□

available at

[Ligmincha's Tibet Shop](#)

Melodic Wisdom (Music CD)

Chanting by Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche and the monks of Tritten Norbutse Monestary in Kathmandu, Nepal and orchestrated by Sarad Gurung (includes chöd chants). Available through

[Ligmincha's Tibet Shop](#)

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