

calm state of mind. I stress again, this positive state of mind is the most valuable thing that we can ever invest in. So, it is important that we cultivate and protect whatever positive mind we already have.

The value of following a meditation practice is something we may not take much notice of in our normal everyday life, especially when things are going relatively well. However, some people have confided in me that in times of difficulties in life such as a grave illness, when everything seems to fall apart, then this is when they see how valuable the practice is. The value of mediation in our tradition, or any other religion that offers such practices, become apparent during difficult times in ones life, such as when we face great problems. For example, for those who believe in a creator God such as in the Christian tradition, face a difficulty in life, such as a grave illness, their faith in God is further deepened and enhanced. At a time when nothing external works and everything seems to fall apart, this is the time when people find real solace in God. Apparently someone with a strong faith in God comes to a point of entrusting themselves entirely to God. They feel that whatever befalls them it is in God's will; they completely accept whatever God offers them. They trust that God will look after them in good and bad times. This reliance on God seems to help people at times of great difficulty. The practices and the teachings that are offered in every tradition come down to the point of benefiting others in times of difficulty and distress. So, if we engage in the practice now, then it will definitely help us especially at times of difficulties.

The main point that I am stressing in relation to the practice of meditation is that meditation comes down to familiarising our mind with positive attitudes and good behaviour. If we train correctly and protect these positive attitudes in our life, then this will be of great value to us.

### Join the over 2,000,000 monks, nuns & lay people worldwide in mantra recitation for the long life of His Holiness the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama.

We have been asked to recite the Shakyamuni Buddha mantra and the Praises to the 21 Taras to be dedicated to the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

This can be done waiting in the airport, at the tram stop, walking the dog; anywhere really. Your heart felt prayers joining all the other people in the world doing this practice; become a prayer wheel turning with loving thoughts for His Holiness.

Your mala (rosary) counts may be recorded in a book that you will find under the Green Tara Thanka (painting) in the gompa every Tuesday or Wednesday night. Or you can ring your count through to Llysse in the office on 9596 8900. Recitations will be collected until December.

**Please join us on Friday 27 August at 7.30pm** to recite the 21 Praises to Tara together in the gompa. Practicing together creates the causes for harmony in our community as well as contributing to the long and healthy life of His Holiness who is so unbelievably kind – make sure you mark your diaries.

You do not have to have taken the Green Tara initiation in order to recite the praises and this is an ideal opportunity to begin a regular practice if you have not done so yet. Malas can be bought in the TI bookshop.

The Shakyamuni Buddha mantra is:

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHAMUNAYE SOHA

If you have any questions please call Ani Rigsal on 9596 7410.

### Farewell Jemma



Jemma Dacre, Wednesday night student, artist and fabric designer passed away on 20 June. Exceptionally creative, Jemma was also known to be compassionate, generous and a wonderful friend. We send our sincere condolences to her family.

*A warm welcome to new members Oy Leng Dwyer & family, Isabel Lengyel & family and Ingrid Leibbrandt.*

This newsletter is Dharma material; please treat it with respect.

For information on the disposal of Dharma materials, please contact the Office on 9596 8900. Thank you.

### Tara Institute

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*Tara Institute is affiliated with the FPMT — the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition — a network of Buddhist Centres in Australia and worldwide. Following the Mahayana teachings of the Buddha — in the tradition of Lama Tsong Khapa — we work to relieve all beings from suffering in all its forms.*



*Tara Institute is fully audited, not-for-profit and mainly run by volunteers. We rely entirely on the support of members, friends, benefactors and bequests. Donations and fees are requested in order to keep the Centre running.*

You are welcome to contact the Tara Institute newsletter editors Allys Andrews and Sandra Kinread at [allys.andrews@gmail.com](mailto:allys.andrews@gmail.com)

# Tara Institute NEWS



August 2010

## STUDY GROUP SEMINAR

SERIOUS BRAIN FOOD WITH LOTS OF LAUGHS!

Sunday 15th August - 10am to 4pm

### When times get tough the tough go shopping ... has it ever worked?

An excerpt from a teaching by Ven. Geshe Doga 16 June 2010

There may be times in our life when we feel content and happy, especially when we have good external conditions, such as plenty of food, good shelter and so forth. However, as soon as we go a little bit deeper, beyond the surface, we will notice that we feel a little unsettled. In particular, there are times when we may feel a bit lonely or unhappy, as if something is missing in our life. When we look deeper, we find that our mind is not really content and happy; so what we are lacking is a joyful state of mind.

There are meditation techniques we can use to contain our mind, to bring our focus inwards, which will distance our mind from the distractions around us. However, it is also necessary for us

to be realistic about our approach in meditation. There are no quick results. We need to have a realistic approach where we allow ourselves time for transformation to take place; we need to be patient with our practice. There will be no results merely with a few attempts as it is not that easy to overcome a distracted mind.

Results won't occur within a few days or few weeks or even few months, but if we engage in the meditation practice year after year, then we will begin to notice that some transformation definitely takes place. A steady transformation over a long period of time is sustainable and stable.

We need to integrate meditation into our life so that it becomes our life long commitment. The meditation practices

## WHITE TARA INITIATION

Sunday 22 August at 10am



involve techniques and methods to develop a clear state of mind, which in turn leads to a more joyful, happy mind, and ultimately a genuinely kind mind. These states of mind are extremely valuable – they are the best companions we can ever have in life. But in order to maintain these positive states of mind, it is not enough to think, 'Oh, I will engage in some meditation practice to be calm and peaceful for a short while'. Likewise thinking that 'I will be kind for a

short period of time', this is not the sort of attitude to adopt. Instead, we should see the practice as a companion for our entire life. This means that we need to constantly remind ourselves, and constantly encourage ourselves to keep practising to achieve a firm positive state of mind. A good attitude and meditation practice brings about a clear,

**MONDAYS ~ 8pm**  
• 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30 August

## Introduction to Buddhist Meditation



with Clare Callinan

### The Twelve Interdependent Links

As you attempt to meditate you will notice that the mind naturally becomes calmer and more settled. The reason why the mind becomes calmer and one feels more settled is because the mind is not distracted during that time, thus the disturbances in the mind subside. The disturbances arise when we are distracted and overreact to things with attachment, or anger or any other negative state of mind. The reason we overreact to things is due to a deep rooted and fundamental misunderstanding of how all things, including ourselves, exist.

Over the next four weeks we will look at how this fundamental 'ignorance' sets in motion a cause and effect sequence known as the Twelve Interdependent Links, that perpetuates the disturbances. Combining this understanding with some basic meditation techniques we begin to see the possibility of lessening and even ending our suffering.

*The atmosphere on Monday nights is relaxed and open and people are welcome to attend all four teachings.*

*A facility fee is requested (members free) to help cover administration expenses. Just turn up at 7.50pm or phone Llysse in the Tara Institute office on 9596 8900 for more details.*

**TUESDAYS ~ 7.45pm**  
• 3, 10, 17, 24 & 31 August

## STUDY GROUP



Study Group offers students the opportunity to study more deeply in a structured and supportive environment. The course runs in six-week blocks comprising four weeks of teachings, one night of discussion group and a written exam that examines the subject matter of that series. Homework is given each teaching week and is assessed by experienced students from the group.

The text for this year's Study Group is: Nagarjuna's *Precious Garland*.

Nagarjuna is renowned for his penetrating analysis of reality. In *Precious Garland* he offers advice on how to conduct one's life and how to construct social policies that reflect Buddhist ideals. The advice for personal happiness is concerned first with improving one's condition over the course of lifetimes and then with release from all kinds of suffering, culminating in buddhahood.

Students are welcome to sample study group at any time but a commitment is required to attend on a regular basis.

*If you would like to attend Study Group and need more information please contact Ani Rigsal on 9596 7410.*

**WEDNESDAYS ~ 8pm**  
• 4, 11, 18 & 25 August

## An Evening with Geshe Doga



*The value of following a meditation practice is something we may not take much notice of in our normal everyday life, especially when things are going relatively well. However, some people have confided in me that in times of difficulties in life such as a grave illness, when everything seems to fall apart, then this is when they see how valuable the practice is.*

*Geshe Doga 16 June 2010*

Geshe Doga continues to teach on the Middle Lam Rim – a text by Lama Tsong Khapa – on the stages of the path to enlightenment. The evening comprises a guided meditation, a commentary on the text and a question and answer time. Geshe-la elucidates his commentary with practical examples from daily life, illustrations from his own experience and deep insight to reveal the essence of the text.

Geshe Doga teaches in Tibetan and Venerable Michael Yeshe translates the teachings into English.

There is no charge for the evening and everyone is warmly invited to attend

*For more details please contact Ani Rigsal on 9596 7410.*

## WHITE TARA INITIATION

Sunday 22 August at 10am

White Tara is associated with practices which can contribute to enhancing one's life span and overcome life-threatening hindrances. White Tara practice can also be done on behalf of someone who is ill.

Ven. Geshe Doga prepares for the empowerment by doing a White Tara retreat on our behalf, and dedicates the positive energy to our physical, spiritual and mental well-being. Geshe-la has said that he has seen sick and critically ill people regain their health after being given the White Tara mantra to recite. Even those without problems can avert future sickness and obstacles to a long and healthy life. By relying on White Tara and reciting her mantra, we can achieve a deep level of inner well-being so that we can truly be of help to ourselves and others.

The atmosphere during these initiations is inspirational. Through the Spiritual Teacher's blessings, we are opened to the presence of White Tara as an active, healing dimension of Buddhahood.

*There are no prerequisites or subsequent commitments involved in attending the initiation. Members, families and friends are most welcome to attend. Please phone Ani Rigsal on 9596 7410 if you have any further queries.*



## STUDY GROUP SEMINAR

### SERIOUS BRAIN FOOD WITH LOTS OF LAUGHS!

Sunday 15th August - 10am to 4pm



Each year the students of the Tara Institute study group organise a seminar that looks in depth at the material studied that year. Each group in turn presents a chosen topic with relevant arguments, and then the floor is thrown open for questions, refutations and counter-arguments.

This method of debate is part of the vibrant living heritage of Tibetan Buddhism and whilst serious in content, the exchanges are often hilarious and always enlightening. Laughing is compulsory!

Everyone is welcome - you don't have to be a member of study group and lunch is provided by the students.

**Auspicious days in August** are calculated according to the lunar calendar. On these days the benefits of actions are greatly multiplied, so are especially good for spiritual practice.

|             |            |           |                     |
|-------------|------------|-----------|---------------------|
| Thursday 5  | Tibetan 25 | Tsog Day  | Guru Puja at TI 6pm |
| Tuesday 10  | Tibetan 30 | Full Moon | Precepts            |
| Tuesday 17  | Tibetan 8  | Tara Day  | Tara Puja at TI 6pm |
| Thursday 19 | Tibetan 10 | Tsog Day  | Guru Puja at TI 6pm |
| Tuesday 24  | Tibetan 15 | New Moon  | Precepts            |

WEEK 1  
MONDAY 2  
8pm Intro to Buddhist Meditation  
TUESDAY 3  
7.45pm - Study Group  
WEDNESDAY 4  
10.00am - Healing Group  
8pm - An Evening with Geshe Doga  
THURSDAY 5  
6pm - Guru Puja

WEEK 2  
MONDAY 9  
8pm - Intro to Buddhist Meditation  
TUESDAY 10  
7.45pm - Study Group  
WEDNESDAY 11  
10.00am - Healing Group  
8pm - An Evening with Geshe Doga  
SUNDAY 15  
10.30am - Dharma Club  
10am to 4pm - Study Group Seminar

WEEK 3  
MONDAY 16  
8pm - Intro to Buddhist Meditation  
TUESDAY 17  
6pm Tara Puja  
7.45pm - Study Group  
WEDNESDAY 18  
10.00am - Healing Group  
8pm - An Evening with Geshe Doga  
THURSDAY 19  
6pm Guru Puja  
SUNDAY 22  
10am - White Tara Initiation

WEEK 4  
MONDAY 23  
8pm - Intro to Buddhist Meditation  
TUESDAY 24  
7.45pm - Study Group  
WEDNESDAY 25  
8pm - An Evening with Geshe Doga  
FRIDAY 27  
7.30pm - 21 Tara Praises in the gompa

WEEK 5  
MONDAY 30  
8pm - Intro to Buddhist Meditation  
TUESDAY 31  
7.45pm - Study Group

**Dharma Club at 10.30am**  
Sunday Oct. 17 & Nov. 14