

## NINE DAYS OF SILENCE IN TASMANIA

At the end of October a number of T.I. students joined a group of 30 at a Vipassana Retreat in Hobart, organized by our sister FPMT Centre, Chag-Tong Chen-Tong. The retreat was led by Venerable Antonio Satta who has focused on leading Vipassana Retreat for FPMT centres around the world for the last 15 years.

The retreat was held in strict silence and Ven. Antonio spoke at length on the Buddha's teaching that discipline and ethics are the ornaments that should adorn a meditator on retreat. Ven. Antonio set very firm guidelines: No 'teddy bears' were allowed in the gumpa, that is no cups of tea, water bottles, books or other unnecessary accouterments. All retreatants were expected to sit on the floor, either cross-legged or using a kneeling stool and this posture had to be maintained for the whole retreat.

The day began at 5.30am with the wake-up bell. There were 7 sessions throughout the day, three of which were proceeded by 45 minutes of walking meditation. The evening session included a Dharma talk. Ven. Antonio led the whole retreat with his special mix of firm kindness. Early in the retreat he quoted Chogyam Trungpa saying that being a committed Dharma student was the equivalent of submitting yourself to major surgery without an anesthetic; it was a helpful metaphor to help us all navigate the rigors of the retreat.

The retreat was held at a beautiful retreat centre owned by the Catholic order of Presentation nuns, set on a hill overlooking Blackmans Bay, a seaside suburb on the southern fringe of Hobart. Set on a hillside site of about ten acres above the beach, each session was accompanied by the

background sounds of waves on the beach on one side and busy suburban life on the other. We were greatly assisted by having nine very cold days that supported the intense inwardness of such a retreat.

The Director of the Hobart Center, Venerable Lindy Mailhot, organized the retreat in a marvelously no-fuss manner. She seamlessly attended to everyone's needs, cooked all the meals, and did our washing plus all the towels and linen. It was a super-human effort. Her calm background presence was the bedrock on which the success of the retreat was built.

Ven. Antonio was ordained in 1979 with Lama Yeshe. He went on to train extensively with Lama Yeshe's teacher Geshe Rabten, at Tharpa Choeling monastery in Switzerland, then for another four years at Nalanda Monastery with Geshe Tegchok. Tharpa Choeling monastery produced many fine Western Dharma teachers, among them such luminaries as Allan Wallace and Stephen Bachelor. Ven. Antonio has a link with Tara Institute. When our first resident teacher, Geshe Dawa, returned to Australia to become the teacher at Vajrayana Institute in Sydney, Ven. Antonio was appointed as his translator; a job he filled for five years.

In recent years Ven. Antonio has become a jewel in the FPMT world-wide mandala of travelling teachers. He has specialized in leading Vipassana retreat with their unique combination of the method of Vipassana meditation that was re-invigorated by the Burmese master in the 18<sup>th</sup> century combined with the Mahayana focus on compassion and emptiness yoga, taught particularly in the Mahamudra tradition. He has also taken an important role by continuing to offer the three-month Vajrasattva retreat as advised and encouraged by Lama Yeshe. It was Lama Yeshe's wish that

all his committed students undertake the three-month retreat some time in their life. He gave clear instructions and commentary on the retreat process and wrote a specific Tsog practice. Ven. Antonio has been leading these retreats every two or three years in N.Z. I was fortunate to have been on the last one in 2009 and another one is planned for late 2012.

Ven. Antonio's vigorous monastic training with Geshes Rabten and Tegchok gave him a firm foundation in the Geluk Mahayana tradition. His immersion in Burmese style Vispassana meditation gave him a deep experience of this pan-Buddhist practice. He is a superbly well qualified, and reliable, Western teacher. If you seek out one of his retreats it is just possible that the experience will deepen and enrich your Dharma understanding and practice in ways that will continue to sustain you for the rest of your life.

Bob Sharples



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### Tara Institute

ABN 74 328 295 797

[www.tarainstitute.org.au](http://www.tarainstitute.org.au)  
3 Mavis Avenue, East Brighton, 3187  
Phone 9596 8900, Fax 9596 4856  
Email: [admin@tarainstitute.org.au](mailto:admin@tarainstitute.org.au)

*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.*

## Tara Institute news

If undelivered, please return to -  
3 Mavis Avenue, East Brighton 3187



February 2012

## Members' Tara Puja Sunday 26 February at 10am

### Impermanence at work; the New Year brings a new Spiritual Program Coordinator to Tara Institute



It's time for more change and so I am letting you know that I will stand down from being the SPC here at Tara. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as SPC and have learnt a lot. I have been very impressed with the support and help that I have received from the students at Tara, that was so helpful to me coming into the job and learning the ropes. The help, the support and friendship from students has continued and I thank you all very much.

Ven. Lhamo, who many of you met at the time of Geshe Doga's Long Life Puja, will take over from me beginning February. She is young and energetic and I am sure will perform the role of SPC very well.

I am going to stay on at Tara and so hope to continue my relationships with people and be part of the wonderful Dharma community that flourishes here at Tara Institute.

### Welcoming Venerable Lhamo

My name is Lozang Lhamo and I have spent the past 7 years living, studying and working at Chenrezig Institute in Queensland. I was fortunate enough to have completed a full 5 year round of the Buddhist Study Program, during which time I was also able to serve the community as the Gumpa Manager, SPC and audio technician at various times, straight from ordination right through until my recent trip down here to Tara Institute. TI has turned out to be a beautiful place both externally and internally as found within all the lovely people I have thus far had the pleasure to meet. I hope to be able to serve Tara Institute long into the future and look forward to becoming a part of the community and receiving teachings from Geshe Doga, who I see as inseparable from my own teacher Geshe Tashi Tsering. I want to thank Ani Rigtsal for providing me with this opportunity and also Judy and Gabe for endorsing me, as well as to everyone who has been so kind and welcoming. Please feel free to drop into the program office and talk to me about the program or anything else anytime.

Lhamo



Photo taken by Sue Fotheringham

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)

**MONDAYS ~ 8pm**  
• 6, 13, 20 & 27 February

## Introduction to Buddhist Meditation



with Venerable Michael Yeshe

## Facing the year with a calm mind

Every year we are faced with a new set of challenges and are required to deal with unpleasant situations. This is part of our existence; however there are ways to help us deal with difficult situations as they arise. We may not be able to completely avoid problems in life, but with the right attitude, we can certainly handle them more efficiently. Meditation is one technique that can help us develop a clear and clam mind with a positive attitude that can help us shape a more constructive year. Ven. Michael will begin the sessions with a brief introduction, followed by simple guided meditation and time for questions and answers.

*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.*

### Beautify the Gompa

Sponsors are needed to buy fresh flowers on a weekly basis for the altar and Geshe Doga's throne. We are starting a special fund for this in February 2012. If you feel you can help, no matter how small or large the offering, please call Llysse in the office 9596 8900

**TUESDAYS ~ 7.45pm**  
• 14, 21 & 28 February

## 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.

Geshe Doga's commentary on Nagarjuna's *Precious Garland* continues this year.

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.

The evenings run in six-week blocks and students are asked to attend all six sessions. You are most welcome to come and experience Study Group at any time but conditions apply if you wish to attend on a regular basis.

*If you have any questions please contact Ven. Lhamo on 9596 7410.*

### GREEN TARA PRACTICE

Wednesday 1 February at 8pm

On this night we will recite together the Praises to the 21 Taras and engage in Green Tara meditation.

This practice is renowned for helping us to overcome obstacles in our daily lives and spiritual practice. You do not have to have taken a Green Tara empowerment and everyone is most welcome to join in.

**WEDNESDAYS ~ 8pm**

• 8, 15, 22 & 29 February

## An Evening with Geshe Doga



"If we have applied introspection and have been mindful in securing a clear, happy and kind state of mind, then it becomes our unfailing aid whenever we face difficulties. If an external friend deserts us it would be a particularly difficult time, but if one has developed a clear, happy and kind state of mind, them regardless of the situation, it will not cause us as much suffering."

30 November 2011

On these evenings there are detailed and accessible instructions from a fully qualified Tibetan Lama on how to meditate correctly.

There is no charge for these evenings.

If you have any questions please contact Venerable Lhamo on 9596 7410.

# Members' Tara Puja

## Sunday 26th February at 10am



Geshe Doga warmly invites you to join him for the special Members' Tara Puja where prayers will be offered for the long lives, health and prosperity of Tara Institute's Members, their families & friends.

Tara is the female Buddha of enlightened activity. The Tara puja includes offerings and requests to help us overcome the many inner and outer obstacles in our lives and to achieve successful Dharma wisdom in our minds. You are welcome to bring offerings of flowers, food and incense.

**Everyone is welcome and lunch will be offered after the puja.**

If you have any questions please contact Ven. Lhamo on 9596 7410.

## A huge thank you to Ingrid Leibbrandt and Jeremy Miller

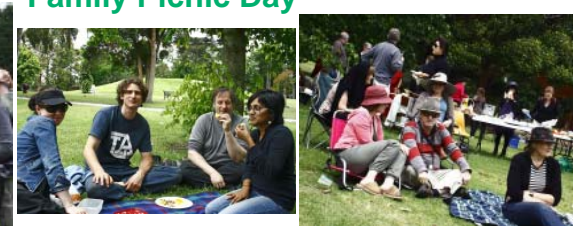
The poetry and music event held in November last year was absolutely marvelous; it brought so much happiness to the people who attended. The surroundings and light supper couldn't have been better.

To all the people involved in organizing this, WELL DONE. Special thanks to our fearless leader at T.I. Judy Mayne.



Photo taken by Damien Busby

### Family Picnic Day



Photos taken by Guy Parish

Auspicious days in February 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 2	Tibetan 10	Tsog Day	Guru Puja at TI 6pm
Tuesday 7	Tibetan 15	Full Moon	Precepts
Thursday 16	Tibetan 25	Tsog Day	Guru Puja at TI 6pm
Tuesday 21	Tibetan 30	New Moon	Precepts

WEEK 1

WEDNESDAY 1  
10.00am - Healing Group  
8pm - Green Tara Practice  
THURSDAY 2  
6pm - Guru Puja

WEEK 2

MONDAY 6  
8pm - Intro to Buddhist Meditation  
WEDNESDAY 8  
10.00am - Healing Group  
8pm - An Evening with Geshe Doga

WEEK 3

MONDAY 13  
8pm - Intro to Buddhist Meditation  
TUESDAY 14  
7.45PM - Study Group recommences  
WEDNESDAY 15  
10.00am - Healing Group  
8pm - An Evening with Geshe Doga  
THURSDAY 16  
6pm - Guru Puja

WEEK 4

SUNDAY 19  
10.30am -Dharma Club  
MONDAY 20  
8pm - Intro to Buddhist Meditation  
TUESDAY 21  
7.45PM - Study Group  
WEDNESDAY 22  
10.00am - Healing Group  
8pm - An Evening with Geshe Doga

WEEK 5

SUNDAY 26  
10am - Members' Tara Puja  
MONDAY 27  
8pm - Intro to Buddhist Meditation  
TUESDAY 28  
7.45PM - Study Group  
WEDNESDAY 29  
10.00am - Healing Group  
8pm - An Evening with Geshe Doga

February 2012