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# Tara Institute News

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## DRAWING FIRE PUJA MANDALAS WITH THE VENERABLE THUBTEN DONYO

4 classes to be conducted at  
Tara Institute

Wed 23rd and 30th January, Wed 6th and  
13th February at 8pm

These special classes will be conducted by our resident monk and tantric ritual expert, Thubten Donyo who is fully trained in this highly specialized and sacred artistic activity. Over the four nights Thubten will give full instructions on how to draw fire puja mandalas starting with the preparation of the base, the mapping out of the dimensions, how to draw with coloured

sands, what mental attitude is required etc. To enable an active involvement of students, the class size will be restricted to 10 students only. Students must have a tantric initiation as a pre-requisite to join the classes. If you would like to participate, please register with Patrick Campisi or Sonam Jampa at the centre. Early registrations will be given priority.

## SEMINAR "LOVE OR ATTACHMENT?"

SUNDAY JANUARY 20 10am-5pm

Our first major event for 1991 will be another of our popular seminars. Geshe Doga has suggested a theme of 'Love or Attachment?' This should prove an exciting topic as there can be few of us who can claim to have fully resolved the tension between love (ie; the wish that others be happy) and attachment (ie; the wish that others make you happy) in our relationships. The seminar will

comprise a mixture of open discussion, meditation and brief presentations. All students will be encouraged to take an active part. Lunch will be provided so that a relaxing yet challenging day can be had by all. The seminar will be suitable for both old and new students.

FEE: MEMBERS \$10  
NON-MEMBERS \$12

Bookings: Ring office  
on 596 2465

## A MESSAGE FROM DAVID HOPE, DIRECTOR

The Directorship of TI is changing. Due to time constraints, all three Co-Directors have found it increasingly difficult to devote enough time to the running of TI.

Help was sought from Lama Zopa and it was agreed that new Directors should be sought. Suzanne and Max have stood down and on behalf of everyone, I would like to thank them most warmly and sincerely for their incredible efforts in Co-Directing TI.

Rinpoche picked some new names, and a combination thought to be particularly good, is that of Alison Ribush and Jools Gardner. Alison and Jools have agreed to take over the reigns, probably towards the end of March. Until then I will carry on as Director.

The last 12 months have been busy and successful. Our teaching program and social events have been well attended. We ended the year by hosting the FPMT Regional Meeting (a meeting of Centre Directors from Australia and New Zealand) and Rinpoche visited briefly.

We will be hosting the Global Meeting of FPMT Centres in June of this year. You will be able to meet Dharma people from all over the world. Rinpoche also looks likely to spend about 5 months in Australia. Some of that will be at TI. Also on the agenda is the build up to His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Australasian tour which looks set for early in 1992.

I would like to thank everyone who helped TI during 1990. It is only through your support that the Centre can develop and provide the pure Buddha's teachings and a strong community base that is able to offer so much to the people of Melbourne.

We would, however, love to see you all more often; at teachings, at social events and Pujas. Being involved with TI is most rewarding and I would like to invite you to participate in anyway you can. Very Best wishes for '91,

David Hope  
Director.



Foundation for the Preservation of the  
Mahayana Tradition (FPMT), a network  
of Buddhist Centres in Australia and  
around the world



Tara Institute  
3 Mavis Avenue  
East Brighton 3186  
Phone: 596 2465  
Fax: 596 2465

# GESHE DOGA'S END OF YEAR ADVICE TO THE STUDY GROUP

**L**et us consider now how fortunately we are placed in terms of having all the outer and inner conditions to achieve the purpose of our lives.

Our life's purpose can be seen as twofold - in terms of this life and in terms of future lives. We understand this life's purpose in terms of having wealth, more wealth, a good reputation and some degree of respect and praise from others. So this life's purpose is fulfilled if we gain some satisfaction out of worldly achievements involving possessions, wealth, reputation and so forth. To this end we spend our time working in a bid to extract this satisfaction. But such gains do not extend beyond this life and have absolutely no power to benefit our future lives. The only means of accomplishing the purpose of future lives is to control our mind.

Controlling the mind means overcoming our grasping at sensual objects and pleasures. Such control is necessary because sensual grasping functions as an obstacle to the development of positive mental qualities. For example, if our mind is always entranced, fascinated by external sensual objects then it is very difficult to develop love and compassion. Even if developed, our love and compassion may be lost due to the influence of grasping attachment in the mind.

Irrespective of what one does and achieves in life, the basic cause of our (continuing) dissatisfaction is a lack of discipline and the real ability to control our own mind. We can judge this from personal experience. As one becomes very rich and famous and popular, it is simply not true that our lives become correspondingly more peaceful and satisfying. On the contrary, as our name and wealth increase, we find ourselves experiencing more restrictions of our personal freedom, more pride, more and more mental unrest.

It is also true that the cause of this increasing unhappiness does not necessarily lie in material or external objects. In other words it is not an inevitable quality of wealth, reputation and so forth. If it were, as soon as we obtained them we would become immediately unhappy. Clearly then, the

cause lies inside oneself, within one's own mind. It is because we give rise to mental attitudes such as jealousy and pride that these worldly objects are incapable of engendering any happiness in us at all. Indeed, as soon as we have these things we think of a friend who is still richer or more popular, more advantaged than ourselves and a sense of competitiveness arises in our mind making us very uncomfortable. From our personal gain we generate suffering. We are not making these points to suggest that we should forbid all wealth and abandon all concern for having a good name. It is natural that everyone wants material resources and respect. The essential point of our investigation is to find out how we can actually make these things a source of happiness - how best can we transform them into their best possible use for both ourselves and others! In short, if our mind is not fully tamed then no amount of wealth, possession, esteem etc. is going to guarantee satisfaction.

But it does not follow that these samsaric objects are necessarily a source of suffering either. It is because of the crucial role of the mind in determining whether we experience unhappiness or happiness that we must learn about the benefit and practicability of Dharma teachings.

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***As one becomes very rich and famous and popular, it is simply not true that our lives become correspondingly more peaceful and satisfying.***

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**G**iven that we have this unique opportunity right now, endowed with all the favourable external and internal conditions conducive to full mental development, the best thing we can do is strive hard to bring some change to our mind. If we really appreciate the full benefits of controlling the mind then we will also appreciate that the best time to actually begin controlling it is NOW. This is because there isn't another BETTER time.

To be successful in achieving control over our mind as well as our relationship to externals, we need to

see the benefit of such control from our own side and therefore the benefit of doing some practice to achieve this. Then in addition to this resolve to practice we must acquire some knowledge of skills and techniques that we can use as well as the ability to discriminate which ones are best for us given our particular circumstances. But if we look at our immediate situation we will see that we have both sets of conditions. We have had contact with the Dharma or spiritual teachings and have therefore seen the benefit of transforming the mind. But mere contact is not enough for us to unravel these teachings by ourselves

To understand the meaning or import of Dharma we must have assistance. But we have this as well, together with access to the teachings, we have the teachers who are essential in revealing their meaning. In this way all the necessary conditions, external and internal are gathered together right here now in this very lifetime.

When we reflect like this we can see that THIS is the best opportunity and we must make full use of it. Conversely, if we don't recognize and seize this current and best opportunity to practice then we must conclude that it is impossible to achieve the goals or fruits of this practice. To put it bluntly, we are really deluding ourselves if we think that the optimum moment for practice will come later, some time down the track. It is also a self-delusion to wait in the vain belief that we will experience some sudden spectacular experience of wisdom knowledge that spontaneously penetrates to the heart of reality. In reality no such instant experience is possible. It is only by putting gradual and consistent effort that we will experience some change and improvement.

As well as the importance of recognizing the unique opportunity of this life we should also rejoice in each and every effort we have put in over the course of the whole year while we have been studying "Lam Rim" - The Graduated Path to Enlightenment. This teaching is a very profound and complete teaching of how to gain full control over the mind and development to their utmost all excellent qualities of mind. So, following from what we have said before we should

think "May the significance and benefit of what I have learnt by studying the Lam Rim help me to acquire the skills enabling me to gain control over my mind and to achieve some perseverance and patience in practising the Dharma which I have never managed to attain previously".

**T**he benefit we can reap from practising the Dharma depends on putting it into practice. Understanding the Dharma in terms of knowing about the shortcomings of jealousy, anger, pride and so forth, as well as knowing the meditations that are remedies for these afflicted minds is all very well but we must do more than just understand the method of practice - we must integrate and apply these methods into actual practice. Dharma not practised is not going to solve the problems we face in everyday life such as pride and jealousy.

We must understand that practising Dharma is the ONLY means of overcoming the mental problems that bring suffering from inside ourselves. Such constant internal suffering is not like that we experience from some excruciating disease so that we scream out in agony, nor like that caused by reaction to severe heat or bitter cold. The suffering arising from mental delusion is both very deep and always present.

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Sometimes our experience of suffering caused by mental delusion stimulates us to create thoughts such as the possibility that our jealousy could be overcome if only we destroyed the person who is making us jealous! But such a solution doesn't work to solve our mental pain because as soon as we have rid ourselves of this person, another crops up to take their place; there is always someone who



seems richer, more attractive and more privileged than ourselves.

The grounds to compete with others can always be found while we have pride. In fact our pride can grow so enormously inside that we can't bear to receive even a minor insult from another, even if it is no more than a little swear word.

If we think in terms of the Mahayana teachings we will know that the essential practice is to develop love and compassion towards other beings. From the Mahayana perspective, by meditating we seek to view the person towards whom we may be feeling jealousy or other negative attitude in a very objective manner. We do this by recognizing that just as we wish for happiness and seek to avoid suffering, so do they.

Why should we not, therefore, experience joy and happiness because they have more than us. Why should we resent the fact that they have the conditions for experiencing good things? Rather than generating jealousy we should pray - "Just as this person has this positive quality, may I also have the fortune of receiving such qualities in the future and may all other sentient beings also receive and share in these benefits. In this way may all sentient beings experience happiness."

Yet when we are engaged with effort in generating positive attitudes in our minds, and some negative mind arises within oneself, we sometimes forget or lose sight of the need to apply Dharma - right at this crucial moment when it is most needed. This is a clear indication that although we have some knowledge of Dharma inside there is still a gap between learning and practice - between one's mind and the Dharma itself.

The real advantage of putting effort into Dharma is that we can make use of it in ALL situations, all deeds of

life such as walking, sitting and sleeping. If one becomes a real expert in Dharma knowledge (as opposed to a phony one) then our knowledge is useful in all life situations and times.

This advantage is not shared by worldly knowledge holders. For example, though we might be expert in assembling planes, we cannot apply this knowledge without having acquired all the parts and without depending on others. Car mechanics cannot utilize their knowledge if unemployed.

Dharma knowledge not only provides the inspiration of being the only true means of achieving peace and satisfaction and eliminating all life's problems but it has this unique feature of being useful in every moment of our lives. Since the aim of Dharma is no less than enabling us to achieve the complete state of full Enlightenment which constitutes the perfection of our being - we should be making constant effort in each and every moment until we have actually reached that aim.

In one Buddhist scripture the question is asked "what Bodhisattva is qualified to leave their meditational equipoise to perform post-meditational deeds?" The answer given was that only a 10th Ground Bodhisattva was so qualified. The significance of this reply is that everyone has to engage in meditation!

Therefore I would like to say that I rejoice in the effort that each of you has made through-out 1990's Study Group by attending the discussions, teachings, and sitting the monthly examinations. Also thank you for your persistence in attendance of the Study Group.

**F**inally, I request you to continue your efforts in 1991. The Study Group next year will prove as beneficial as this year's, providing an excellent opportunity for learning and the successful continuity of one's spiritual practice.

As this is the last night of the Study Group for the year I would also like to take this opportunity to wish you all happy Christmas and a happy New Year.

### ▼WEEK ONE AND TWO:

NO PROGRAM

### ▼WEEK THREE:

MONDAY 14  
8pm Introduction to Buddhist Meditation

SUNDAY 20  
10am - 5pm Love or Attachment Seminar

### ▼WEEK FOUR:

MONDAY 21  
8pm Introduction to Buddhist Meditation

WEDNESDAY 23 8pm Sand Mandala Class

FRIDAY 25  
8pm Guru Puja

### ▼WEEK FIVE:

MONDAY 28  
8pm Introduction to Buddhist Meditation

WEDNESDAY 30  
6pm Tara Puja 8pm Sand Mandala Class

# JANUARY PROGRAM

## TSOG AND MAHAYANA PRECEPTS DAYS IN JANUARY

THURSDAY 10 Tibetan 25th - Tsog Day; TUESDAY 15 Tibetan 30th - New Moon (Precepts); WEDNESDAY 23 Tibetan 8th - Tara Day; FRIDAY 25 Tibetan 10th - Tsog Day; WEDNESDAY 30 Tibetan 15th - Full Moon (Precepts).

### INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHIST MEDITATION

**Monday Nights 14th, 21st, 28th at 8pm**

Patrick Campisi will present this months introductory meditation classes. Patrick has been a student of Tara Institute for some years and has led several previous introductory series. He likes to emphasize the practical application of Buddhist meditation techniques and will focus on simple meditations which can readily form a personal meditation practice.

During these sessions some of the basic ideas of Buddhism will also be discussed. In particular, the three basic principles of renunciation, bodhicitta (or compassion) and wisdom will be explored. These classes will be ideal for all those wishing to learn more about Buddhism and its meditation techniques.

A fee of \$5 per night is asked to help off-set administrative expenses. There is no charge for members.

### TARA INSTITUTE ON HOLIDAYS!!

After a busy and successful 1990 staff at Tara Institute will be taking a well-deserved rest over the Christmas/New year period. Wendy (who has cheerfully worked in our office since mid 1989) will be on pilgrimage in India with Geshe Doga, whilst our spiritual program director Sonam Jampa will spend two weeks minding a friends' house.

The office re-opens on Monday 14th January.

### COMING EVENTS IN FEBRUARY

#### MONDAY NIGHT INTRODUCTORY MEDITATION CLASSES



will be led by the ever-popular Sonam Jampa. Sonam's classes are always very enjoyable so mark these days off in your diary.

#### MEDITATION ON CHENREZIG

Thursday Nights: Commencing Thursday February 7, Sonam Jampa will also be leading a series of four evenings of Chenrezig meditation practice. Chenrezig is the Buddha of compassion and this practice can help us all develop this much needed quality



#### GESHE DOGA



resumes teaching on 20th February with two special talks

1. 20th February "Why WE need a spiritual practice?"
2. 27th February "How to Meditate"

More details in the February Newsletter.

### LIVING AT TI

Ever thought of moving into Tara Institute? At the moment there are several rooms vacant. When Lama Zopa Rinpoche visited he talked of the benefits of living at the Centre. There is a real community spirit which makes one feel part of an extended family, and we have two wonderful cooks who prepare an evening meal every week-day. If you are considering moving into Tara Institute and would like more details, please contact Patrick, Alan, Wendy or Andy on 596 2465 or 596 6197.

### A PRAYER FOR THE HOSPICE PATIENTS

I want my skin to be a house,  
 my bones to be machines for comfort,  
 my blood to be nectar and swimming pools,  
 my internal organs to be beautiful flowers and gardens,  
 my senses to be blissful objects and for them only to experience bliss (like the senses of fully Enlightened beings),  
 my heart to be a wish-granting jewel that fulfills temporary and ultimate wishes.

I make this offering to the patients of the hospice; by this cause may they reach to the state where even the name of suffering does not exist.

**Lama Zopa Rinpoche**  
11th July, 1990.

### Company Auditor Anyone?

FPMT Australia Ltd, which owns Tara Institute, requires a Registered Company Auditor to audit its accounts for the year ending June 1990. We are willing to pay an appropriate fee for this work. If you know of anyone who could help us in this area, please contact Hal Young on 339 8406 (BH) or 370 0957 (AH).