

## News

November 2021

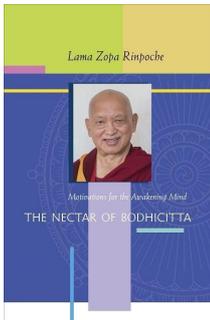


### TARA INSTITUTE IS PLANNING TO OPEN

Once Victoria reaches 80% fully vaccinated status, the Government's directions at the time of publication state that Tara Institute can open to fully vaccinated people who do not have the virus, who have not travelled recently and who have not recently been at tier 1 sites.

There will be limits on the number of people who can be accommodated in the Gompa. As soon as it is clear precisely what our capacity and other requirements will be, we will let you know.

We are working towards starting back with some classes and pujas, hopefully in November. If you would like to hear directly about the classes and pujas please contact Paul at the Tara Institute Office and register your interest as soon as possible.



## The Nectar of Bodhicitta

Available from the Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive

LYWA director Nick Ribush writes: The story behind this book is that in the early Kopan courses, Rinpoche would start his day's teachings by quoting a verse from Shantideva's or Khunu Lama Rinpoche's seminal texts, giving a short teaching on it and then suggesting that students use it to generate a bodhicitta motivation for the day's activities (mainly teachings, meditations and discussion groups but also ordinary activities such as eating, talking, walking around and so forth).

To have a wholesome thought is very unusual. We human beings of this world seem overwhelmed by ignorance, continuously creating nonvirtue in the belief it will make us happy. We see what is worthless as valuable and because of that fall into great suffering. In *Songs of Spiritual Experience*, Lama Tsongkhapa says,

This life of leisure is even more precious than a wish-granting jewel;  
That I have found such an existence is only this once;  
So hard to find yet like a flash of lightning it is easy to vanish;  
Contemplating this situation it's vital to realize that all mundane pursuits

Are like the empty grain husks floating in the winds  
And that we must extract the essence of human existence.  
I, a yogi, have practiced in this manner;  
You, who aspire for liberation, should do likewise.

A husk doesn't have any essence; it is merely the container of the kernel of grain. When the thresher is shaken, the grain falls to the ground and all the husks are blown away in the wind.

These verses explain the real meaning of life. This body with freedoms and riches is more precious than a wish-granting jewel and we should take the essence day and night. The real essence is not just to achieve power, fame or learning—even in Buddhadharma. None of these things gives real meaning to life. Even if we have scriptural understanding of all the sutras and tantras and

can explain them by heart, we have still not taken the real essence. Taking the essence means realizing the three principal aspects of the path to enlightenment: renunciation, bodhicitta and right view or emptiness.

As mentioned in the sutra teachings of the Buddha, in the teachings of Lama Tsongkhapa, in *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand* by the great enlightened being Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo, and in the teachings of all the other great lamas, yogis and pandits, without practicing the three principal aspects of the path there is no way to live life in peace and happiness, going from happiness to happiness to full enlightenment.

Without renunciation, nothing becomes a cause of liberation; without bodhicitta, nothing becomes a cause to achieve enlightenment; and without right view, nothing becomes a remedy to cut the root of samsara. Practicing the lamrim, practicing these three, is taking the real essence of life. Meditating on the three principal aspects of the path every day brings us closer and closer to those realizations.

The extensive teachings of the Buddha and the commentaries by the Indian yogis and pandits and others are like the ocean, the lamrim is like a boat, and the virtuous friend is like the boat captain who

(Continued on page 2)

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rescues us from danger and guides us across the river to the place we wish to go. And taking the three principal aspects of the path, the heart of the lamrim, is like taking jewels from the ocean. Without actualizing the three principal aspects of the path, no matter what great power we develop—clairvoyance, the ability to disappear, whatever—it is worthless. Whatever realizations we gain are unstable and we can slip back into gross negativity very easily.

Whatever success we have in the whole path to enlightenment, from the perfect human rebirth up to enlightenment, all depends on successfully devoting ourselves correctly to the virtuous friend through thought and action, which in turn depends on having a stable realization of guru devotion.

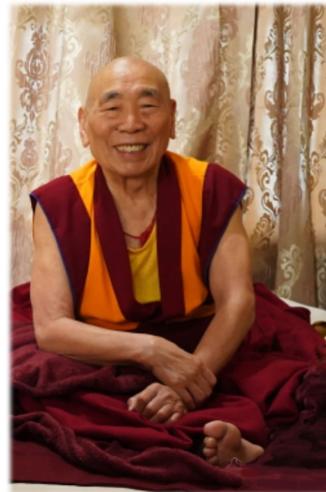
We have the opportunity now, at this moment, to ensure that we will never be lost in the dark again. This opportunity happens incredibly rarely. It has happened through the power of the Buddha and the guru and, as Lama Tsongkhapa says, we must extract the essence of this human existence, which is practicing Dharma purely. How many human beings are able to do this? Negativity is unbelievably powerful in this world and positive thoughts seem feeble in comparison, hence to be able to generate a positive mind is a wonderful thing. Bodhicitta can destroy all nonvirtue. This is the mind we should strive for at all times.

## **L**ove and Compassion ~ *The Root of All Happiness* ~

The root of Dharma practice consists of two thoughts: “I will benefit others as much as I can” and “I will abstain from harming others”. While it may be easy to generate these thoughts when we are alone, if the mind is untrained and we meet adverse conditions, it will be difficult to hold them and translate them into practice. So, we need to train the mind repeatedly in these two thoughts through meditation, by sitting down in a relaxed manner without grasping, and developing and fostering these thoughts. This is the root of all of our Dharma practice. It is also the root of purifying all our actions of body, speech and mind.

There is a great difference between those who value the happiness of others and selfish people who value only their own happiness. The more self-cherishing a person has, the more difficult their life becomes. Even small things that frustrate their self-cherishing set them off and make them unhappy. Usually, a selfish person is unpleasant, which causes other to distance themselves from them. But if we have a more open mind that cherishes the happiness of others, we will be more balanced and happier, and we will be automatically liked by others. We need to ask: what is the method for looking after ourselves? Is it having a state of mind where we are constantly unhappy, or is it having a state of mind where we are happy?

Love is the thought wishing others to have happiness; compassion is the thought of wishing another to be free from suffering. Love is generated by reflecting on another’s lack of happiness. This is because when we become aware of how the other person lacks happiness, we automatically wish that person to have happiness. Compassion is generated by reflecting on the other person’s suffering because



understanding it, naturally brings about the wish for them to be free from that suffering.

Having love and compassion in our mind will stop harmful intent, and consequently stop us from harming ourselves and others. Instead, it will generate happiness for ourselves and those around us. That is why it is said that love and compassion are the root of all happiness. Everyone – our girlfriend or boyfriend, our parents, and so

forth – needs happiness, and this happiness comes about through love and compassion. If we have love and compassion in our mind, we will be happy, affectionate and loving toward others. We will automatically like those around us and they in turn will like us back. Anyone who acts in a warm, loving and affectionate manner will always be liked. Wherever such a person goes, they will be happy and the friends they meet will also be happy. On the other hand, if we act in the opposite way, in a selfish and angry manner, wherever we go we will experience unhappiness and the people around us will not like us. We will not like them and they will not like us.

A person who is warm, loving and compassionate will have many friends because everybody is attracted to those qualities. Even if such a person loses a friend to whom they were attached, they will not be completely alone because they will still have many friends.

*Heart Advice by Venerable Geshe Doga – Essential teachings on daily living by a Tibetan Lama*

*Translated and edited by Tenzin Dongak 2005*

**Auspicious days 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 4	Tibetan 30	New Moon	Precepts
Friday 12	Tibetan 8	Tara Day	Tara Puja
Sunday 14	Tibetan 10	Tsog Day	Guru Puja
Friday 19	Tibetan 15	Full Moon ~ Lunar Eclipse	Precepts
Monday 29	Tibetan 25	Tsog Day	Guru Puja

# Online Teachings

with

**Geshe Lobsang Dorje**



Livestreaming  
from the  
**Tara Institute  
Facebook Page**

<https://www.facebook.com/TaraInst/>

~ Online teachings are available on our YouTube channel after the livestream event ~

~ Please note it is currently not possible to attend the teachings in person at Tara Institute ~

**WEDNESDAYS ~ 8.00pm**

## **The Swift Path by Panchen Losang Yeshe**

The Swift Path by Panchen Losang Yeshe is a Lam Rim text, and is a step by step guide on the path to Enlightenment. It is a concise and very practical presentation of the various points from renunciation and the altruistic aspiration (bodhicitta) up to the development of concentration and insight. The text is a practical meditation guide and it explains in detail what to do in a meditation practice on the points of the path and what to do in between sessions. It also address the pitfalls that can occur and gives advice on the different experiences meditators may have.



**FRIDAYS ~ 8.00pm**

## **Abhisamayalamkara The Ornament of Higher Realisation by Maitreya**

Maitreya composed *The Ornament for Clear Realizations* to clarify and make explicit the teachings composed in *The Perfection of Wisdom Sutras*. It is composed entirely of verses and is divided into eight chapters. Each chapter presents one clear realization.

Although it is not compulsory to view every live-streamed teaching as it happens, all online teachings (which began on June 11th) are made available on our youtube channel after the event, so you can view them whenever it suits you. Geshe Lobsang has advised that in order to gain a good understanding of the topic it would be very beneficial to make a personal commitment to view as much as possible, and to put effort into studying the text.

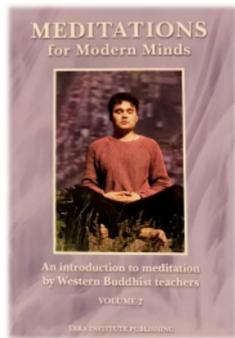
## **Breathing Meditation**

In the scriptures it is said that breathing meditation is an antidote to disturbing thoughts. Therefore, breathing meditation is particularly effective in getting rid of our disturbed and agitated states of mind. Also, as mentioned last week, breathing meditation is recommended for beginner meditators as the technique is so simple and easy to do. Anybody can do it; you don't need to have any experience in meditation practice. The object that you use in that meditation is just your own breathing - inhaling and exhaling. So, you don't need to look for or learn about the object. You are already familiar with it, so, this makes it easier.

## **Visualisation of Tathagata image**

For those of us who have some experience of meditation practice and know how to apply mindfulness, it is said that another object which is very beneficial to use is an image of the Tathagata or the Buddha. Using the Buddha as an object of meditation to develop concentration has the additional benefits of accumulating merit and purifying negativities and so forth. The benefits arise because, as we become familiar with the image of the Buddha, we will easily remember the Buddha at all times. We will remember the Buddha in whatever activities we do, such as sleeping, sitting, walking and standing or when we get sick or are facing death. At all times it will give us a sense of the Buddha being near as protection and a refuge. First, we must establish the image of the Buddha in our mind. September 1<sup>st</sup> 2021

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) for issues relating to the newsletter



## Meditation for Modern Minds

### Vol 2

Cynthia Karena

I've re-read this book during lockdown, and it is a revelation. When my depression and/or anger crept in, it was so helpful to see the buddhist perspectives of these teachers - real human beings who have used buddhism to help their own lives.

This book is a collection of nine amazing Monday night teachings and meditations at Tara Institute. Geshe Doga personally handpicked each teacher to be in the book.

Reading about resolving conflict and addictive behaviour (hello covid kilos) was also a godsend during lockdown!

Other enduring themes include removing delusions, and exploring the notion of suffering, and - more importantly - clear and practical explanations of what we can do about it!

Traditional buddhist ideas are presented from a place of experience - and how they can be applied to our modern Western lives.

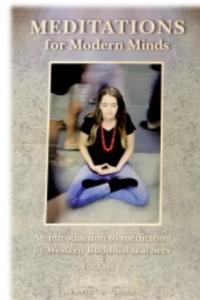
Each teacher has also written a personal account of their own struggles in life, and how buddhist philosophy and meditation has helped them become happier.

You may have read an excerpt from Damien Busby's intriguing teaching in last month's newsletter. This is from the first volume of 'Meditation for Modern Minds.' We have a few copies left that we are selling for the bargain price of \$7.50.

**Order:** please ring/email TI office, and the book/s will be posted to you.

**Price:** \$18 + postage

(\$7.50 + postage for Vol 1)



## BOOKSHOP NEWS

from Pam Hansen

As soon as retail reopens in Melbourne, Tara Institute bookshop will also be open for you to visit. Until then you can email us at [bookshop@tarainstitute.org.au](mailto:bookshop@tarainstitute.org.au) for click and collect, or delivery by post. Please allow sufficient time for delivery as is quite slow at the moment. With Christmas coming up the bookshop is a good source for gifts. We have available a wide range of Buddhist books including the Dalai Lama's first children's book "The Seed of Compassion" and the second volume of the Tara Institute series "Meditations for Modern Minds". Also available is Tibetan incense, Japanese incense, malas and wrist malas, earrings, hats and the ever popular singing bowls plus much more. When we open up please drop in and say hello. We are looking forward to seeing you.



## Remembering Anne Gostelow

Anne was one of the early students of Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche and she had a long and close connection with Geshe Doga. She had been unwell for some years but had managed to stay at home until the last few days when she went into the Bethlehem Hospice where she died on October 5<sup>th</sup>. Daughters Rinchen, Grace and husband Lobsang were spending time with her during these days, her friend Sarah New also visited. Anne's mind was clear to the end and the atmosphere in the room was very peaceful.

