



Losar 2023 བོད་རྒྱལ་གསར།

The Fifteen Days of Miracles—from the first day of the Tibetan new year (Losar, February 21) until the fifteenth (March 7)—commemorate the special time when Guru Shakyamuni Buddha showed miraculous powers in order to subdue the Six Founders, who lacked faith in him, and to inspire more faith in his followers. It culminates on the full moon, the fifteenth day of the lunar calendar, which is called Chotrul Duchen. These 15 days are merit multiplying days for spiritual practices.

Losar holds an additional special significance for FPMT Centres, as FPMT founder Lama Yeshe passed away 20 minutes before dawn on the first day of Losar in 1984.



*The last words of Lama Yeshe's last teaching at Kopan,
9 December 1983:*

As His Holiness the Dalai Lama said recently, if you're going to be selfish, do it on a grand scale; wide selfishness is better than narrow! What did His Holiness mean? He was saying that, in a way, bodhicitta is like a huge selfish attitude because when you dedicate yourself to others with loving kindness you get a lot more pleasure than you would otherwise. With our present, usual selfish attitude we experience very little pleasure, and what we have is easily lost. With "great selfishness" you help others and you help yourself; with small it's always "me, me, me" and it is easy to lose everything.

The main point, then, is that when you contact Buddhadharma you should conquer the mad elephant of your self-cherishing mind. If the dharma you hear helps you diminish your self-cherishing even a little, it has been worthwhile. But if the teachings you have taken have had no effect on your selfishness, then from the Mahayana point of view, even if you can talk intellectually on the entire lam-rim, they have not been much use at all.

Do you recall the story of Shantideva and how people used to put him down? They used to call him *du she sumpa*, which means one who knows how to do only three things: eating, sleeping and excreting. This was a very bad thing to call someone, especially a monk. But that's all that people could see him doing. However, he had bodhicitta, so whatever he did, even ordinary things, was of greatest benefit to others. Lying down, peacefully, he would meditate with great concern for the welfare of all living beings, and many times, out of compassion, he would cry for them. Westerners need that kind of practice. Fundamentally we are lazy. Well, maybe not lazy, but when we finish work we are tired and don't have much energy left. So, when you come home from work, lie down comfortably and meditate on bodhicitta. This is most worthwhile. Much better than rushing in speedily, throwing down a coffee and dropping onto your meditation cushion to try to

(Continued on page 3)

MONDAYS ~ 8pm

6, 13, 20 & 27 February

**Introduction to
Buddhist Meditation**



with Clare Callinan

"The very purpose of our life is happiness. There are two kinds of happiness - One mainly comes from physical comfort. Another essentially through mental thought, mental training. Between the two mental and physical, mental is much more superior. The reason is that if our mental state is calm and happy we can even subdue small physical pains. On the other hand if our mind is restless or uncomfortable we may have best facilities/ conditions but that person will not be happy or comfortable. Therefore mental experience is more important than physical. This brings curiosity about whether there is a certain way to train the mind to achieve happiness. Only humans can use techniques to shape the mind. Other animals cannot do that. These techniques are usually called meditation." - HHDL

Over these Monday nights we will discuss some of the philosophy behind and learn some of these meditation techniques.

Sessions will run for one hour and include guided meditations, a talk, and time for questions.

While our teachers kindly volunteer their time for these teachings and do not take any payment, there is a suggested facility fee of \$5. This fee goes towards the general running of our centre.

Everyone is welcome and there is no need to book. For any inquiries about these teachings please contact spc@tarainstitute.org.au or call 9596 8900.

TUESDAYS ~ 7:45pm

7, 14, 21 & 28 February

Study Group



Middle Length Lamrim

by Lama Tsong Khapa

with Venerable Geshe Doga

Geshe Doga will continue his commentary on Lama Tsong Khapa's Middle Length Lam Rim.

This commentary was previously given on Wednesday evenings over many years until 2018. How fortunate are we that Geshe-la will now continue the commentary. The sections on calm abiding and special insight in this text are especially praised for their clarity and detail. To hear the teachings of Lama Tsong Khapa are said to be extremely rare, but to receive these from such a qualified and realised teacher as Geshe Doga is beyond compare.

This text is suitable and accessible for beginners through to experienced students and is a not to be missed opportunity to study in depth in a supportive and friendly environment.

New students are welcome to join study group anytime. Geshe Doga begins teaching promptly at 7.45pm.



WEDNESDAYS ~ 8pm

8, 15 & 22 February

**Guide to the
Bodhisattva's Way of
Life**



with Geshe Lobsang Dorje

Venerable Geshe Lobsang will teach on Shantideva's text The Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life.

"Shantideva's work is required reading for an understanding of Tibetan Buddhism, and the clarity and crispness of this new translation make it an accessible way into the world."--Publishers Weekly

"If I have any understanding of compassion and the practice of the bodhisattva path, it is entirely on the basis of this text that I possess it."-- H. H. the Dalai Lama

These teachings will occur every Wednesday and students are welcome to attend when they are available. There is no need to register prior to the teaching, simply come along.

You are most welcome to stay afterwards for a cup of tea and a chat with Geshe Lobsang in the dining room.

For any inquiries about these teachings please contact spc@tarainstitute.org.au or call 9596 8900.

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.

Sunday 5	Tibetan 15	Full Moon	Precepts
Wednesday 15	Tibetan 25	Tsog Day	Guru Puja
Monday 20	Tibetan 30	New Moon	Precepts
Tuesday 21	Tibetan 1	Losar: Tibetan New Year	Precepts
Monday 27	Tibetan 8	Tara Day	Tara Puja

Annual Tara Puja

Sunday February 26th

at 10 am



An image of Green Tara from The 21 Taras Thangka located at Tara Institute

Geshe Doga warmly invites everyone to join him for the special Tara Puja where prayers will be offered for the long life, health, prosperity and happiness of Tara's friends and families.

Tara is the female Buddha of enlightened activity. The Tara puja includes making offerings and requests to help us overcome outer and inner obstacles in our lives, and to achieve wisdom and compassion in our minds. You are welcome to bring offerings of flowers, food and incense. Everyone is most welcome to join us for lunch afterwards.

To help with catering, please register by emailing admin@tarainstitute.org.au or call the office on 9596 8900

(Continued from page 1)

meditate. It doesn't work that way; your nervous system needs time and space. You can't be rushing through traffic one minute and sitting quietly meditating the next. Everything takes time and space. It is much better to have a quiet, blissful cup of coffee, and don't pressure yourself either; that too is very bad. Don't punish yourself when you are too tired to meditate: "I should be meditating; I am very bad." You destroy yourself like this. Be wise. Treat yourself, your mind, sympathetically, with loving kindness. If you are gentle with yourself you will become gentle with others so don't push. Pushing doesn't work for me, that's why I tell others not to force themselves. We are dealing with the mind, not rocks and concrete; it is something organic.

In his text, Lama Chöpa, the Panchen Lama says, "Self-cherishing is the cause of all misery and dissatisfaction, and holding all mother sentient beings dearer than oneself is the foundation of all realizations and knowledge. Therefore bless me to change self-cherishing into concern for all others." This is not some deep philosophical theory but a very simple statement. You know from your own life's experiences without needing a Tibetan text's explanations that your self-cherishing thought is the cause of all your

confusion and frustration. This evolution of suffering is found not only in Tibetan culture but in yours as well.

And the Panchen Lama goes on to say that we should look at what the Buddha did. He gave up his self-attachment and attained all the sublime realizations. But look at us. We are obsessed with "me, me, me" and have realized nothing but unending misery. This is very clear, isn't it? Therefore, you should know clear-clear how this works. Get rid of the false concept of self-cherishing and you'll be free of all misery and dissatisfaction. Concern yourself with the welfare of all others and wish for them to attain the highest realizations such as bodhicitta and you'll find all happiness and satisfaction.

You people are young, intelligent and not satisfied with what you have in your own countries. That's why you are seeking further afield. And now you have found that most worthwhile of all things: bodhicitta.

As Lama left the tent he reached out and held several students by the hand, encouraging and reassuring them with his perpetual "Thank you, dear. Thank you, thank you."

(Many thanks to Adele Hulse for providing this text)

Week 1

WEDNESDAY 1

11am - Wednesday Meditation Session

8pm - Chenrezig Meditation

Week 2

MONDAY 6

8pm - Intro to Buddhist Meditation

TUESDAY 7

7.45pm - Study Group

WEDNESDAY 8

11am - Wednesday Meditation Session

8pm - Bodhisattva's Way of Life

THURSDAY 9

11am - Healing Group

Week 3

MONDAY 13

6.30pm - Tibetan language class

8pm - Intro to Buddhist Meditation

TUESDAY 14

7.45pm - Study Group

WEDNESDAY 15

11am - Wednesday Meditation Session

6pm - Guru Puja

8pm - Bodhisattva's Way of Life

Week 4

SUNDAY 19

10.30am - Dharma Club

MONDAY 20

6.30pm - Tibetan language class

8pm - Intro to Buddhist Meditation

TUESDAY 21

7.45pm - Study Group

WEDNESDAY 22

11am - Wednesday Meditation Session

8pm - Bodhisattva's Way of Life

THURSDAY 23

11am - Healing Group

Week 5

SUNDAY 26

10am - Annual Tara Puja

MONDAY 27

6pm - Tara Puja

6.30pm - Tibetan language class

8pm - Intro to Buddhist Meditation

TUESDAY 28

7.45pm - Study Group

Stay up to date with all our events! Sign up to our mailing list for weekly updates and more!
Click [here](#)



Tibetan Language Classes return with Geshe Lobsang

Geshe Lobsang will resume his Tibetan language classes from Monday February 13th at 6.30pm in the hall at TI. Classes will run in 5 week blocks, followed by 1 week off, and are open to everyone. Please register your interest in attending these classes by emailing geshe.care@tarainstitute.org.au



Evening Meals are back!

Commencing Monday February 6, our dining room will once again be serving evening meals prior to teaching sessions on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Why not come for a delicious vegetarian meal before heading into the Gompa for a Dharma teaching?

Bookings are preferred, by 2pm on the day.

Please look out for more information about how to book on our website and in our weekly update emails.

Benefits of Membership and Support

from TI Director, Kerry Whitlock

I spoke with Geshe Doga about our drop in membership, as in 2020 Tara Institute had 189 members, and now in 2023 we have 149 members. Geshela suggested to explain the benefits of membership, to help Tara Institute improve our membership and financial situation. This enables the Tara Institute community to support the dharma and allow us all to receive precious teachings from Venerable Geshe Doga and Geshe Lobsang

Lama Yeshe in Sept 1981 Tara House magazine, mentioned the businesses run by Tara House (now Tara Institute). He said it wasn't that Lama Yeshe needed money, or any individual at Tara house needed money, but people should understand the centre was established to develop a higher state of consciousness.

Lama Zopa said: *My point here is for you to understand what we are doing and what you are helping with. This is so that you can rejoice. It really is unbelievable, incredible, what you are helping*

with, and this creates so much benefit for the world and for sentient beings. This actually creates the cause to liberate so many beings. This is an incredible opportunity for you to rejoice, and if you rejoice and then dedicate the merits, it is amazing.

If you are a member of Tara Institute, we thank you for continuing to support the Dharma and our community. If you are interested in becoming a member, please contact the office on 03 9596 8900 or admin@tarainstitute.org.au

Communications - Comms Update

Lama Yeshe in Sept 1981 gave instructions for Tara Institute (then called Tara House). He said it was important to communicate to all levels of people. Lama said it was very important to have many different ways of communication.

So much happens at Tara Institute that isn't directly communicated to our community. To this end we are going to have an update from one of the 14 teams that supports Tara Institute in the monthly newsletter. Next month we will hear from The Executive Committee and then the other teams will follow. Stay tuned.

Teachings in Bodhgaya *from Pam Hansen*

At the end of December 2022, I travelled to Bodhgaya, India with about 20 others from Tara Institute to attend teachings by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Packing for the trip, I was filled with doubts and trepidation. Would we be held at the airport for hours waiting to be processed? What would post pandemic Bodhgaya be like? Booking accommodation had been very stressful. The group were spread over 7 or 8 different hotels and guesthouses unable to secure rooms together in our favourite hotels.

At the same time, I could feel the pull of Bodhgaya. It's such a wonderful place to visit; the actual place where the Buddha attained full enlightenment.

My experience in Bodhgaya this trip didn't fall short of my



expectations. We had a few challenges, but actually being in Bodhgaya with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Geshe Doga and a host of highly evolved spiritual beings was magical. His Holiness the Dalai Lama's teachings were pure gold. Not a superfluous word just potent, pithy, clear instructions. We were blessed to meet

with Lama Zopa Rinpoche at Root institute. We twice shared a meal with the reincarnations of two of Geshe Doga's teachers. Some of the people in our group also received blessings from Ling Rinpoche and the Nechung Oracle. We caught up with the monks from Sera Monastery house 15b who, along with Tsering, Geshe Lobsang and Geshe Jangchub, devotedly looked after Geshe Doga.

Lama Zopa Rinpoche asked us if we would be back next year. I certainly hope so.