

Tara Institute

News

October 2025



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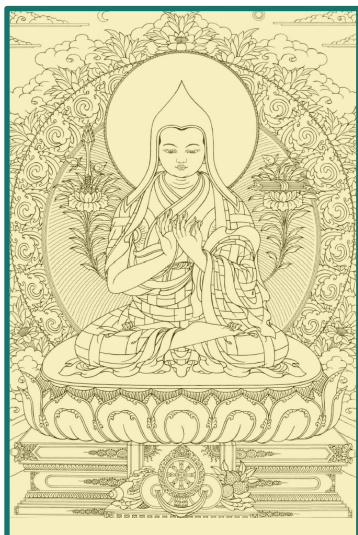
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Why we must rely on a perfect spiritual guide

by Venerable Geshe Doga



The foundation of all good qualities is the kind and venerable Guru.

Correctly devoting to him is the root of the path.

**By clearly seeing this and applying great effort,
Please bless me to rely upon him with great respect.**

(From *The Foundation of All Good Qualities* by Lama Tsong Khapa)

The importance of having a teacher is obvious. When we were young, we were ignorant. For example, we didn't know the alphabet. Then our primary school teacher taught us the alphabet. After a while, we were able to remember the alphabet, so we were no longer ignorant of it. Our ignorance was removed by the teacher.

In the same way, the spiritual teacher helps us overcome the ignorance and delusions in our mind. If this teacher is perfect and qualified, the spiritual path shown by them will be perfect, and because the path is perfect, the result of following the path will be extremely beneficial for us.

We need to grasp the importance of finding a good spiritual teacher. The verse says that the spiritual teacher is kind and venerable. This is because they give us instructions and advice which, if followed, will help us lead a good life, not only in this life but in future lives as well. This is how the spiritual teacher is kind to us.

Having realised the importance and kindness of the spiritual teacher, correctly devoting to him [or her] is the root of the path. Actually, this is the most important part of our spiritual training. If the root of our practice is weak then, despite all our efforts, we'll find it hard to make progress.

...continued page 4

Events in October 2025

- **Sunday 19 October - Generating Bodhicitta; one-day course with Geshe Lobsang**
- Regular weekly Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evening teachings, see page 2
- 2, 16 & 31 October - Monthly Guru pujas, 6pm
- 29 October - Monthly Tara puja, 6pm
- **26 October (Sunday) - White Tara Group Practice, 10am**
- 12 October (Sunday) - Dharma Club, 10.15am
- 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29 October (Wednesdays) - Morning Meditation, 11am
- 2, 16 & 30 October (Thursdays) - Healing Group, 11am

MONDAYS ~ 8pm

6, 13, 20 & 27 October

Introduction to Meditation



with **Anjali Khushu**

Finding Ease in Change

Everything in life is always shifting - our bodies, moods, relationships, the world around us.

Buddhism teaches that impermanence is not something to fear, but something to embrace, because it helps us understand the true nature of life.

In these Monday night sessions, we will explore impermanence as a core Buddhist teaching and discover how recognising change can bring more ease, resilience, and even joy into our everyday lives.

Seeing things as they really are, we can loosen our grip, let go of unnecessary struggle, and find more peace in the present moment

Please join us in reflecting on this gentle but powerful truth, which touches every part of our life and experience.

These relaxed and informal sessions run for one hour and include guided meditations, a talk and discussion. A facility fee of \$5 or \$10 (for those able to contribute more) goes towards the running of the Centre. Everyone is welcome; there is no need to book. For more information, please email spc@tarainstitute.org.au or phone 03 9596 8900.

TUESDAYS ~ 7.45pm

7, 14, 21 & 28 October

Study Group



Middle Length Lamrim

by Lama Tsong Khapa

with **Venerable Geshe Doga**

'Love is a mental attitude of giving happiness and wishing others to have it. If we feel love for others, we should have a genuine thought of wishing them happiness and goodness.'

'Whereas compassion is an attitude of wishing others to be free of suffering and problems. Obviously both love and compassion are very positive mental attitudes towards others.'

'On the contrary, sometimes our attitude is such that we hate to see others with happiness or doing well, or we feel jealousy, hatred and competitiveness. And if they are inflicted with loss and suffering, sometimes we even feel good and wish them more suffering.'

'Think about it – this is so unnecessary and unwarranted. We should ask ourselves, is holding such a negative attitude worthwhile?'

- Geshe Doga, June 2025

Study Group offers an opportunity to study Buddhism in-depth in a supportive and friendly environment. You are most welcome to experience Study Group at any time, but conditions apply if you wish to attend on a regular basis. Geshe Doga begins teaching promptly at 7.45pm. Please feel free to email spc@tarainstitute.org.au if you wish to find out more.

WEDNESDAYS ~ 8pm

1, 8, 15, 22 & 29 October

Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life



with

Geshe Lobsang Dorjee

This month, Geshe Lobsang begins a commentary on Chapter 6: Patience, from Shantideva's text, Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life. As His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, has commented:

'When people get angry, they lose all sense of happiness. Even if they are good-looking and normally peaceful, their faces turn livid and ugly. Anger upsets their physical well-being and disturbs their rest; it destroys their appetites and makes them age prematurely. Happiness, peace, and sleep evade them, and they no longer appreciate people who have helped them and deserve their trust and gratitude. Under the influence of anger, people of normally good character change completely and can no longer be counted on. They are ruined by anger, and they ruin others too. But anyone who puts all his energy into destroying anger will be happy in this life and in lives to come.'

- from A Flash of Lightning in the Dark of Night, a commentary on Shantideva's text

Students are welcome to attend these Wednesday night teachings whenever they are able to do so.

For information about any of the weekly teachings, please email spc@tarainstitute.org.au or phone 03 9596 8900.

Auspicious Days in October

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

Thursday 2	Tibetan 10	Tsog	Guru Puja
Tuesday 7	Tibetan 15	Full Moon	Precepts
Thursday 16	Tibetan 25	Tsog	Guru Puja
Tuesday 21	Tibetan 30	New Moon	Precepts
Wednesday 29	Tibetan 8		Tara Puja/Precepts
Friday 31	Tibetan 10	Tsog	Guru Puja

Generating Bodhicitta

By combining the two Mahayana methods

Venerable Geshe Lobsang Dorjee

Sunday 19 October, 9am to 5pm



'My religion is kindness to all.' - His Holiness the Dalai Lama

The spontaneous heartfelt attitude of extending loving kindness to all beings is the essence of bodhicitta. There are two methods for cultivating bodhicitta: the seven-fold cause-and-effect method, and that of exchanging self for others. The basis of both methods is developing a sense of equanimity towards all sentient beings.

In this one-day course, Geshe Lobsang Dorjee will teach us how to combine the two methods (also outlined in *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand* by Pabongka Rinpoche).

'Bodhicitta is what makes life most beneficial for ourselves and meaningful for every single sentient being that exists, because every single one is suffering and needs help.'

- Lama Zopa Rinpoche

Cost: \$80 TI Members; \$100 non-members – a delicious lunch is included in the cost. To help with catering, please register by Friday 17 October. If you have any further questions, please email spc@tarainstitute.org.au

[PLEASE REGISTER HERE](#)

[FOR MORE INFORMATION, CLICK HERE](#)

Dharma Club for children

Sunday 12 October
10.45am to 12.30pm

Children naturally have a wealth of inner wisdom, and the aim of Dharma Club is help them recognise and develop this wisdom through fun activities and games. At noon, we all come together to share our lunch or snacks (no nuts please). All welcome! If you have any queries about Dharma Club, please phone the Office or email admin@tarainstitute.org.au

UPDATE: A BIG thankyou to Amelia Kelsang for contributing her time and energy teaching Dharma Club this year. Amelia's joyful enthusiasm and devotion to the Dharma shone through, making her a perfect teacher. Amelia is now happily pregnant with her third child, so regrettably has had to step aside for the time being.

(From left to right: Amelia Kelsang; Amber & Chris at this year's 21 Taras event; and Sabra)



We're very fortunate that Amber Jukes, her daughter Sabra and husband Chris are stepping in to teach the younger group (5-9 years old). Amber has an extensive background working with children. Sabra is 15, and it's wonderful she's volunteered to assist her Mum at such a young age. As a loving family, they will be excellent teachers! Jenny Molloy will continue teaching the older group (9-15 years).

IMPORTANT DATE IN NOVEMBER

Sunday 23 November, 10am

Annual Long-Life Puja for Ven. Geshe Doga

- Set-up on the afternoon of Saturday 22 Nov.

- Volunteers and sponsorships welcome! Please phone the Office or email spc@tarainstitute.org.au

October Calendar

Week 1

WEDNESDAY 1

11am - Wednesday Meditation

8pm - Bodhisattva's Way of Life

THURSDAY 2

11am - Healing Group

6pm - Guru Puja

Week 2

MONDAY 6

8pm - Intro to Buddhist Meditation

TUESDAY 7

7.45pm - Study Group

WEDNESDAY 8

11am - Wednesday Meditation

8pm - Bodhisattva's Way of Life

Week 3

SUNDAY 12

10.15am - Dharma Club

MONDAY 13

8pm - Intro to Buddhist Meditation

TUESDAY 14

7.45pm - Study Group

WEDNESDAY 15

11am - Wednesday Meditation

8pm - Bodhisattva's Way of Life

THURSDAY 16

6pm - Guru Puja

11am - Healing Group

Week 4

SUNDAY 19

9am - 5pm: Generating Bodhicitta.

One-day course with Geshe Lobsang

MONDAY 20

8pm - Intro to Buddhist Meditation

TUESDAY 21

7.45pm - Study Group

WEDNESDAY 22

11am - Wednesday Meditation

8pm - Bodhisattva's Way of Life

Week 5

SUNDAY 26

10am - White Tara Group Practice

MONDAY 20

8pm - Intro to Buddhist Meditation

TUESDAY 28

5pm - 21 Taras Online Meditation

([click this link](#) just before 5pm)

7.45pm - Study Group

WEDNESDAY 29

11am - Wednesday Meditation

6pm - Tara Puja

8pm - Bodhisattva's Way of Life

THURSDAY 30

11am - Healing Group

FRIDAY 31

6pm - Guru Puja

OCTOBER 2025



Why we must rely on a perfect spiritual guide *(continued from page 1)*

When the verse says: *The foundation of all good qualities is the kind and venerable guru*, it means that to obtain these qualities, we must depend upon the perfect spiritual teacher.

However, it's not as if all the good qualities are magically transported from guru to disciple. The Buddha said, 'I cannot transfer my inner realisations into another being, but I can help them by teaching them the truth.' If such a transfer were possible, all we'd have to do to achieve enlightenment would be to just listen to the teacher and have faith. Rather, we need to work hard on the spiritual path from our own side, while at the same time relying upon the guidance of perfect spiritual teachers.

If a teacher lacks qualities and realisations or is too stingy to share their spiritual knowledge with others, then it would be hard for us to get help from them. Therefore, the teacher must have the quality of being kind, compassionate and generous.

Some people are confused about the term 'root guru', thinking their root guru is the person with whom they made the initial Dharma connection. That's not the correct meaning. The root guru is someone from whom we receive the teachings directly. The lineage of these teachings traces back from our teacher, to our teacher's teacher, to the teacher of his teacher, and so on, all the way back to the root guru, Shakyamuni Buddha.

There are two ways to rely on the root guru – through thought and by deed. By relying on the root guru through thought, we first need to train the mind in faith. A sprout won't grow if there's no seed. Likewise, we won't develop faith in the Dharma if we don't have faith in the lama or guru who plants the seed of Dharma.

Therefore, we should treat our spiritual friend with respect and kindness. We should listen to what they have to say and try to follow their advice. In ordinary life, we take the advice of friends. However, a spiritual friend is vastly superior and more important than an ordinary friend, so we should always rely on them and follow their advice.

We've talked about finding an external spiritual guide whose role is to guide us along the correct path; the qualities they should possess; and how we need to rely on them. Now, we should also talk about our inner guru or teacher. It's said we all possess some inner wisdom, knowledge and skill. If we utilise these qualities, they too can guide us along the path.

*[Edited excerpt from the forthcoming book **Steps on the Path to Happiness: A Commentary on Je Tsong Khapa's Foundation of All Good Qualities** by Venerable Geshe Doga]*

Walking the bodhisattva path in everyday life...

Recently, I was watching Venerable Tsering Dorje make momos. As we chatted, he spoke about his daily work: 'From morning till night, every task I do is an opportunity to exercise my body. Whether it's cooking, carrying things – every moment I treat as physical training. So I work from morning till night, yet I don't feel tired.'

Hearing this, I felt deeply touched. Over the past year or so, I've been observing how Ven. Tsering, as the owner of Café Bliss, could easily assign tasks to others. Yet he personally involves himself in everything: from the kitchen to the front counter, busy from morning till night, with barely any real rest. I often wondered: How can he sustain such an intense workload?

Only when I heard his words, did I understand: Ven. Tsering treats every moment of daily life as practice. He doesn't go to monasteries, nor does he expound lofty spiritual theories. Yet amid the daily smoke and fire of worldly life, every bit of labour, every plate served, every moment bent over his work – all become his meditation, his way of cultivating both body and mind.

In that moment, I couldn't help but say from my heart: 'Tsering Bodhisattva!' For true bodhicitta is not something merely spoken – it is something lived. Ven. Tsering never declares: 'I am practising'. Rather, his practice manifests in the kitchen's clatter of pots and pans, in every moment, from opening the café in the morning to closing it at night. Silent, steady, in the background, yet profoundly present.

What moves me even more is that everything he earns is not for himself. Almost all his income goes to support the maintenance of Sera Jey monastery and sustain the activities of its sangha. This offering comes entirely from his own heartfelt aspiration, not from a fleeting inspiration or external obligation. It is a 'vow-driven strength', arising from within, stable as a mountain, quiet as gently flowing water, yet enduring without end.

In him, I see the embodiment of the bodhisattva path – not so much in scriptures or formal Dharma gatherings, but more so in the daily smoke and fire of his life working in a café. His practice is inseparable from his everyday life. So genuine and unassuming. Every moment is the practice. Every action is the path.

– Lobsang Tenzin

Calling all handy people!

Do you have skills and experience in building or gardening?
Or even just some time and energy to give to maintaining and developing the TI building and grounds? Jeremy and the TI Building Management Team would love to hear from you. Please email building@tarainstitute.org.au

LATE NEWS...

In line with the recent advice from His Holiness regarding practices for Ven. Geshe Doga's health and long life, we will host a **White Tara Group Practice, Sunday 26 October, 10am**. Please register to attend, sponsor or find more information [here](#).

Acknowledgment of Country

Tara Institute acknowledges the sovereign Bunurong/Boonwurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners of the land on which our Centre stands.