



CHERISHING OTHERS IS THE REAL CAUSE OF HAPPINESS

By Venerable Geshe Doga

Self-cherishing is the source of all our problems and suffering. It prevents us from extending benefit to others, even if we can, and even when we have the resources to help and support them. The self-cherishing mind misleads us and brings us no benefit whatsoever. It closes all the doors of happiness to both ourselves and others. It is the main obstacle to our self-development.

However, replacing self-cherishing with the mind that cherishes others opens all the doors of happiness – it gives us the opportunity to benefit others and accomplish all that we want to accomplish, such as optimum peace and happiness.

The mind that cherishes others brings us closer to others, understanding them and seeing what they need for their betterment. It helps us to be more sensitive, considerate and empathetic. When we put ourselves in their situation and understand what they are going through – understanding that they are sometimes inflicted with much pain and suffering – then, as a human being, even if we can't benefit them, we could not imagine harming them.

However, our usual mental attitude is very self-centred. Our thoughts and words, and what we do physically, all relate to our own interests and needs; we don't consider the needs of other beings. This is very wrong, and Dharma practice is about changing that.

How to train our mind in happiness

The core practice of studying and practising Mahayana or Great Vehicle Buddhism is exchanging self for others. Until now, self-cherishing has been in the centre of our heart. The practice of exchanging self for others means replacing the cherished object of the self-cherishing mind – the 'self' – with 'others' as the cherished object.

If we think about it, over our lifetime, we've been unable



to find lasting happiness. I have often heard that the people who suffer the most are the rich ones. Obviously, the cause of their unhappiness and dissatisfaction is not related to a lack of good material conditions but is directly related to their mind. They possess a strong internal sense of 'I' and self-cherishing and are unhappy because of this 'I' not being satisfied.

The problem is that we can never fully satisfy this 'I'. If we tightly hold onto the 'I' and cherish it strongly, we will never achieve happiness. If we think about who is to blame for our unhappiness, we can point to this self-cherishing mind.

The self-cherishing mind fosters a sense of miserliness within us, hindering us from benefiting others, even when we possess wealth, skills, and knowledge. Because of self-cherishing, people even get stingy about using their wealth for themselves, worrying if they have enough.

There are many reasons why we should cherish others and be kind to them. We have received a great deal of kindness and support from them – we live and survive because of them.

(Lightly edited extract from Study Group teaching, 30 April 2024)

MONDAYS ~ 8pm

2, 9, 16, 23 & 30 September

Introduction to Buddhist Meditation



with **Damien Busby**

The topic for Monday nights this month will be 'Cause and Effect'. It is cause and effect that both gets us into trouble and can get us out of trouble. If we can understand how cause and effect works, we can understand the problems that we face in life and where they have come from.

The word 'karma' can be translated as 'action' and so cause and effect are two sides of an action – one part occurs now, when we do the action, and the second part is a future consequence of that cause.

This month we will go through the presentation of how karma works and how we can use that knowledge to our own benefit.

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, which goes towards the running of the Centre.

Everyone is welcome; there is no need to book. For enquiries about these teachings, email spc@tarainstitute.org.au or call 03 9596 8900.

TUESDAYS ~ 7:45pm

3, 10 & 17 September
(24 - Discussion night)

Study Group



Middle Length Lamrim

by **Lama Tsong Khapa**

with **Venerable Geshe Doga**

Venerable 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 an 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

4, 11 & 18 September

A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life



with **Geshe Lobsang Dorjee**

Venerable Geshe Lobsang will teach on Shantideva's text 'A 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 able to do so. There is no need to register prior to the teaching, simply come along.

For any inquiries about these teachings please contact spc@tarainstitute.org.au or call 03 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.

Monday 2	Tibetan 30	New Moon	Precepts
Wednesday 11	Tibetan 8	Tara Day	Tara Puja/Precepts
Friday 13	Tibetan 10	Tsog Day	Guru Puja
Wednesday 18	Tibetan 15	Luna Eclipse	Precepts
Friday 27	Tibetan 25	Tsog	Guru Puja

ANNUAL TI STUDY GROUP WORKSHOP

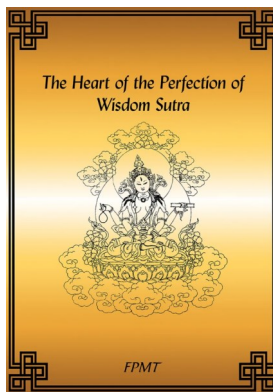
Benefits of the Heart Sutra
Sunday 22 September, 10am to 4pm

For this year's Study Group workshop, we'll explore the benefits of studying and even reciting the Heart Sutra.

The Heart Sutra – the most widely known and recited sutra of the Mahayana Buddhist tradition – is the summation of the Buddha's wisdom. It explains perfectly the Buddhist teaching on ultimate reality, which is emptiness, the view free of the two extremes of nihilism and eternalism. When we begin to grasp the wisdom of emptiness, we'll come to realise how things actually exist, changing the way we see ourselves and the world, and enabling us to better able to manage our emotions and relationships.

This interactive workshop is a great opportunity for us to get together discuss, share, ask questions, debate, and learn from each other in a friendly and open way. Morning and afternoon tea breaks will provide plenty of time to relax and chat with friends old and new.

Everybody is welcome to attend. Please bring a vegetarian plate to share for lunch. If you are interested in attending, please register via the website, the office, or email Kim at spc@tarainstitute.org.au



<https://www.tarainstitute.org.au/2024-study-group-workshop>

REGISTER HERE

MANTRA ROLLING (FOR THE BLESSING OF HOLY OBJECTS)

Sunday 8 September, 10am to 1pm

This event has been organised for those interested in learning how to roll mantras to fill and consecrate their own statues. Geshe Doga has advised the steps for filling and consecrating statues are: rolling mantras; blessing them; filling statues; and consecrating them via a blessing ceremony or puja.

This event will take those interested through the first step of rolling the mantras. Please remember the success of this process depends on each participant taking full responsibility for their own statue and following the steps closely. That said, there'll be help along the way.

Those who don't have a statue to fill and would like to be involved are most welcome to come and help roll mantras. If you plan to attend or have any other questions, please register via the website or email spc@tarainstitute.org.au



<https://www.tarainstitute.org.au/mantra-rolling-workshop>

REGISTER HERE

SOME REMINDERS FOR YOUR DIARY

- **This month's pujas:** Tara puja, 11 September, 6pm; Guru pujas, 13 & 27 September, 6pm; Medicine Buddha puja, 25 September, 8pm. Sponsorship welcome.
- **10 September, 5pm:** Online meditation inspired by the 21 Taras Thangka. See <https://21tarasthangka.org/>
- Saturday 9 November, 10am: **Annual Long-Life Puja for Venerable Geshe Doga. Sponsorship welcome.**
- Don't forget to try the **delicious evening meal service at Tara Institute**, Monday to Wednesday evenings, 5.30-8.30pm.

Week 1

MONDAY 2

8pm - Intro to Buddhist Meditation

TUESDAY 3

7.45pm - Study Group

WEDNESDAY 4

11am - Wednesday Meditation

8pm - Bodhisattva's Way of Life

THURSDAY 5

11am - Healing Group

Week 2

SUNDAY 8

10am - 1pm - Mantra Rolling Day

MONDAY 9

8pm - Intro to Buddhist Meditation

TUESDAY 10

5pm - 21 Taras Practice (Online)

7.45pm - Study Group

WEDNESDAY 11

11am - Wednesday Meditation

6pm - Tara Puja

8pm - Bodhisattva's Way of Life

FRIDAY 13

6pm - Guru Puja

Week 3

SUNDAY 15

10:15am - Dharma Club

MONDAY 16

8pm - Intro to Buddhist Meditation

TUESDAY 17

7.45pm - Study Group

WEDNESDAY 18

11am - Wednesday Meditation

8pm - Bodhisattva's Way of Life

THURSDAY 19

11am - Healing Group

Week 4

SUNDAY 22

10am-4pm - Study Group Workshop

MONDAY 23

8pm - Intro to Buddhist Meditation

TUESDAY 24

7.45pm - Study Group Discussion

WEDNESDAY 25

11am - Wednesday Meditation

8pm - Medicine Buddha Puja

FRIDAY 27

6pm - Guru Puja

Executive Committee's focus: The building, finances, and volunteers

The Tara Institute Executive Committee is elected yearly by Members at TI's Annual General Meeting. The 2024 committee comprises:

- Sahil Shekhar (President)
- Steven Sheppard (Secretary)
- Kerry Whitlock (Director)
- Jeremy Cohen (Vice-President)
- Di Johns (Member Culture & Ethics)
- Kim Looi (SPC)
- William Liew (Treasurer)

Apologies: Committee Members names had been incorrectly listed as part of the newsletter editing process in the previous version. These have now been fixed.

The committee is the equivalent of a company board in business, which helps govern the company and steer its long-term strategy.

As well as serving as TI's governing body, the committee provides support to the Centre Director, Kerry, and the Spiritual Program Coordinator, Kim, who lead the Management Team that runs TI's day-to-day operation. Together, we have identified three priorities for the 12 months ahead.

Need for building maintenance and masterplan

Tara Institute's complex of heritage and later buildings is a magnificent space, which provides us with a great environment for our spiritual activities. It is, however, clearly in need of renewal! We began stepping up our building maintenance program in 2023, spending more on repairs and maintenance than we have for at least five years. But there is plenty more to do.

Priority: This year, we aim to draft a building masterplan in consultation with the TI community. As the masterplan develops, we will need to continue investing in maintenance works, as far as our finances allow.

Request: Our most pressing need now is for volunteers with skills in architecture, construction or engineering, who could help with the development of the masterplan. If this sounds like you, please contact Jeremy at vice.president@tarainstitute.org.au

Our current financial position

TI has run at a loss (on a cash basis) every year since the Covid-19 pandemic, bringing our cash reserve down from around \$300,000 in 2021 to just over \$200,000. To put this in perspective, an unexpected expenditure like repairing the leaking gumpa roof can cost the Centre close to \$100,000, at relatively short notice. Clearly, we need to look carefully at our finances and chart a path back to a healthy financial position.

The good news is we have the right ingredients to do just this: a spiritual program that is flourishing under the guidance of our teachers, and an engaged and committed spiritual community.

Priority: To improve our financial position, we aim to (a) introduce a budgeting process that helps TI manage expenditure, coupled with a clear financial expenditure policy; and (b) renew targeted fundraising efforts by applying for deductible gift recipient (DGR) status that will allow us to receive tax deductible donations.

Supporting and encouraging volunteers

Volunteers are a precious resource for our Centre – even more so than our finances. We operate knowing that our key team members only have so much time to give, and that we can experience high turnover in key roles as individuals' ability, or willingness, to offer their time fluctuates.

Just as we hope to increase the diligence with which we manage our finances, we would like to do the same in our management of volunteers. Committee members continue to discuss ideas for improvement and find new ways to support volunteers and address any concerns they may have about their work and the work environment.

Priority: This year, we hope to create more clarity on roles, responsibilities, and key processes. We are also in discussions about whether (and how) new roles such as Members Representative or Volunteer Coordinator can best fit into our volunteer structure at TI.

Spiritual Program: the main purpose of TI

It goes without saying that the Spiritual Program – led by Venerable Geshe Doga and Venerable Geshe Lobsang Dorjee, and coordinated by Kim and Kerry – is the main purpose underlying everything we do.

The Committee will continue to support Kim and Kerry as they coordinate the current Spiritual Program and introduce new elements, such as ritual practices, support for retreats, increased focus on the 21 Taras Thangka, and increased engagement of our community.

If you have any thoughts, questions or ideas on any of the above, please write to Sahil at president@tarainstitute.org.au or Kerry at director@tarainstitute.org.au.

- Sahil Shekhar