

# Tara Institute

## News



December 2024  
January 2025

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## LAMA TSONG KHAPA PUJA

*Wednesday 25 December, 8pm  
Christmas Day*

For centuries, Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhists have annually commemorated the passing of the famous Tibetan yogi and scholar, Tsong Khapa, whose life and work is comparable to the great Tibetan saint, Milarepa.

Lama Tsong Khapa was considered an emanation of Manjushri, the Buddha of Wisdom, and single-handedly inspired an entire religious renaissance. He founded the Gelugpa lineage which continues to this day. Tara Institute and the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT) exist as part of that lineage.

On this day, many thousands of Buddhists commemorate this anniversary by making offerings and prayers, and dedicating the merit to the flourishing of the Buddha's teachings.

Please join us at Tara Institute to share in this beautiful ceremony of chanting and meditation. Supporting the puja is an opportunity to accumulate enormous merit, through making tsog, flower and light offerings, sangha offerings, and participating in karma yoga to set up and clean up afterwards.

Donations to the puja can be made directly to Tara Centre for Wisdom Culture, BSB: 063242, Account number: 10227562, Transaction code: LSK2024.

**All welcome!**



<https://www.tarainstitute.org.au/lama-tsong-khapa-day>

**MONDAYS ~ 8pm**

2, 9 & 16 December 2024

## Introduction to Buddhist Meditation



with Kathi Melnic

In Buddhism we talk of transforming our afflicted mind-states. We're very familiar with how these manifest on the surface, but on a deeper level, our emotions stem from karmic predispositions. These are so deep that we're not usually aware of them.

We can get more in touch, however, through recognising how they play out in our behaviour patterns: the emotional tendencies that drive us, run our life, sabotage our best intentions and test or ruin our relationships.

And our detriment can lead to our gain. Ultimately, it's only through dealing with the demons that plague us that we can find lasting happiness.

In December, we'll discuss ways of addressing our weaknesses and fears, and meditations that can facilitate their release.

*Sessions run for one hour and include guided meditations, a talk and questions. A facility fee of \$5 goes towards the running of the Centre.*

*Everyone is welcome; there is no need to book.*

*For more information, email [spc@tarainstitute.org.au](mailto:spc@tarainstitute.org.au) or phone 03 9596 8900.*

**TUESDAYS ~ 8pm**

3, 10 & 17 December 2024

## Study Group



### Golden Light Sutra Recitation

With Jeremy Cohen

Geshe Doga advised to spend the December Study Group sessions reciting the *Golden Light Sutra* and, if we have time, to also discuss Lama Tsong Khapa's 'four keys' technique for understanding the emptiness of self-existence.

As Lama Zopa Rinpoche explains:

"The most beneficial thing to have peace and to stop the wars is recitation of the *Golden Light Sutra*... everyone should try to do this, no matter how busy they are, even to recite one or two pages, even a few lines. By reciting the whole text ... one collects extensive merits, liberates numberless sentient beings from the oceans of suffering and brings them to enlightenment."

Lama Tsongkhapa's four keys are:

- Ascertain the object to be eliminated
- Ascertain the pervasion – the self must be either one with body/mind or separate from them
- Absence of true sameness of the self and the body/mind
- Absence of true difference of the self and the body/mind.

***Everyone welcome. These sessions promise to be fun and illuminating!***

**WEDNESDAYS ~ 8pm**

4, 11 & 18 December 2024

## A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life



with Geshe Lobsang Dorjee

**Shantideva's text, *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, is highly regarded by teachers of all Tibetan Buddhist traditions.**

What is a bodhisattva? In his commentary on Shantideva's text, His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, says: "*Bodhi* means enlightenment, the state devoid of all defects and endowed with all good qualities. *Sattva* refers to someone who has courage and confidence and who strives to attain enlightenment for the sake of all beings. Those who have this spontaneous, sincere wish to attain enlightenment for the ultimate benefit of all beings are called Bodhisattvas."

– **From *For the Benefit of All Beings*, Shambala Classics**

*There's no need to register for these teachings. Students are welcome to attend when they're able to do so.*

*For information about any of the teachings, please contact [spc@tarainstitute.org.au](mailto:spc@tarainstitute.org.au) or phone 03 9596 8900.*

## TI OFFICE CLOSURE

The Tara Institute Office will be closed from Monday 30 December 2024 and reopen on Thursday 2 January 2025.



### NEW YEAR'S EVE PRAYERS AT TI

*Tuesday 31 December 2024, 8pm to 9pm*

As we approach the end of 2024, TI will hold a New Year's Eve prayer night to say goodbye to 2024 and to welcome 2025. There will be recitations of 21 Tara Praises, Tara mantras and the Golden Light Sutra. Please come along with family and friends to join us for this special auspicious event.

#### Week 1

MONDAY 2

8pm - Intro to Buddhist Meditation

TUESDAY 3

8pm - Golden Light Sutra

WEDNESDAY 4

8pm - Bodhisattva's Way of Life

#### Week 2

MONDAY 9

8pm - Intro to Buddhist Meditation

TUESDAY 10

6pm - Guru Puja

8pm - Golden Light Sutra

WEDNESDAY 11

8pm - Bodhisattva's Way of Life

THURSDAY 12

11am - Healing Group

#### Week 3

MONDAY 16

8pm - Intro to Buddhist Meditation

TUESDAY 17

8pm - Golden Light Sutra

WEDNESDAY 18

11am - Wednesday Meditation

8pm - Bodhisattva's Way of Life

#### Week 4

WEDNESDAY 25

8pm - Lama Tsong Khapa Puja

#### Week 5

TUESDAY 31

8pm - New Year's Eve Prayers

### TI END-OF-YEAR & NEW YEAR PROGRAM

The Tara Institute Spiritual Program will finish after Wednesday 18 December 2024 and recommence on Monday 6 January 2025. Please check the TI website for any further updates.

Geshe Doga and Geshe Lobsang Dorjee resume teachings on Tuesday 4 February. Please check our website for more details.



*We wish everyone in the TI community a joyful and relaxing holiday break and a peaceful New Year.*

*Heartfelt thanks to the teachers, volunteers and others who have contributed to the Centre this year.*

*Immeasurable thanks to our precious teacher, Ven. Geshe Doga, and to Geshe Lobsang Dorjee and Geshe Jangchob.*

### DECEMBER 2024

**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 1	Tibetan 30	New Moon	Precepts
Tuesday 10	Tibetan 10	Tsog	Guru Puja
Sunday 15	Tibetan 15	Full Moon	Precepts
Wednesday 25	Tibetan 25	Tsog	Guru Puja/Lama Tsong Khapa Day

## MONDAYS ~ 8pm

6, 13 & 20 January

### Introduction to Buddhist Meditation



with  
**Mark Fernandes**

Sometimes in life, things are not easy and we can lose the peace of mind that we have. We think our thoughts are innocuous and that nothing will happen as a result of them, but if we keep following those trains of thought, they will eventually lead to some sort of afflicted state, such as anger, desire, attachment, aversion or ignorance.

If we develop a peaceful mind, we'll have happiness. Buddhism teaches us techniques we can use to enhance our peace of mind or reclaim it. We can cultivate the antidotes to negative states of mind and develop positive, virtuous thoughts and actions that create merit.

Mark will discuss what some of these techniques are, how to cultivate them and whether they are effective or not.

*Sessions run for one hour and include guided meditations, a talk and questions. A facility fee of \$5 goes towards the running of the Centre. Everyone is welcome; there is no need to book.*

## WEDNESDAYS ~ 8pm

8, 15, 22 & 29 January

### Chenrezig & Green Tara Meditations



with  
**Damien Busby**

For the first two Wednesdays in January, Damien will lead a meditation on Chenrezig, the Buddha of Compassion. We all possess the potential to be infinitely compassionate, and a powerful way to awaken and develop this potential is to meditate on Chenrezig.

Meditating on Green Tara will be the focus of the last two Wednesdays. Tara is known as the Liberator, the buddha who represents the skilful activities of all enlightened beings, and the Mother of all the buddhas, who awakens our potential for enlightenment and brings quick results in whatever we want or need.

These evenings will comprise a talk on Chenrezig or Tara, meditations on the deity, and time for questions and answers at the end of the session. It's a wonderful way to usher in 2025. All welcome, no need to book!

"If we think about it, cultivating love and compassion for other beings is the true source of peace for ourselves, as well as for our family, the community and the world. Within each of us, we hold the main cause of true peace for ourselves and others—holding the right mental attitude. If we love and care about each other sincerely, from the bottom of our heart, there's no room to harbour ill-will and harmful thoughts. That means we experience inner peace. With love and compassion, we will support and benefit, rather than harm, each other."

- Geshe Doga, Study Group, 10 September 2024

## JANUARY 2025

**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.**

Tuesday 7	Tibetan 8		Tara Puja/Precepts
Thursday 9	Tibetan 10	Tsog	Guru Puja
Monday 13	Tibetan 15	Full Moon	Precepts
Friday 24	Tibetan 25	Tsog	Guru Puja
Wednesday 29	Tibetan 30	New Moon	Precepts

# MONTHLY ONLINE TARA PRACTICE

Monday 6 January, 5pm

Each month on the evening before the Tara puja day, you can listen to Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche invoking the power of Tara, known as the Mother of all Buddhas. The 48 min. slideshow, set to beautiful music, features evocative videos and images of Peter Iseli's 5 x 9m 21 Taras Thangka, a gift from Rinpoche to Tara Institute. Please click on the link below before 5pm on the day to prevent technical glitches. Add your email below to receive monthly updates.

[CLICK HERE](#)

[CLICK HERE TO RECEIVE MONTHLY UPDATES](#)



JANUARY 2025

## Week 1

MONDAY 6

5pm - Monthly Online Tara Practice

*(See article for details)*

8pm - Intro to Buddhist Meditation

TUESDAY 7

6pm - Tara Puja

WEDNESDAY 8

8pm - Chenrezig Meditation

THURSDAY 9

6pm - Guru Puja

## Week 2

MONDAY 13

8pm - Intro to Buddhist Meditation

WEDNESDAY 15

11am - Wednesday Meditation

8pm - Chenrezig Meditation

## Week 3

MONDAY 20

8pm - Intro to Buddhist Meditation

WEDNESDAY 22

8pm - Green Tara Meditation

THURSDAY 23

11am - Healing Group

FRIDAY 24

6pm - Guru Puja

## Week 4

WEDNESDAY 29

8pm - Green Tara Meditation

## WELCOME TO CHAR, PAULINE AND CATHERINE

Over the past month or so, TI has welcomed **Charmain (Char) Borg** as Centre Manager and **Catherine McLoughlin** as our new Building Manager. Char will be in the Office weekdays from 10am to 4pm, Monday to Friday.

We also welcome **Pauline Alvarez** as our volunteer Members' Representative, part of the TI Management Committee. Pauline has helped with many TI fundraising activities and special functions over the years. She first connected with Tara Institute and Buddhism in 1983, attending Monday night meditations. Pauline has cooked regularly for Geshe Doga; he has often enjoyed a weekly meal at Pauline and husband Joe's place and become a cherished member of the Alvarez family.

We look forward to the contributions that Char, Catherine and Pauline will make to the Centre in their new roles.



Char, TI's new Office Manager



Pauline, our new Member's Rep

"...what makes the happiest life is bodhicitta. You must know that. Everybody must know that. At least write it down! If we want to have happiness, what makes the happiest life is bodhicitta. That is what we should study and practice as much as possible. Practice bodhicitta!"

- Lama Zopa Rinpoche, Kopan Course, Nov-Dec 2019

# GESHE DOGA AT CHENREZIG INSTITUTE'S BIG LOVE FESTIVAL

In late September, Chenrezig Institute celebrated 50 years since the first FPMT teaching course in Australia. Geshe Doga, Geshe Lobsang Dorjee, Geshe Jangchob and Ven Tsering were invited to attend, along with other sangha from Australia and around the world, including Osel Rinpoche.



*Geshe Doga (centre) surrounded by sangha in front of the head of the new Buddha statue.*

It was a great celebration and a huge reunion for sangha and lay students worldwide. Past and present TI students included Debbie and John Wright; Caroline Crossman; Kim Krejus; Marg, Ben and Emma Phillips; Corey Vlahos; and Chonyi Melnic and myself.

Chenrezig's resident teacher, Geshe Tsultrim, referred to the great honour of having Geshe Doga present. Here are some abridged comments from Geshe Tsultrim's talk:

"First of all, in the morning of the first day of the 50-year anniversary, all of a sudden, the head of the new big Buddha statue miraculously arrived! It wasn't organised like that but it arrived just as we were starting the 50th celebration and we were able to consecrate it.

(Geshe Doga was the Master presiding over the statue consecration and also blessed all the students in the gathering, plus the site for the new gompa.)

"Then on this second day of our 50th celebration, the texts (the entire set of the Buddha's sutras and commentaries) unexpectedly arrived, and are now here in this gompa in front of this gathering headed by the great elder Geshe Doga.

"We are quite fortunate to be here. Being able to be here and witness these great occurrences requires great merit. We have here the precious teachings of the Buddha, the precious commentaries given by the Indian pandits; we have great masters here in the gompa – we have the precious teacher Geshe Doga, Gen Rinpoche, Khensur Chonyi, Gshelas and Gshemas.

"So, we have here quite a few masters and Gshes, first of all headed by the great elder, Geshe Doga. Please make prayers for the long life and stability of our beloved teacher Geshe Doga, who has been with us in Australia for many decades. Please keep him in your heart and make prayers for him.

"Geshe Doga has been living in Australia for a few decades now and really, it's incredibly rare and difficult to come by, to have, such an amazing master living with us here in Australia. Thinking of the incredible opportunity, to have come across great spiritual masters like that – this is so rare.

"When we think of the difficulty in obtaining the opportunity to invite him to visit us and remain with us in Australia, such an incredible master; so rare to get such a precious opportunity for something like that to come to pass.

"And so, I feel that I have this precious connection with Gshela and would like you to also consider how rare and precious to have such a great master with us. So, in the future, if we have some hopes to come across someone like that again, it would be extremely rare and difficult. This is something we really need to keep in our heart."

- Kathi Melnic

## 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.*