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marpa house news

BUDDHIST MEDITATION AND RETREAT CENTRE

Winter 2015



Winter Meditations

From The Trustees • From The Committee

The Magic of Summer Camp 2015 • Lama Chime in London • Two Gems from Lama Samten

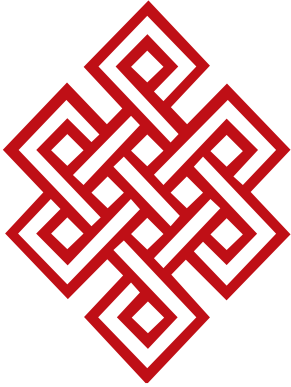
The Most Extraordinary Hotel in Germany (with HH Karmapa in Bonn)

A Still Mind • The 37 Practices of a Bodhisattva



chös khor ling

BUDDHIST
MEDITATION AND
RETREAT CENTRE



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to go in the Newsletter please contact
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Trustee News

Writing this piece is always a leap in the dark. What will be happening by the time you read it?

Now it is autumn and the House is going to bed for the winter. There is something special about being in the Shrine Room at Tara puja during autumn and winter with friends, shrouded in blankets, sitting in darkened silence, dawn breaking outside, frost on the ground, the low murmur of the heating boiler. It is a good time to visit and stay at the House. This year we have no formal retreat over Christmas-New Year and the retreat wing is pretty much booked already. There is ample space in the House, though!

As I write, Lama Samten has just visited for a second session of teachings for this year. The evening Fire Puja that he led took place amidst the beginning of what proved to be days of fierce storms. The prayer flags, launched by our precious Lama, have been torn and shredded as they sent their prayers into the nights of the world following the awfulness of Paris.

Our Secretary, Emma, has recently had to deal with a period of having only two staff members. Please be patient and mindful when such times occur. Give her lots of space and offer to help where you can.

A lot of changes have been going on in the background. Except for some replacement treads on the external fire escapes, all the fire work has been completed. At last! Room 4 now has a (very expensive) window exit door and is about to be redecorated and refurbished. All the dining room windows are now finished. The garden shed, long a sign of disintegrating impermanence, is soon to be replaced.

Chris Sladdin has joined us as a Trustee! Please make him welcome. He was one of the original trustees of





Lama Chime's retreat centre back in 1973 – when he was in robes and driving HH Karmapa XVI through the wilds of Scotland. Although Chris has been edgy about the potential levels of bureaucracy and paperwork involved in the role (having seen the amount of work his Sylvia used to handle), his knowledge and dharma background will be a huge help to the other trustees, as both an anchor and a rudder. He is another person to whom you can go if some aspect of Marpa House troubles you or you have ideas for its future. Please feel free to talk to the trustee with whom you feel most at ease.

Paul Wootton has retired as Chair of the Marpa House Management Committee after several years in that role. He is staying on to help the Committee until Spring. At the very point he left the role of Chair, he was swept into being the pivotal figure helping Lama Chime arrange and focus his Celebration of Vajrayana Coming to the West. Paul has been a powerhouse of organisation and common sense for Marpa House over the past three years. It is not possible to thank him enough.

Into the role of Chair of the Management

Committee has now come Karim Rabi-laleh. If he isn't nervous yet, he will be. He will bring a new dimension – from his time as a staff member and Secretary at Marpa House and from his teaching and practice. And recording the sound at teachings. And working on our computers.

Thank you Paul, thank you Karim. It is very difficult to thank all the members of the Committee deeply enough; they are the ones who organise all the events, make them happen, guide them, and springboard new ideas to the Trustees.

Beyond all of this news, in the background is stirring the spectacular Celebration of Vajrayana Buddhism Coming to the West. This will be a very big affair. We expect a thousand people and a day full of events. Its details are still shrouded in planning. The function will be free to those attending (its cost is to be funded by separate donations). Half a century ago, three young Tibetans arrived in Britain. They were our first Vajra Masters. Only Lama Chime remains with us. Time is so short. Practise.

Roger Britton (Chair of the Trustees)

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Committee News

I joined the Marpa House Management Committee to give something back to the community that has given me so much. At first I was apprehensive, having heard tales of five-hour-long heated debates. However, I have been pleasantly surprised by the light and joy in our meetings. Paul Wootton, as Chair, has organised

them so efficiently that we now have the habit of moving through information and coming to consensus quickly while leaving aside things that require further discussion or exploration for a later meeting. Every event that happens at the House must be covered by at least one committee member and it was heartening to realise that usually several join in and pay for their own participation.

I also have been humbled by the effort and ideas that my fellow committee members have contributed. It is especially invigorating to see how they and the Trustees all work together





to preserve and maintain Rinpoche's teachings and home.

I have now taken over the reins as the Committee Chair from the inspirational Paul Wootton and I hope I can continue in the same manner as he has over the last few years. Marpa House has been busy. With Emma holding the space beautifully, we are in good hands. Lisa-Marie Lejemtal and Jamie Pinto have now left their positions as Cleaner and Cook, respectively, and we thank them for their consideration and calm background efforts, keeping the house clean and the meals excellent. Now we have had several people as short-term staff, as is often the case, with help from Len White as Cook, Daniella Goodman who has been Cleaner but also side-lined as a volunteer gardener as she loves doing the vegetable patch so much, then Wendy Jilley as Cleaner and sometime Cook, who also often volunteers for gardening weekends, and a stream of others.

Thanks to everyone who has attended a volunteer weekend and helped out with the garden or house. These weekends are really important to the running and upkeep of Marpa House and any and all efforts in this regard are really appreciated. New visitors often come to these weekends, but long-time callers to the house and members are encouraged to join them. The work is as light or hard as you make it, with the idea being to do it as a meditation, just as monks and nuns do. Everything is planned to enable workers to keep to the meditation and break rhythms of the House, as advised by Lama Chime Rinpoche, and to work at their own pace.

This autumn we have been very lucky to have two visits from Lama Karma Samten, whose radiance and down-to-earth approach to Buddhism and meditation has been a joy to us all. I always recall one fundamental piece of advice he gave in the past: to let the 'apparent

turmoil' of your mind melt away into a cup of PG Tips (tea)! He always brings people's awareness to Nature and to the way things work in the world and this time he and his assistant Kate gave us healing water enhanced by moonlight in September and a fire puja in November.

I would like to welcome Vicki Tofts and Karen Packwood to the Committee – as Paul gradually edges out and into being director of Lama Chime Rinpoche's celebration of Vajrayana Buddhism Coming to the West. Along with us, Janet Scott, Meng-Chee Leong and Amy Corzine are carrying on as committee members, which will help to spread the work until Chime Rinpoche's big event. I am sure that Vicki and Karen will bring great vibrancy to the Committee and new good ideas for events and fund-raising for Marpa House.

We wish everyone in the sangha a happy Christmas and look forward to a great 2016. A lot of changes are happening, as always. My hope is that we all work together to keep Marpa House a happy and powerful heart-centre for spiritual practice and a regenerative force in everyone's lives.

Karrim Rabi-laleh (Chair of the Committee)

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khö
long

marpa house staff

We need volunteers to come on staff in 2016.

You can volunteer for up to one year and would receive a small honorarium to cover basic living costs. All meals and accommodation are provided free of charge. This is a great opportunity to spend time in a beautiful Dharma centre, to receive teachings from visiting teachers and to practise in a lovely and peaceful environment. If you are interested in finding out more, please contact the Secretary:

t: 01799 584415 e: mail@marpahouse.org.uk



The Magic of Summer Camp 2015

No better place to be.

Summer camp this year was a particularly joyful experience for me. It is always a pleasure to see all my German friends again. Friday and Saturday were spent settling in the lovely forest surroundings and hugging everyone and on Saturday night, Rinpoche made his first appearance.

His instructions were very simple: just be happy! For ten days, drop your quarrels and worries, forget about the past and future, be here and be happy! It did not seem too difficult. Glorious sunshine, forests, a river and lakes, a plethora of activities to choose from, both for adults and children, yet nothing compulsory... But there is more: the summer camp feeling – a feel-good syndrome; the smiles, the laughter; the hugs are contagious. You are enveloped in this glorious Rinpoche-smile feeling and you just let it flow.



It's no good trying to arrange meeting friends at a specific time. You can be sure you will be distracted on the way. There are so many wonderful people about, you're bound to start a conversation with someone else, jump into the river for a swim or linger over tea and cakes at the bar:

But of course summer camp is not just about drinking coffee with your friends and having a jolly good time. In the mornings, Khenpo Tseten gave teachings on 'The 37 Practices of a Bodhisattva', including: 'Happiness is like dew on the tip of a blade of grass. It evaporates very quickly.'

When one desire is fulfilled, we are happy for a few minutes then we find fault with what we have or want something else. We must

find 'unchangeable happiness'. This can only be achieved through the practice of altruism, or sharing our happiness with others.

The Khenpo also spoke about the six paramitas: generosity, discipline, patience, effort, concentration and wisdom. He explained that without the sixth paramita of wisdom, the other paramitas 'are blind'. Wisdom is the understanding of emptiness. If we believe it is 'me' practising the first five paramitas, it 'annihilates the benefit of the practice'.

In the evenings, Lama Chime Rinpoche talked. His teachings included: 'Joy is not elation; love is not attachment; compassion is not sentimentality; impartiality is not apathy.'

He asked us: 'Who is telling you what to do? Who are you serving? Where is "me"?''

The magic of summer camp is a unique gift from Chime Rinpoche. In this very ordinary setting, a holiday for families, he makes the profound teachings of Mahamudra available to everyone. Indeed, the ordinary human happiness of being with friends and loved ones and enjoying the simple pleasures of natural surroundings becomes a vehicle for going deeper into ourselves and further out to others. Looking at all the happy faces, it seemed to me that we had followed the Lama's instructions and that the special summer-camp happiness would not evaporate 'like dew on a blade of grass', but stay with us in our 'normal' lives.

Dominique Simpson





How to Practice Vajrayana Buddhism in the West

It was a complicated route to Amrita Dzong where Chime Rinpoche was teaching; SatNav took me to strange realms. I hadn't been there for a while, but got to Hackney early and spent thirty minutes meditating in the car

Lama Chime taught on the Three Yanas and how the most important thing that differentiates Vajrayana from the other Buddhist schools is its use of the Lama, Yidam and Dakini.

He said, we investigate the guru and the guru investigates us. Doubt arises from lack of investigation and that isn't good, but is part of our western culture. In school we are taught not to trust. The doubt that arises in us from this leads to indecision and is why people often are in a state of confusion.

It's most important to trust yourself. Mind is your mirror. The Lama reflects that mirror. In the morning when you get up, you look in a mirror and see a ghost, which makes you feel low. Having a shower dissipates that self-image and you feel a little better. You could think of washing as something like going to the River Ganges in India for a symbolic spiritual cleansing.

Empowerment from teachers is important. For Vajrayana empowerments, you are given a yidam. To get his yidam, Lama Chime underwent a ritual where a red ribbon was placed on his head and he had to drop a flower onto a mandala. The part on which it fell determined which yidam was the one he should use in his practice. His was Vajrayogini.

Without a yidam, it is impossible to practice Vajrayana. With a yidam, enlightenment is quick. One needs a lama for this, so you should choose very carefully, then meet with the Lama's mind. It is necessary to open your mind just a little (not totally) so there is space between you and the Lama. There is nothing to surrender; no

me or you. Transmission can be oral.

Fear is the working of the ego and its defence mechanism. When death comes for the body, if there is no fear, there is no death.

Do the foundations. Prostrations counteract tendencies to intellectualise, as there is no place for asking questions while doing them. Prostrations reduce pride. When his teacher Khenpo Gangshar was 24, he was very clever, but full of pride. At a public assembly, Dilgo Khyentse gave him food from his mouth. This embarrassed the Khenpo immensely, but was a most important act as it attacked his pride, which led to his enlightenment. If you are full of pride, you won't get enlightened.

Transmission comes from empowerment too. When Lama Chime went to Khenpo Gangshar for teaching, they sat in silence until the Khenpo said, "That's it." That night, Chime Rinpoche had a realisation experience. His dream dissolved into clear light.

In replies to questions, he said that at death you should eject your consciousness into Dharmakaya and that in Tibet dementia was seen very seldom and thought to be linked with loneliness. We have money in the West, but communication problems. We send old people into care homes they are not allowed to leave – that's a serious problem.

On how to investigate a teacher and the nature of surrender, Rinpoche explained that the teacher is not like a dictator. Books exist to guide people regarding the meaning of surrender. If a teacher fits with you, then you should follow them. Surrendering is from the head, not the heart, as there are no concepts in the heart. You surrender your concepts to learn from a teacher.

Roy Jilley



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marpa house



PROGRAMME OF EVENTS
January 2016 - June 2016

January



NEW YEAR'S DAY - MIKYO DORJE'S FOUR SESSION GURU YOGA

Friday 1 January 9.30am and 2.30pm

Free, all welcome. Lunch is available for £5 but must be booked in advance.

Join us in welcoming the New Year in with a day of this beautiful practice, very special to the Karma Kagyu Lineage. Please note earlier start time of 9.30am.

Led by Vicki Tofts.

MEDITATION PRACTICE DAY

Sunday 3 January, 10.30am and 2.30pm

Free of charge, all welcome. Lunch is available for £5 but must be booked in advance.

A day of calm abiding meditation, led by a student of Kyabjé Chime Rinpoche.



TIBETAN LANGUAGE DAY

Sunday 24 January 10.30am and 2pm

Fee for the day: £10 including lunch

For anyone who can read Tibetan and use a dictionary, we will be reading and translating Dharma texts. Please join us. All welcome!

February



LOSAR MAHAKALA PUJAS

Friday 5 February, Saturday 6 February, Sunday 7 February

– 2.30pm each day

Free of charge, all welcome. Lunch is available for £5 but must be booked in advance.

Traditionally, an extended form of the Dharma Protector Mahakala is done each day before the New Year to clear away any obstacles for the year ahead.

Led by Kyabjé Chime Rinpoche's sangha.

LOSAR – TIBETAN NEW YEAR OF THE MALE FIRE MONKEY

Tuesday 9 February 2.30pm

Free of charge, donations welcome. Lunch is available for £5 but must be booked in advance.

Traditionally, Losar is a holiday and time of celebration, join us for a Lhasang bonfire and offering of Khataks. All students, friends and relatives are very welcome to attend.

Free of charge, donations welcome. Lunch is available for £5 but must be booked in advance. We will celebrate Losar with a tea party and bonfire. We will offer Khataks and have a recitation of ‘Calling the Lama from Afar’. Please bring (vegetarian) food to share; also feel free to bring any unwanted Dharma texts or papers to burn on the bonfire.

For anyone who can read Tibetan and use a dictionary, we will be reading and translating Dharma texts. Please join us. All welcome!



Friday 26 February 6pm, Saturday 27 February to
Saturday 5 March -
10am and 2pm

Course starts on Friday, 26 February, at 6pm, with arrival and welcome, and finishes on Saturday, 5 March, at 4pm. It is possible to attend as a day visitor for individual days if you wish. Fee: £5 per day plus accommodation. Lunch is available for day visitors at £5 but must be booked in advance

Aims of this course: To learn the Uchen Tibetan alphabet and Tibetan word construction through Calligraphy. To be able to read a Tibetan text, even if it is slow. You will be able to use a dictionary or an online dictionary to find the meanings of individual words, and you will be able to write correctly-formed characters using a calligraphy pen. To do calligraphy we don't need to be artists. The idea is to have a go and enjoy it. To write a prayer in Tibetan is to meditate on it. Learning Tibetan is learning the Dharma. Every word you learn the meaning of can help your practice. Although grammar will not be covered, we can look at a book by Stephen Hodge which explains it in detail.

Brian Richardson is a student of Lama Chime Rinpoche. He studied the Tibetan alphabet with Khenpo Gyurme Tsultrim of Shechen Monastery at Marpa House in 2013. Brian has also attended a Calligraphy course with Tashi Mannonx which was very inspiring.



MEDITATION PRACTICE DAY

Sunday 6 March - 10.30am and 2.30pm

Free of charge. All welcome. Lunch is available at £5 but must be booked in advance.

A day of calm abiding meditation led by a student of Kyabjé Chime Rinpoche.

Lama Alasdair

RITUAL IN VAJRAYANA

Saturday 12 March and Sunday 13 March - 10.30am and 2.30pm

Course fee: £15 per day (both sessions) or £7.50 per session

Lunch is available for £5 but must be booked in advance.

Lama Alasdair will guide us through some of the essential rituals, symbols and their meaning in our lineage. Lama Alasdair is Kyabjé Chime Rinpoche's resident teacher at Karma Kagyu Cho Kor Ling (previously known as Kagyu Benchen Ling in Todtmoos) and has completed the traditional three year retreat. We are delighted to welcome him back to Marpa House.



TIBETAN LANGUAGE DAY

Sunday 20 March - 10.30am and 2pm

Fee for the day: £10 including lunch

For anyone who can read Tibetan and use a dictionary, we will be reading and translating Dharma texts. Please join us. All welcome!



EASTER TEACHINGS & SILENT RETREAT with Lama Klaus

Teachings: How to conduct a personal meditation retreat

**Saturday and Sunday 26 - 27 March 10.30am, 2.30pm
and Monday 28 March, 10.30am**

Fee for the day: £7.50 per session/ £15 per day (morning and afternoon)

Lunch is available for £5 but must be booked in advance.

March Continued



According to HH 17th Karmapa, Orgyen Trinley Dorje:

'Retreat centres are very important for the Kagyu lineage...because the Karma Kamtsang especially emphasises practice and meditation...it's called the practice lineage. We have a long history of solitary retreatants such as Milarepa. To do a one-week or two-week retreat is very good, in order to enjoy our meditation practice, so that we get a real taste of spiritual practice. During a short retreat, we can take a break from the dominance of the five senses, and, through meditation practice, we can experience through a sixth sense instead and realise the joy of samadhi. Also the experience of retreat builds up our strength and self-confidence in order to face life's challenges, difficulties and of course death.' In Tibet he always enjoyed visiting the Tsurphu retreat centre, high up on the mountainside. 'As soon as I enter a retreat centre,' he says, 'I feel some peace or blessing.'

During this weekend, Lama Klaus will guide us through the process of undertaking a personal retreat, and give advice and instruction on meditation. Lama Klaus himself has completed the traditional three-year retreat at Karma Triyana Dharmachakra. We are delighted to welcome him to the House again!

April



SILENT MEDITATION RETREAT with Lama Klaus

Friday 1 April 6.30pm til Thursday 7 April 12.30pm

Course fee: £200 for the whole course including meals and accommodation. To secure your booking, you must pay a non-refundable deposit of £50. It is not possible to attend as a day visitor.

Following the Easter weekend's teachings, Lama Klaus will be leading a week of silent meditation. Anyone is very welcome to join us for either or both of these.

This is a closed retreat and participants are asked to join us for the whole course. Places are limited, as all participants have a single room. Please make the most of this wonderful opportunity to join us and deepen your practice!

Lama Klaus will give an introductory talk on Friday at 6.30pm and the house will then be silent until Thursday lunchtime. There will be scheduled (optional) meditation sessions as well as an opportunity to ask questions of Lama Klaus.

To secure your booking we need a non-refundable deposit of £50.

April Continued



TIBETAN LANGUAGE DAY

Sunday 17 April - 10.30am and 2pm

Fee for the day: £10 including lunch

For anyone who can read Tibetan and use a dictionary, we will be reading and translating Dharma texts. Please join us. All welcome!

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VOLUNTEERS WEEKEND

Saturday 23 and Sunday 24 April

Free meals and accommodation in exchange for some work. Day volunteers are also very welcome.

Kipling wrote 'The Glory of the Garden lies in more than meets the eye'. Come and see why this is so while helping to get the Marpa House garden ready for summer. Special knowledge and skills are not required and tools are provided, though you may wish to bring your own gardening gloves.

May



MAY BANK HOLIDAY PRACTICE WEEKEND

Saturday 30th April, Sunday 1st May, 10.30am and 2.30pm

As the first May Bank Holiday weekend is only two weeks before Rinpoche's Celebration of Vajrayana Buddhism Coming to the West on the 14th May, Rinpoche will not be giving his traditional Bank Holiday course at the House this year. We very much hope to welcome him to teach later in the year. Instead we will organise a weekend of practice and teaching. Further details to follow about this weekend but for now please keep the date free.



May Continued



A Celebration of Vajrayana Buddhism Coming to the West

*Friends House, 173 - 177 Euston Road, London
on Saturday 14th May 2016 10:30 to 17:00*

Please join Kyabjé Chime Rinpoche in celebrating 50 years since the arrival of Vajrayana Buddhism in the West. A free event but please book tickets by emailing paul.wootton108@gmail.com. We hope that students, relatives and friends old and new will all join us for this wonderful occasion! *See back page for more details.*

TIBETAN LANGUAGE DAY

Sunday 29 May 10.30am and 2pm

Fee for the day: £10 including lunch

For anyone who can read Tibetan and use a dictionary, we will be reading and translating Dharma texts. Please join us. All welcome!

June



YOUNG SANGHA WEEKEND

Saturday 4 and Sunday 5 June

Booking essential! Please contact ben@henriques.org

For anyone aged 18-30 who would like to enjoy the House and learn about Karma Kagyu Tibetan Buddhism. No previous experience required, and all sessions are accessible to beginners and experienced meditators alike.



June Continued



AN INTRODUCTION TO CHÖD

Saturday 11 June & Sunday 12 June 10.30am and 2.30pm

Fee: £5 per session or £10 per day (morning and afternoon) Lunch is available for £5 but must be booked in advance.

Chöd or 'Cutting through delusion's root' is one of the most effective, but most often misunderstood, practices in Tibetan Buddhism. This course, led by Vicki Tofts, will introduce some of the key principles and techniques of this beautiful form of healing.

Vicki is a student of Chime Rinpoche's and a professional flautist. Her warm, direct and humorous approach to teaching Chöd has been popular in Rinpoche's summer camps and we are delighted that she will also be teaching us here in Marpa House!

VOLUNTEER WEEKEND

Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 June

Free meals and accommodation in exchange for some work! Day volunteers are also very welcome.

We welcome enthusiastic volunteers to help in the garden or house. No special knowledge or skills are required. Tools are provided for gardening, though you may wish to bring your own gloves. Please come along and enjoy Marpa House's glorious garden in summer!

ANNUAL MEMBERS MEETING

Saturday 25 June 2.30pm

This meeting is for Foundation and Subscribing Members of Marpa House only. Full details will be sent to members nearer the time.

TIBETAN LANGUAGE DAY

Sunday 26 June 10.30am and 2pm

Fee for the day: £10 including lunch

For anyone who can read Tibetan and use a dictionary, we will be reading and translating Dharma texts. Please join us. All welcome!

A Still Mind

On a silent retreat with Lama Klaus

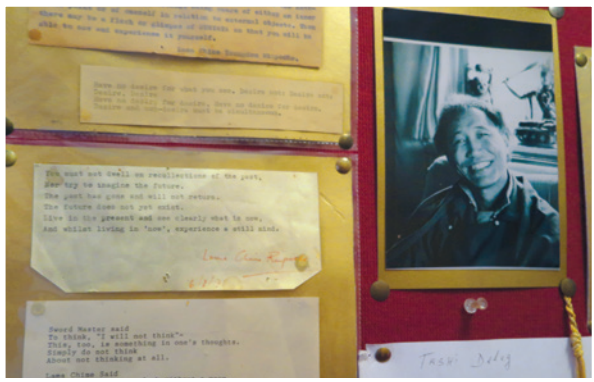
Whilst on Lama Klaus' silent retreat at Marpa House in summer, I wondered if I would find my still mind. With five hours of meditation and the two pujas each day, there was plenty of opportunity. Lama Klaus led the retreat with much kindness and care. We benefited from sharing and discussing his condensed notes from teachings he received from Tai Situpa on *The Quintessence of the Union of Mahmudra and Dzogchen* by Karma Chakme Rinpoche. A book now waiting to be explored.

The retreat gave much time for quiet reflection and contemplation.

During the sessions I noticed how busy my thoughts were, thinking of the future, worrying and thinking about the past. I contemplated this, remembering techniques given to me by Rinpoche and others to work on taming the mind and being in the present.

One day in one session I had a feeling of past and present almost disappearing and there was stillness. When I opened my eyes, it was as if time was standing still and everything and everybody in the shrine room was unmoving and frozen in time. It didn't last long.

On leaving the shrine room, my eyes fell on the notice board on the opposite wall. I have passed this notice board often without looking; other times I have read the precious words that are pinned there. This time it was as if one part of the board was shining out at me, surrounded by gold. I had to put on my glasses to see what was there, typed on an old



style typewriter.

This it was, typed in either 1978 or 1975 (there was a blotch on the last digit), by Rinpoche:

*You must not dwell on recollections of the past,
Nor try to imagine the future.
The past has gone and will not return,
The future does not yet exist.*

*Live in the present and see clearly what is now,
And whilst living in 'now', experience a still mind.*

After that, these words kept coming back to me in the meditation sessions as a reminder of what is possible. They were typed at about the same time I first came to Marpa House and I must have read them before. It was if they were meant for me now.

I realise that writing this has required me to dwell on recollections of the past. However, remembering this does give me a glimpse of the present that is here. There are other poignant words typed on the notices there. Take a quiet moment to absorb.

Anne-Marie Scott





Two Gems from Lama Karma Samten

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one person all of the time, the suffer-ring and the boring! The impression he conveyed was that we are here for eternity and there is no escape from our karma.

So what do you do when you feel attacked by the world and in pain? He replied, 'Accept.' So then how do you heal yourself? 'Accept[ing] is [the] healing.'

No one said a word after that. It was the end of his weekend of lectures. I couldn't even say thank you. Truth fell so you could hear a pin drop.

Amy Corzine

Lama Samten visited Marpa House in September and for a weekend set us thinking about 'How Wisdom Creates Compassion'. After leading us through analytical processes, he showed us how important careful observation, balance and reason are in acting wisely, and that you must include yourself in the equation at all times. If you don't have the ability to give, you could end doing harm, so you must check yourself first before acting.

The question and answer sessions were especially entertaining but also deadly serious. Two answers he gave really rang out for me with their cleverness. He said you get four rings when you marry: the engagement ring where you choose only one person to be with, the wedding ring (he said he calls it the 'weird ring!') where you are with only



The Most Extraordinary Hotel in Germany



In August the Hotel Maritim in Bonn was transformed from an ordinary hotel into a dream-like stage for the second visit of His Holiness the seventeenth Karmapa to Germany. A large hotel foyer and extraordinarily long linear lobby, normally the domain of wedding guests and business conferences, was

transformed by the mixed and milling presence of two and a half thousand Rinpoches, Lamas, their students, nuns, monks and organisers. Groups of the devoted could be seen busily making offerings, prostrating, taking endless photographs and videos and listening with bated breath to the utterances of their gurus and teachers. Occasionally a flurry and hushed tones in the surrounding crowds indicated the presence of an official black-suited group of security guards surrounding His Holiness, moving quietly to an unknown hotel destination. The hotel staff looked on with an air of bewilderment whilst coping with the other more ordinary events that were also going on simultaneously.

In normal life, access to the precious ones can be difficult to get, so the surreal quality of having a Rinpoche coming and sitting next to you and starting a conversation is not usual outside of a dreamscape. How wonderfully strange!

The organisation of the event was flawless, the audiences with His Holiness tightly controlled with security in mind, all so very different from the visits of His Holiness the sixteenth Karmapa all those years ago. How things change, I thought.

Each morning, a long line of devotees queued (or sometimes not) for entrance to the huge auditorium, ready for the teachings and empowerments. We gently filed in and found a seat. A myriad of photo opportunities taken in the midst of excited chatter; quiet mantra, reflection and busy shopping experience



at the back of the room. Then 'Karmapa Chenno' chanted by two monks, the whole audience joining in. This was really quite moving, the voices of devotion ringing out loud and clear.

His Holiness

arrived amidst the sonorous melody of jalings (Tibetan horns) to be seated either on his high throne or on a chair; depending on the teaching. His presence radiated calmness and compassion.

The main message of the Karmapa was how to integrate spirituality into everyday life. We live in an ever-smaller world, our lives ever more connected, and we need to find ways to take more responsibility for our environment to create better conditions for a harmonious existence. He talked at length about the European refugee crisis. Again and again His Holiness emphasised the need to be not more special than others, but to become a better human being – with less anger and the cultivation of love, compassion, rejoicing and equanimity. The four immeasurables.

All-in-all, the whole thing was an excellent occasion with a dream-like quality.

Paul Wootton





Lama Chime's Golden Birthday



A lot of goodwill was about for Lama Chime's birthday at Marpa House. Everything seemed suffused in golden light. At 2.30 we greeted Rinpoche in the Shrine Room in the traditional Tibetan way, presenting him with white scarves, which he put round our necks in return.

Then everyone sat down as Lama Chime thanked us for coming and talked to us about his life nowadays and the loneliness, insensitivity from others and lack of freedom that elderly people experience nowadays.

After that, we chant-sang and meditated upon 'Calling the Lama From Afar', led very beautifully by Irmela, as we called upon the lama both outside and inside us, and a prayer that Lama Chime would live long and his highest, noblest aspirations manifest.

During the party afterward, Lama Chime cut a red and yellow-gold marzipan-covered cake that was made to look like a Tibetan house by trustee Keith, with the help of his wife. Coincidentally, several people had brought along red and yellow roses that day, which complemented it perfectly.

Old acquaintances and visitors mingled with each other and Lama Chime for a long while. As he left, many people waved white

scarves high towards his departing car and quickly drew them back, over and over, in the traditional and poetic way the Tibetans have of ensuring that the Lama and his high teachings always return to them.

Pure Gold

Golden years golden days
 Pass too fast in a haze
 And leave us dry, brittle, old
 Unless we find the source of course.
 'If I tell you my spectacles are gold
 You must not believe
 But investigate'
 Essence of internal sun.
 Appreciating someone
 Brings the rose to blossom
 Sugar sweet scent of plum

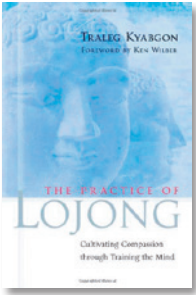
Amy Corzine



Book Review

The Practice of Lojong: Cultivating Compassion Through Training the Mind

by Traleg Kyabgon, published by Shambhala (2007), ISBN 1-59030-378-4



[This book was written by Traleg Kyabgon Rinpoche (1955–2012), who was the ninth incarnation of the Traleg tulku in the Kagyu lineage.]

In Tibetan, Lojong means 'mind training'.

The teachings and practices of Lojong present the essence of the Mahayana path, containing everything needed to attain enlightenment, freedom from suffering, since they develop the compassion and wisdom of Bodhicitta. So far so good. Words on a page. Ideas in my mind. Aspiration. But as I know from past experience, ideas and words can soon join others in the fuzz of my memory.

My previous attempts to get into Lojong and Bodhisattva practices had led to very little understanding and a kind of exasperation. I had focussed on the 'slogans' or pithy reminders, but applying the slogans seemed as impossible as 'the camel going through the eye of a needle'. Slogans such as: 'Drive all blames into oneself' or 'Be grateful to everyone' seemed totally alien.

Now, having had the chance to read Traleg Rinpoche's book, I feel much more encouraged. For me, this was not a light read by any means; it required effort.

Traleg Rinpoche follows the traditional Lojong structuring of dividing the information into seven headings – Seven Points of Mind Training – under which the 59 'slogans', or reminders, are organised. Traleg Rinpoche develops each part extensively and this often requires further sub-divisions. I found

the structuring a bit hard to follow at times and I also needed time to think and re-read sections. But this reading difficulty in fact soon became a joy, because I realised that by working, I was learning – learning about the Bodhisattva path – in a practical, sustainable way.

There really is so much in this book. Traleg Rinpoche clarifies fundamental concepts, outlines steps for practice, gives advice, and shows how Lojong works as a psycho-emotional-social process. His explanations of the 'how' and the 'why' helped me greatly, both emotionally and culturally. Also, his inclusion of references, quotations, anecdotes and analogies helped me to appreciate the wonderful words of historical teachers like Shantideva and Patrul Rinpoche.

Rinpoche encourages us to choose a meaningful place to begin practising, to choose any slogan, jump in, work with it, and keep going. Instead of being overwhelmed by the immensity of the task, we are told that we should appreciate that a 'full, frontal attack' does not work. This practice works over time, as we erode negativity and re-habituate ourselves.

The power of aspiration is aided by the power of habituation, which will only progress properly if it is supported by the power of planting white seeds. (p.131)

And those white seeds are a life-line for me: simple steps that I understand and can experiment with.

Janet Scott



A Celebration of Vajrayana Buddhism Coming to the West

Friends House, 173 - 177 Euston Road, London
on Saturday 14th May 2016 10:30 to 17:00



We have great pleasure in inviting you to register for tickets for this auspicious event hosted by Kyabje Chime Rinpoche and his Sangha.

Please contact Paul Wootton at paul.wootton108@gmail.com to register; or telephone **0207 252 8555** (9am to 5pm Monday to Friday) if you don't have email. Once you have registered you will be sent an individual eTicket (or it will be posted to you if you don't have access to email) which must be presented on the day to gain entry. Tickets are free of charge.

A light vegetarian lunch will be provided.

You must provide the following information for all who are attending with you:

First Name, Family Name, email address (or postal address)

If you plan to bring your children with you, please include their names and age.

Tickets are going fast and applications will close at the end of January 2016.

The **Zambhala Shop** at Marpa House sells all things Tibetan and Buddhist, from Thangkas and Rupas to Books and Shawls. Just ask the Secretary when visiting.

For mail order or if you have any questions please contact Joyce McCleary via email for more information: joycemccleary@gmail.com



Marpa House Accommodation prices are:

Standard House Charge (shared accommodation and 3 vegetarian meals)

£25 per night £150 per week

Standard Retreat Charge (single room accommodation and 3 vegetarian meals)

£30 per night £180 per week

Further discounts are available for retreats of four weeks or more, provided they are pre-booked and pre-paid