



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Talks and interviews from some of the speakers at 2025 Buddhist Summer School Maitripa Centre Healesville

- Tribute to the founder of the annual Buddhist Summer School – Traleg Kyabgon Rinpoche IX
- Talk by Ringu Tulku Rinpoche – Pith Instructions of the Wisdom of the Great Seal of Mahamudra
- Dialogue with Leesa Davis and Traleg Khandro on Zen and the Art of Non-duality

Buddhist Summer School 2025 Nyima Tashi Centre, Auckland, New Zealand

- Interview with Ekai Korematsu Roshi on Emptiness and Non-discrimination
- The Importance of lineage by Ani Jangchub Lhamo
- News from E-Vam Institute Australia
- News from Nyima Tashi Buddhist Centre, New Zealand
- News from E-Vam Buddhist Institute U.S.
- News from Akshara Bookshop
- E-Vam Institute Melbourne Summer Teaching Program



Founder of the Buddhist Summer School



42 years ago, Traleg Kyabgon Rinpoche IX had a vision of a Buddhist Summer School that explored difference within the many and varied schools of Buddhism from Theravada, Zen to Vajrayana, and so on, as well as comparative discussions with such disciplines as western philosophy, psychology, science, and other religions. The intention was to explore, debate, and discuss similarities and differences between these different modalities. Rinpoche expressed his belief that it was in exploring the differences where the greatest insights, growth, and knowledge can be found. We are dedicating much of the December 2024 “Wheel Of

Times” newsletter to introducing some of the wonderful topics that will be shared by an esteemed range of presenters from different Buddhist Schools and academic disciplines in the 2025 Buddhist Summer Schools. ■

The Buddhist Summer Schools will be held in Melbourne Australia and Auckland New Zealand:

11-14 January 2025 at Maitripa Centre in Healesville Australia, and 23-26 January 2025 at Nyima Tashi Centre, Auckland New Zealand.



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The Pith Instructions of the Great Seal of Mahamudra

Ringu Tulku Rinpoche



One of the highlights of 2025 Buddhist Summer School, Maitripa Centre, in Healesville will be the two courses given by Ringu Tulku Rinpoche. In the course, *The Four Harmonious Friends* Rinpoche will explore how harmony, personally and among small groups, can lead to peace, prosperity, and auspicious outcomes for entire societies. In the course *Gesar Of Ling*, Rinpoche will teach on Gesar's life, culture, and their practices of bravery, fearlessness, and compassion.

To follow are excerpts from a teaching Ringu Tulku Rinpoche gave at E-Vam Institute in 2022, a spontaneous translation and commentary of the text – *The Pith Instructions of the Wisdom of the Great Seal of Mahamudra* (*Shadra chenpo machig yeshe rangdrol. Chag gya chenpo*).

Rinpoche's Translation begins:

Homage to Guru Padmasambhava. Guru Rinpoche. Orgyen Padmasambhava passes the oral instructions of Mahamudra to his consort, Yeshe Tsogyal. There are four main points in the instruction of Mahamudra in this text. This is a *terma*, a treasure-finding teaching most probably from Guru Rinpoche, Guru Padmasambhava,

discovered by *Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo* who gave it to *Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye* the 1st and it was passed down from there.

To translate: Mahamudra – *Chag gya* is mudra which is like a seal, and *gya* means a type of greatness. So, *chag gya chenpo* is the great seal that covers everything and the nature of everything is the meaning of Mahamudra. *Ma chig* is a type of instruction that is very direct and practical, like following a recipe. *Yeshe* means wisdom, *rangdrol* means self-liberation. Thus the title can be translated as The Pith Instructions of the Wisdom of the Great Seal of Mahamudra.

In Buddhism we speak of the view, meditation, and the result. Mahamudra is traditionally presented as Ground Mahamudra, Path Mahamudra, and Result or Fruition Mahamudra. The ground is the view about “how things really are.” It refers to wisdom, it is about understanding what and how everything exists in reality.

What is meant by “Pith Instructions”

In Buddhism we have *Kangyur* canon – the direct instructions and teachings of the Buddha - Tripitaka, sutras and tantras, et cetera. Then there is the *Tangyur*, commentaries on Buddha's teachings by many great learned and accomplished

masters of India that have been translated into Tibetan. There are approximately 228 volumes. In addition, there are many, many commentaries by other masters including Tibetan masters.

The “pith instruction” teachings cover the whole of a practice in a short concise way. In Tibet, there were eight practice lineages brought directly from India to Tibet, each with their own pith instructions. The oldest are from great masters who studied the many different sutras, tantras, and other essential practices that were compiled and passed on to their students. One can study many sutras and tantras. Once studied, the question is then, “How should one practice them?” The Nyingma school has pith instructions for the Dzogchen teachings, the Kagyus practice pith instructions for Mahamudra, and for the Sakyas, it is Lam Dre and shi je and chod. The pith instructions are the most ultimate instructions but one also must go through preliminary practices to prepare oneself to purify the mind.

The teachings in this text cover the whole practice of Mahamudra but in a concise or pith way explaining how to understand the nature of things. The importance of studying, understanding, and following the meditation instructions means you can gain greater benefit. We can understand and have ideas about how things are theoretically, but to have direct experience and deepen one's understanding is so important. For that, one needs to meditate. By using the instructions in the teachings while engaging in meditation practice, one can benefit tremendously. Even if you are very learned, without meditation there will not be much benefit.

Of course it's very, very good to receive teachings. Even if one has quite good understandings, if one doesn't do meditation practice, without this direct experience, there may be little transformation. That instruction is really the most important instruction I have

received. Some people ask me, “Should I just go into retreat all the time and give up everything?” You can also become enlightened if you participate in the world and practice and study. Whether you are at home, in the cave, or in the monastery the habitual tendencies that bind us to samsara are still there. Whether you change your appearance, go into retreat for years, or become a monk, we still have the same attachments - aversion, attractions - all habitual tendencies can remain exactly the same. If the change is only external, if that is the only thing that is different, there will be little change. It is not about changing the clothes, or changing the place. We need to practice meditation to experience the wisdom of the teachings to develop real insight.

So what is *the view* in meditation?

In Buddhism, it is important to try to find the truth; to find out how things are in reality is very important. It is understood that the way we react and see things habitually defines how we experience the world. We may spend our lives looking into the causes of our problems in the world, whether it is international issues or individual problems. From a Buddhist perspective, the main poisoning of the mind is through the perpetuation of negative emotions. When there is too much hatred, anger, ill will, greed, jealousy, envy, arrogance - excessive attachment and desire, there can be all together too much wanting and too much ego clinging.

These different states of mind, over time, can create habitual tendencies of responsiveness, reaction, and inculcated opinions. We become addicted to these ways of acting and reacting. Wars, conflicts, lack of inner peace, and lack of concern for others pollute the world and create all kinds of problems.

We think and act in these habitual ways, generating many types of compulsions, excesses, and negativities, because we believe something good will come from it. We often don't realize these habitual ways of reacting are harmful not only for ourselves but also for others, in the immediate sense and in the long run. We react in these ways because of *not knowing*, referred to as “ignorance” in Buddhism.

From the point of misunderstanding,



Guru Padmasabhava

Buddhism views negative emotions as a result of not seeing intelligently and clearly how things are *in reality*. If we really understood that acting and reacting in a negative way is not good for me and not good for others now and in the future, if we could see that it brings pain and suffering, and creates problems, we would not act or react in this way.

Madhyamika analysis in meditation.

That is why developing an understanding of the *nature of reality* is so important. How we see things and understand them - the actions and their results. In Madhyamika philosophy, we ask questions about how things exist in particular in relation to phenomena, the outside world. For example, we seek to distinguish the conceptual frameworks created by the mind from the object we are contemplating or observing, be it a

table or a glass or another part of the phenomenal world. We asks questions such as, “What is this table? If in pieces, is it still a table? How is it existing externally to me?” We can ask broad questions, such as, “In what way does the world exist separate to my mind’s version of its existence?” From a Vajrayana perspective, in relation to pith instructions, in the Mahamudra and Dzogchen, more emphasis is given on the mind – “who is it that I am?” and, “What is it that I am?” more so than in relation the Madhyamika focus on phenomena.

Kalachakra tantra.

In Kalachakra tantra, we look at the elements that make up our body, that need to find some balance and harmony to engender well-being. The elements - earth (substance such as flesh), water (such as blood and other fluid), air (such as breath),

fire (such as body heat), space (such as cavities, space in the stomach, et cetera). And there is the conscious element. Now these kind of elements can be seen as matter, or energy, or matter and mind.

Space, for example, allows for change, transformation, evolution; the idea of all things coming and going, birth and death, creation and dissolution. There is inner space and external space. The consciousness is very important to consider because, how we see and feel about ourselves and the world, how we react, everything is done through our mind. Happiness is a mental action, as is unhappiness, all that is good and not good, our sadness, happiness, joy, everything comes from mind. So to understand what is consciousness is very important.

We first look at the body in this way to see its constant change, moment by moment. We know there are trillions of bacteria in our bodies, trillions of cells, always changing and in motion. Also it is said that all the cells in the body change every 7 years, so we are becoming a new person all the time, as we age. We have this body, but where does consciousness reside, and what is consciousness? Is it wrapped up with my identity? When we look for consciousness, it cannot be pinned down. We need to really experientially investigate. Guru Rinpoche has said, "Your consciousness is nothing but emptiness." Believing that is not enough. We need to investigate deeply – clearly contemplate and understand how we react to change. That is how we can create transformation – through direct experience – not just because we believe something.

The Buddha reminds us that we shouldn't believe something because he said it. We shouldn't believe something even if it is written in a very sacred text, or believe because everybody else believes something. We must test, deeply experiment and investigate the teachings through study, meditation, and contemplation. This investigation helps us clarify and understand what is being said in the teachings. This investigation and understanding, this direct experience leads to transformation. Therefore *the view* is about that, understanding the aspect of

philosophy and the instructions to approach its investigation. This will help us have glimpses of reality, to have direct experience. That is, to uncover how things are in reality, and how I am in reality.

When we do more than just believe, when we really see and understand, then our way of reacting to ourselves, others, and the world changes. That is how we transform, not because we believe something. That's why *the view* is so important. You might have the most trust in the Buddha, but still we must investigate.

What is mind, where is mind?

In Mahamudra meditation, we look at our own consciousness awareness, the mind, and we look to see what is going on. We find our mind has lots of thoughts and emotions, worries and so on. All that activity is not so important in our investigation. What is important, is to investigate "What is mind?" We can observe and watch a thought coming and going, emotion coming and going, or sensation coming and going, coming, going and changing. Then what happens?

"All the sufferings we are having is not because there is something wrong with the mind or consciousness, but rather, the way we conceptualize can create ongoing problems. So we don't have to get rid of things in the mind, instead we need to change our perception."

"Where is the thought located? Where did the thought go? Is it in my head? Where exactly in the head? When I think about head, it is there, if I think about my feet it is there, wherever I think it is, it seems to be there!"

We cannot entirely locate our mind or thoughts, and if we want to get rid of a thought somehow, we can't always get rid of it. With some meditation instructions, we are instructed to move our minds - extend the mind beyond the body, extend the mind far away into the east, or north and so on. So we can experience expanding the mind out and drawing it in and so forth. So therefore, the state of our mind, what our consciousness is, can be seen as more undefined, not solid. With

this type of investigation, we can gain insight into the nature of the mind (*Drup tsal mepa semchen*).

So part of the view of Mahamudra means there is not something independent, substantial – (*ten mepa* means not something born or created). You can't locate it definitely, nor can its manifestation be seized or captured - its creativity of endless thoughts and other arises. This nature is the nature of everything. Our consciousness and phenomena have the same ultimate nature, uncontrived, how things are in reality.

So if we look deeply there is nothing that needs to be acquired. There is nothing to add, and there is nothing to get rid of because fundamentally, the nature of mind is just awareness, clarity. We do not experience the mind and ourselves in that way, as we are deluded. Like mistaking a rope for a snake, we perpetuate all kinds of conceptual misunderstandings. In relation to seeing the rope as a snake, our consciousness actually did see the snake. Your sensory perception was not really wrong, the

concept of a snake was simply misplaced and attributed to the rope. This is an important aspect and example of a samsaric problem. All the sufferings we are having is not because there is something wrong with the mind or consciousness, but rather, the way we conceptualize can create ongoing problems. So we don't have to get rid of things in the mind, instead we need to change our perception.

In that way, there is nothing to be totally gotten rid of actually. The Buddhist point of view is that, to see things as they are in reality, to have the right view, and the right meditation, we can actually experience our true nature. In that way, we can see there is nothing to get rid of as such, we are just purified then and there. Even with lots of delusions, we may



thus are personal creation and have limitations. All these concepts and ideas are useful, but from a Buddhist point of view, we can go beyond concepts to something unconditional. This kind of understanding is difficult to grasp and to experience because our way of looking at things is so dualistic. We see things as either this or that. So if we can even a little bit, go beyond concepts to a more open state of mind in our meditation, then we can experience something like the meditation of Mahamudra. ■

believe much purification is needed.

There are negative things that we have done from the beginningless time to now, over countless lives. All the negative deeds, if we have to purify by experiencing the negative result of it, then there will be no chance that we will be purified ever. Developing wisdom is the strongest purification.

myself to be, and how I exist are all a series of concepts. When we know that they are concepts, we realize we don't need to grasp so tightly on to a fixed sense of ourselves. Everything that arises in the mind is in a way manifested (created) by the mind. All these things, our experience, are manifestations, creative energy of the mind, it is a radiance. So therefore,

“Everything that arises in the mind is in a way manifested (created) by the mind. All these things, our experience, are manifestations, creative energy of the mind, it is a radiance. So therefore, everything can be seen as primordially right or pure, fundamentally right and pure from the beginning, deeply and naturally pure.”

When we deeply, deeply experience the wisdom of awareness, insubstantiality and emptiness, when we understand this, we know more directly our true nature. So therefore, you know, that's wisdom. The wisdom is not something you have to get, it is something you recognize. In that way, we can understand the view of Mahamudra, that there is nothing to get rid of, actually.

All the time, we make so many concepts, we hold all kind of views about what we like and dislike, what should or shouldn't happen, what is good and what is bad; I'm happy or I'm unhappy, I'm good or I'm bad. We have all kinds of things arising in the mind. We can see that simply as manifestations or radiance.

The idea of the self.

We don't need to grasp on to a fixed sense of self. Who I am, who I believe

everything can be seen as primordially right or pure, fundamentally right and pure from the beginning, deeply and naturally pure. There's nothing impure, nothing unenlightened, nothing imperfect. To deeply understand this, we can go beyond concepts. We normally only function through concepts. We have judgements that this is, or this is not, of right or wrong, pure or impure, and so on. But in reality, it is not fixed, and cannot be tied down to a concept. That is why the true nature is referred to, as called, being naturally perfect, uncontrived and untainted, it is Buddha Nature, the true nature. It doesn't mean that if you say it's very good, very perfect, that's also a concept, because what is perfect?

What do we mean by perfection or truth? We can ask, whose perfection, whose truth? These are all concepts, and

Ringu Tulku Rinpoche is a Tibetan Buddhist Master of the Kagyu Order. He was trained in all schools of Tibetan Buddhism under many great masters such as HH the 16th Gyalwa Karmapa and HH Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche. He took his formal education at Namgyal of Tibetology, Gangtok and Sampurnananda Sanskrit University in Varanasi, India. Rinpoche has served as Professor of Tibetology in Sikkim for 17 years. His doctoral thesis was on the Ecumenical Movement in Tibet.

Since 1990, he has been traveling and teaching Buddhism and meditation at more than 50 universities, institutes and Buddhist Centres in Europe, USA, Canada, Australia, and Asia. He also participates in various interfaith dialogues. He authored several books on Buddhism as well as some children's books both in Tibetan and European languages. He founded Bodhicharya (www.bodhicharya.org), an international organization that coordinates the worldwide activities to preserve and transmit Buddhist teachings, to promote inter-cultural dialogues and educational & social projects. He also founded Rigul Trust which supports his projects in his birthplace, Rigul, Tibet (www.rigultrust.org). Rinpoche is the Official Representative of His Holiness the 17th Karmapa for Europe and the Founder of Karmapa Foundation Europe (www.karmapa.foundation.eu).

Zen and the Art of Nonduality

Discussion with Buddhist Summer School 2025 presenter

Dr Leesa Davis

Traleg Khandro



Dr Leesa Davis is a lecturer in philosophy and religious studies at Deakin University. She is the author of *Advaita Vedanta and Zen Buddhism: Deconstructive modes of spiritual inquiry* and has written on Hindu and Buddhist philosophy, meditative experience, Buddhist ethics, and Buddhism in Australia. Her current research is on the use of paradox in Zen Buddhism; Japanese Dry-Stone Gardens and Zen; and the interaction of tradition and modernity in the work of Bob Dylan. In her interactive workshop at the Summer School Leesa will explore, over three sessions, the connection between Zen practice experience and Zen philosophy by linking nonduality to the core Buddhist philosophical mainstays of impermanence, dependent co-origination, and emptiness.

Khandro: Thank you for giving me your time today to discuss aspects of the topic you will be presenting at the 2025 Buddhist Summer School, your interactive workshop on Zen and the Art of Nonduality.

Davis: Thank you for inviting me.

Khandro: Duality and nonduality are fundamental tenets in Buddhism and such an important concept to investigate for all Buddhist Schools. You will be

focusing on the Zen tradition in your workshop.

Davis: Yes, nonduality is a huge topic and the concept and the experience is important to all Buddhist schools in different ways. In Buddhist thought there are a lot of interpretations of nonduality and its meaning and significance for Buddhist philosophy and practice. My focus is on the articulation and experience of nonduality in the Zen traditions. I want to focus on Zen teacher-student exchanges along with key pointers from scripture and the great Patriarchs of Zen. For example, we will draw from the Prajnaparamita and Lankavatara Sutras, which are key teachings for early Zen and the 14th patriarch Nagarjuna will also be important in this discussion. Other teachers and masters will include Eihei Dogen Zenji and some contemporary teachers.

The question to begin with is, “What is nonduality?” Here, we can take a lead from the Buddha, and there’s no better place to start than there! There is a definition in one of the dialogues from the Lankavatara Sutra:

When the disciple Mahamati asked “What is meant by nonduality?” the Buddha answered:

What is meant by nonduality? It means that light and shade, long and short, black and white, are relative terms, Mahāmati, and not independent of each other; as Nirvana and Samsara are, all things are not two. There is no Nirvana except where is Samsara; there is no Samsara except where is Nirvana; for the condition of existence is not of mutually-exclusive character. Therefore, it is said that all things are nondual as are Nirvana and Samsara. (Suzuki, 1999, pp. 67-68)

The Buddha was asked by Mahamati, “What is nonduality,” and the Buddha says, “Reality is not of an exclusive character and all things Mahamati, they



are *not two*.” The “not two” I believe is very important because nonduality in the Zen traditions, and in the general Buddhist sense, this “not two” does not mean it is one.

Nonduality is often thought of as *things being one*, things being non-separate. If everything goes back to one, that would be monism, which is of course a Hindu point of view where everything is permanent, unchanging, indivisible, and so on. Whereas Buddhist ontology says the complete opposite in that change and transition is the only constant! In a sense, in Buddhist thought it is the process that is all important. Looking at things in this way, we can say that we are transitional beings; always in states of becomings. Of course, here we touch on dependent origination and emptiness and all these great dynamic philosophical concepts. But the whole point of the discussion on “being not two” is that they are “non-



that which is by nature dynamic. What we want to do is get into the dynamics of this relationship, for in all Buddhist traditions, any insight into, “reality as it is” is not the understanding of some sort of static absolute but a glimpse of a dynamic processes that are ever-changing.

In this sense, Buddhist thought posits a dynamic philosophy. So, in Zen discourse, when trying to grasp or attach to any aspect of the teachings or the path, you are often left cutting off the branch you are sitting on, because you are deliberately problematizing all supports. Zen retreats are often described as pressure cookers but we are stewing in our own juice! And what we are stewing in, is the three poisons. In this struggle with grasping, we are coming up against our own three poisons of attachments, aversions, and ignorance, and these three are the fundamental barriers to any sort of insight in Buddhist terms. In effect, an insight into nonduality, whether it be a philosophical insight or an experiential insight, is a type of deconstruction in many ways. Deconstruction is the modern philosophical term but it is almost like a type of deconditioning, or perhaps better, an *experiential undoing* of static frames of knowing and being. Because reality just is, right! Reality as it is – which was the Buddha’s great insight on his night of enlightenment; he saw into reality *as it is* with no overlays. He had a fully existential experience of reality, as it is, and this is of course why he said I cannot possibly teach this, because it’s so subtle. But of course, out of great compassion, he did teach this and here we are still learning!

Khandro: You are raising such important points, that we don’t want to throw out the beauty of our mental activity, because there is so much potential creative capacity. But we do want to have greater insight into our experiences that are very sort of impulse-oriented. The desire to solidify what we believe and how we respond to our beliefs is very strong and very habituated. To rest in a degree of solidity is more comfortable, it’s so much more comfortable in a way than embracing the dynamic nature of everything.

Davis: Yes, one of the greatest abilities we have as human beings is the ability to

dually not two”. So “all things return to one, but where does the one return to?” is how the saying goes in Zen.

In this type of questioning, we have the possibility of a kind of opening—that is an unanswerable question—but what it does in a practice situation on the meditation cushion, is open what I call the nondual phenomenological space, which is just a name for a kind of insight experience one can have on the cushion. But it’s a contentless insight, it is an insight that opens a space, opens a space of awareness, is the opening of shunyata, the opening of some kind of engagement with shunyata that is non-conceptual. Even in this brief outline, we are already pushing the limits of language and this is where the fun starts! I hope this makes sense!

Khandro: It does. I think it’s an excellent opening to this discussion. The idea of using words and concepts to create a non-conceptual environment in meditation is a very interesting one, so it doesn’t negate, it’s not saying the activity of the mind is problematic necessarily, but the relationship to the activity of the mind may need to be, for want of a better word, “reviewed.” Those unanswerable questions have a beautiful unknowing, an unknowing and spaciousness to them.

Davis: Exactly and this is a very interesting and pertinent parallel because

of course as I mentioned, Nagarjuna is a Patriarch of Zen and the four-cornered negation is very important in Zen discourse, in different ways, especially in Dogen’s Zenji’s commentaries. Master Dogen will be someone that I will be especially focusing on. I hope that the workshop type of format I am aiming for at the Summer School will allow people to freely contribute, and for experiential ideas to be discussed. We will begin the discussion with a teaching from the Buddha then move through some of the key Zen exchanges and teachings, and basically unpack them. Unpacking them and incorporating our own experience. In an active dialogue with these teachings, we will reflect on our own meditation practice and understandings.

Opening the questioning space and working with negation is important in this line of teaching. In many ways, it’s all about not substantializing. What we ultimately get to is a non-negating negation. Because nonduality is not just the negation of dualistic thinking, which is important, but it is also the problematization of dualistic thinking. What we don’t want to do, in classical Buddhist terms, is to fall into an extreme. What we don’t want to do is to replace a substantialized idea of duality with a substantialized idea of nonduality because we are then left with a substantializing of

reflect, but to be able to reflect upon the fact that we are reflecting, when you think about it, is quite an exceptional skill.

We should also touch on the cultivation of virtues and the importance of the Bodhisattva path. This is often forgotten in contemporary adaptations of mindfulness – with an over-emphasis of the idea of non-judgemental awareness. This is certainly part of traditional mindfulness practice, and is a very important idea, but non-judgemental awareness does not mean just accepting everything that comes up in the mind. For example, Buddhism does talk very strongly about the cultivation of wholesome virtues. We have the four Brahmaviharas, the six paramitas, and so on in all Buddhist traditions. In the context of nonduality, it is very interesting to think about the cultivation of virtue and the idea of the non-discriminating mind.

There are wholesome and unwholesome states of mind, there are wholesome and unwholesome actions. Buddhist scripture is very clear on a lot of these considerations. In understanding this, I think the trick is to get into the dynamics of the dichotomy.

Let's say we have an unwholesome thought, we have a thought that is to do with greed or ignorance or whatever. Now we don't want to just get rid of that, because that doesn't actually get rid of it, it stays there. What we want to do is understand the relationship, and the meaning of non-discrimination in relation to meditation practice.

We shouldn't prioritise and fall into the extreme of being or non-being, of nihilism or sensuality or whatever dichotomous relationships we want to talk about. So what can we do? By falling into an extreme, we will substantialize and solidify. The whole problem with all of this is reification in philosophical terms, or substantialisation. So what is so bad about substantialisation? It is not reflective of reality as it is. Reality as it is dynamic and fluid. The Zen example is that you're shooting an arrow at a target, but the target is still moving, and you are shooting at the same place where the target was, but it is not there anymore.

This opening up of a nondual dynamic awareness is a glimpse, some kind of non-conceptual glimpse into things as they are. This brings me to another interesting point - the groundless ground of action in the world. The whole point of things is not to be the Olympic gold medallist meditator in the zendo or in the gomba, it is to be able to take this sensibility and these insights into the world. This is of course the wonderful Mahayana motivation, the Bodhisattva motivation, that you are practicing for all sentient beings, not just for your own benefit. This is the connection, so, why should I care? In Buddhist terms, we should care because of dependent origination, the beginning and endless continuum of interrelated phenomena arising and falling according to conditions. The deep caring comes from the interrelatedness of all beings. How could we not care, how could we not cultivate compassion since we are so interconnected?

“Suzuki Roshi, the Founder of the San Francisco Zen Center, said, “The use of language is like trying to scratch your foot with your shoe on.” All of the Zen playful contradictions and performative use of language are to undo our conceptual moorings to language.”

Khandro: The idea of that relationship is, I think, very interesting and important. These contemplations, insights and meditative experience, as you say, should affect our everyday life. All the activity of the mind does not need to be rejected. There are many things that we can become aware of. The issue for us is the desire and compulsion to latch on to some of what arises in the mind. Once we have latched on, we want to continue or develop the story, often referred to as conceptual proliferation.

This commitment to this type of conceptual activity takes a great deal of our energy. It causes a great deal of impairment, and suffering, a restricted view of oneself, and of one's capacity. Realizing that, experiencing that, is the arising of compassion. Because we are all in the same boat, we can develop such feelings of empathy and compassion. It is

the process.

Davis: It is the process. This is a very important point. In talking about nonduality and we are talking about the non-plurality of the world, we are talking about non-difference. So, in this type of insight, no matter how brief, divisions do melt away or divisionary thinking begins to leave us. This is because of the fluidity in the dynamic of understanding how dichotomous entities, relationships, or whatever, are actually mutually dependent. That is a very philosophical way of putting it but in practice it is a felt experience. This is an example that insight into nonduality is not about everything being one, it is about everything being not two, and not one also. Not one not two is a standard Zen motto. This is the dynamic of dependent origination and emptiness. Because emptiness is not nothing, and emptiness is not to be thought of as opposed to something that is full. The idea of emptiness is actually the

potentiality of all becoming.

One of the key virtues that Buddhist practitioners cultivate within these kinds of non-discriminatory insights we have been talking about, is the virtue of non-attachment. Non-attachment is often translated as detachment in English, which I think is a mistranslation because it gives the connotation of being detached and not caring. But the cultivation of non-attachment, the Buddha spoke about is reality as it is.

Khandro: Which comes back to the idea of dynamics and emptiness that you were speaking about. As practitioners we can always see enlightenment as far away today as the day we began to meditate. When we talk about progress along the path, we may feel that enlightenment is going further and further away as if enlightenment is a place, a predetermined non-dynamic place. The relationship that

we might have with where I am now and where I would like to be is a great place to rest in meditation and observe how ideas can solidify and how we tend to seek to arrest the dynamics.

Davis: Yes this is so important. The idea of path and goal, enlightenment is my goal, it is over there somewhere or up there or even in here. But as soon as we become goal orientated to such an extent, we're solidifying the path. And the path is nothing but dynamic. So what is enlightenment? This is another whole great discussion, what is enlightenment? The Dalai Lama in his commentary on *The Way of the Bodhisattva* says, "Flashes of lightening in the dark of night." The more experienced or insightful we are on the path, the flashes may come closer together. This is a very dynamic way of thinking about enlightenment, or enlightened moments. It wouldn't make sense if enlightenment is a one off, solid unchanging state, if so why are beings like His Holiness still practicing?

Khandro: When you look at the early teachings of the Buddha, his students would ask questions and the Buddha would go into meditative absorption and then he would come out of meditation and answer the question. It suggests that the Buddha, until the day he died, was meditating, he was doing a lot of practice and then sharing his insights.

Davis: There are causes and conditions, momentariness, things happening all the time. This is the sensibility that brings Zen meditative insight or contemplative insight out of the zendo. We bring these insights out of the zendo and into the marketplace (everyday life). Nondual action is action in flow. It is responsive action to what is occurring now.

The relationship between practice and nondual action can be compared with the relationship between practice and results in elite sports or musicians. Musicians practice practice practice practice practice practice practice practice practice, then it comes to a point when there is no separation between the player, what is being played, and the music. And this is a very good example of nondual insight and the relationship, the need for practice. I think it was Trungpa Rinpoche who was very fond of saying, "Enlightenment is an accident, practice

makes one accident prone." It's this type of idea that is very important. We don't want to separate, we don't want to be gold medalist meditators in a gompa or a zendo, we want to be active in the world with all sentient beings, however we define "sentient."

Khandro: That flow through in every day life is such an important point. Our ability to develop spontaneous responsiveness to the circumstances that surround us. When it comes to meditation, we may decide that we are too angry or we are too attached, or whatever it might be, or that we want to really understand emptiness and not see anything as solid. As soon as that level of determination comes in, there



is a potential for a lack of kindness towards oneself and others. If we focus too tightly in that way, the anger becomes more central, not less.

Davis: Exactly. and we can't get rid of it that way, where are you going to put it? You can't get rid of these things, the teachings tell us that you can respond appropriately. There are situations where one may need anger or wrath. The danger for oneself is to carry that anger over and over and over, until it is unescapable. In the Zen traditions, it is to do with consolidation of thought, over conceptualising and then solidifying that mental activity. There is the instruction to let your thoughts come and go but don't invite them in for a cup of tea. If you say, I'm going to practice and I'm going to get

rid of anger, then that approach makes it impossible. We're getting more angry because we can't get rid of anger.

Khandro: And then we come back to the idea of allowing, of accommodating anger so it can arise and subside without our fueling it with excessive engagement.

Davis: This is a very good word, accommodating. So yes sometimes we're angry, but be angry without fueling it, without adding. This is the traditional definition of a *skandha*, it's a bundle of fuel. And that's what grasping is, a sort of fuel and we don't want to set fire to the bundle—we don't want to grasp on to it and have it burst into flames in our face.

Khandro: When we look at what we can very easily take into our everyday life, it is that very thing, that no matter what arises, if in our meditation we don't turn away from it, we don't excessively judge it, and we give it some accommodation, it cannot burn. It doesn't have any fuel, it relaxes. Then the shift that happens is that we are deconstructing our habitual responsiveness.

Davis: Deconditioning, deconstructing – experientially undoing.

Khandro: Deconditioning and deconstructing means different things may arise again and again, but more and more it becomes less powerful, we maintain our agency, it can become familiar, but instead of being excessively responsive we simply observe and are aware. Over time, maybe over many years, this thing that has been disturbing our peace of mind, arising habitually - our many prejudices or judgements - it becomes neutral, loses its power. Then there is that sense of freedom. The sense of freedom to not be compelled to respond to or follow a thought or a feeling. A free moment is a liberated moment.

Davis: A liberating moment. And hopefully we have more and more of these moments. We can't plan them because we can't plan causes and conditions. This is the whole point of the dynamic of dependent origination. But in a sense, if there is any "result" in Buddhist practice, it is perhaps a clarity of mind, some sort of clarity of mind but also, responding appropriately rather than reacting to whatever arises. And this is an incredibly

dynamic tableau.

Khandro: Many concepts in Buddhism need quite a bit of unpacking.

Davis: This is in a sense what Zen tries to do, Zen teachings teach strategies to try to unpack the dualistic moorings of language. Language is inherently substantializing. We use nouns all the time, and if we can move toward more verbs, where, instead of “beings” we are “becomings.” It represents a closer dynamic understanding. Suzuki Roshi, the Founder of the San Francisco Zen Center, said, “The use of language is like trying to scratch your foot with your shoe on.” All of the Zen playful contradictions and performative use of language are to undo our conceptual moorings to language. The classic example is of course, the finger pointing to the moon, knowing the finger is not the moon.

Khandro: This comes back to the idea of the path, that we have a set of concepts and then we may take a Buddhist teaching that introduces different concepts. One can find that one’s preciously held conceptual frameworks can drop away through listening to a profound teaching, as we adopt a new set of concepts and create a new conceptual framework. We attend another Buddhist teaching and again we come out with a new set of concepts, the old ones lose their solidity, become deconstructed, and new ones constructed. We can become familiar with the process of the concepts falling away and a new groups taking their place. A lesson in insubstantiality, and how the mind tends to organize itself.

Davis: According to causes and conditions! This is why we need teachers, we need spiritual friends. It’s ultimately up to us, but nonetheless we need these guides to continually keep puncturing our balloons, because we keep blowing up the conceptual balloon. This is where I think Nagarjuna’s great warning is so important: The wise men (i.e., enlightened ones) have said that sunyata or the nature of thusness is the relinquishing of all false views. Yet it is said that those who adhere to the idea or concept of sunyata are incorrigible. (Inada, 1970, p. 93)

He who substantializes emptiness is incorrigible. In Nagarjuna’s examples it is

like grabbing a snake by the wrong end, or an incantation that is wrongly put forward, it will blow up in your face.

We keep setting up frameworks of concepts and, we think this is it, and then it gets replaced by another one. Through this process we can realise that actually we have to be more fluid, there’s always going to be another set of concepts we have to work with. Still we need to be really careful to ensure we keep the fluidity in motion.

Khandro: I feel like the warnings from the masters such as Nargajuna are the signposts. If one actually has an experience, if the master’s sitting there and you have an experience of concepts falling away these are helpful and enlightening moments. I wanted to just mention the idea of sudden enlightenment and gradual enlightenment. Traleg Rinpoche used to say, sudden enlightenment happens gradually.

Davis: This is a great phrase.

Khandro: It is a great phrase because spiritual people or meditators can be very hard on ourselves, thinking we should always be better than we are right now. But the process of de-conditioning and deconstructing is ongoing and repeated many times. It means that there will be reconstruction. In the ongoing process of deconditioning and reconditioning; deconstructing and reconstructing, that one can simply have moments when it all drops away and we have a glimpse of a non-conceptual, clear mind. A freer mind. So all that chipping away (the gradual),

then one suddenly has a moment or a breakthrough (the sudden). Thus sudden enlightenment happens gradually.

Davis: Otherwise we are stuck. The Zen term is that we need to go back to the marketplace. I think sudden enlightenment happens gradually as you say, brings us back to the idea of flow. Because the musician that has to practice, practice, practice to get that non-separation between player and played and music, that is a sudden thing that has happened gradually.

Khandro: Yes, doing the practice, using the techniques, and a lot of repetition allowing one to be free to improvise in musical terms. For the meditator, it’s another type of freedom.

Davis: In a sense, with these type of teachings and practices we are actually creating very different types of habits. I think one of the hardest things is to practice every day. To just keep a habit going. It is a process of conditioning that needs to be undone, reconditioned, deconstructed, constructed, deconstructed, constructed, it’s this ongoing process of dynamic fluidity.

Khandro: Dr Davis, this has been a wonderful discussion and very helpful. Thank you so much. I so look forward to what I am sure will be a very insightful and explorative interactive workshop at the upcoming Buddhist Summer School.

Davis: My pleasure, I am very much looking forward to engaging with everyone at the Summer School. ■

In the interactive workshop, Zen and the Art of Non-Duality, Dr Leesa Davis will explore the connection between Zen practice and Zen philosophy by linking these understandings of nonduality to the core Buddhist philosophical mainstays of impermanence, dependent co-origination, and emptiness. Focusing on classical and contemporary dialogues between teachers and students, we will attempt to enter into the world of the questioning student and identify the philosophical and experiential “surprises” that challenges to everyday dualistic assumptions provoke. “Surprises” that could be conceived as glimpses of “seeing things as they are.” Each session will begin with outlining a nondual teaching or dialogue. We will then identify key philosophical tenets that are embedded in the teaching and consider the experiential impact on the questioning student. There will be plenty of time for discussion and questions.

For more information about the E-Vam Institute Buddhist Summer School and to book:

For the full Buddhist Summer School Program:

<https://evaminstitute.org/event/bss202/>

Email: info@evaminstitute.org

BUDDHIST SUMMER SCHOOL 2025

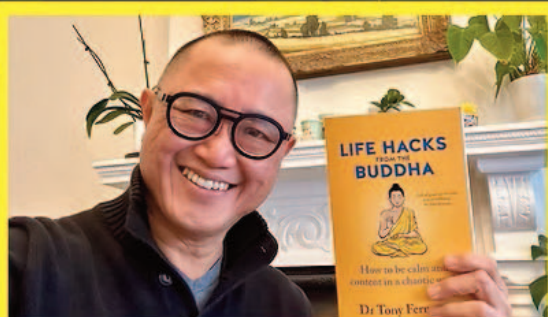
23rd - 26th January



Khenpo Ngawang Sangye
Meaghan Duffy



Lopon Chandra Easton
Ekai Korematsu Roshi



Dr Tony Fernando
Venerable Jangchub Lhamo



Francesca Fremantle

Nyima Tashi is honoured to present the 2025 Auckland Buddhist Summer School.

This year we have an ensemble of gifted orators at the 15th Auckland Buddhist Summer School. This is a precious opportunity to engage, question and contemplate the Wisdom of all traditions which can be a catalyst for transformation. Teachings can be attended in-person or via ZOOM. We hope that you will join us at the Forum which commences on Thursday the 23rd January at 6.30PM.

Interview with Ekai Korematsu Roshi Commentary by Master Dogen on the Heart Sutra

Traleg Khandro



Soto Zen Master Dogen

Ekai Korematsu Roshi will be giving courses at both the Buddhist Summer Schools at Maitripa Centre, Healesville, and Nyima Tashi Buddhist Centre in Auckland.

In this interview Ekai Roshi speaks about the courses he will be giving on the **Great Wisdom that is Beyond Discriminatory Thought**.

Ekai Roshi will be exploring the profound teachings of *Maka Hannya Haramitsu* (*Mahā Prajñā Pāramitā* in Sanskrit), a commentary by Soto Zen master Dogen on the Heart Sutra (*Mahā Prajñā Pāramitā Hridaya Sutra*). This work delves deeply into the concept of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) and the crucial role of non-discrimination in Buddhist practice. Ekai Roshi has been the Abbot and Teacher of the Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community in Melbourne since 1999. Born in Japan in 1948, his Buddhist education and training is from Zen tradition. Roshi was ordained by Kobun Chino Roshi at Haiku Zendo in Los

Altos, California, in 1976. He received Dharma transmission from Ikko Narasaki Roshi at Zuijōji Monastery in Japan in 1986. His formal training spanned twelve years in three Zen monasteries: Eihei-ji, Zuijōji, and Shōgoji, rooted in Soto Zen Buddhism. In addition to his role at Jikishoan, Ekai Roshi has taught at the annual Buddhist Summer School and the Winter Zen Lecture since 1999, at the invitation of Traleg Kyabgon IX. He has also taught Buddhism in the USA, Japan, India, and New Zealand for over 40 years.

Interview begins here:

Khandro: Thank you so much for giving your time to answer these questions

Roshi: I am happy to, thank you.

Khandro: This is a very important topic. What were your main reasons for wanting to discuss this topic at the 2025 Buddhist Summer School?

Roshi: I chose this topic to deepen

practitioners' understanding of emptiness, a central concept in Mahayana Buddhism. The Heart Sutra teaches that all phenomena are empty of inherent existence, and non-discrimination is key to directly experiencing this interconnectedness. Through these teachings, I aim to bridge the gap between abstract philosophy and practical application, showing how the realization of emptiness can relieve suffering and foster true freedom. Additionally, this topic aligns with Zen's emphasis on direct, experiential wisdom, guiding practitioners to transcend dualistic thinking and the conventional judgements that obscure a deeper understanding of reality.

Khandro: What role do you see that non-discrimination play in understanding emptiness?

Roshi: Non-discrimination – the suspension of habitual distinctions between self and other – is essential for realizing emptiness. By letting go of dualistic thinking (such as good/bad, self/other), practitioners can directly experience the interdependent nature of all phenomena. In Dogen's view, non-discrimination allows one to engage with reality without the interference of conceptual filters, revealing that all things are empty of independent existence. This shift in perception dissolves rigid distinctions, uncovering the insubstantiality of all things and cultivating a non-conceptual awareness of the world's ever-changing, interconnected nature.

Khandro: What are the benefits of developing the wisdom of emptiness?

Roshi: The wisdom of emptiness offers transformative benefits for Buddhist practitioners. It reduces attachment and suffering by revealing the impermanent and interconnected nature of all things. This understanding fosters compassion, as



practitioners come to realize that the suffering of others is not separate from their own. Furthermore, it allows for a direct, unmediated experience of reality, free from conceptual divisions, leading to greater clarity, peace, and insight. Embracing emptiness also undermines the ego, encouraging a more selfless and adaptive approach to life. It promotes equanimity, helping practitioners become less affected by the fluctuations of fortune. Finally, it deepens meditation practice, dissolving the sense of a fixed, independent self and leading to profound peace and liberation.

Zen Master Dogen refers to a gatha composed by his teacher, the Buddha of

old, which beautifully encapsulates this wisdom:

My whole being is like the mouth of a bell suspended in empty space;

It does not ask whether the wind blows east or west, north or south.

Impartial to all, it sounds the Wisdom for the sake of others:

"Bong bong bong," says the wind bell, "bong bong bong."

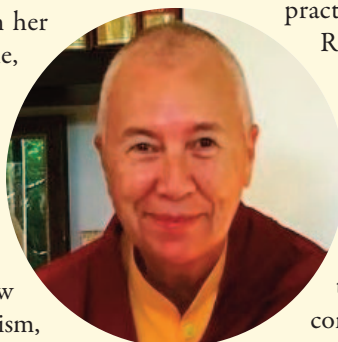
Dogen comments, "This is the sounding of Wisdom, the true transmission of Buddhas and Ancestors. His whole being is this Wisdom; the whole of others is this Wisdom; the whole of oneself is this Wisdom; the whole of east and west, north and south is this Wisdom."

Roshi Concludes: In summary, through Maka Hannya Haramitsu, Zen Master Dogen guides practitioners to transcend dualistic thinking and directly realize the wisdom of emptiness. This leads to greater freedom, compassion, and clarity in their spiritual practice.

Khandro: Thank you so much for providing such insight in this interview. We so look forward to welcoming you and receiving teachings on Master Dogen's commentary at the upcoming Buddhist Summer School 2025, at Maitripa Centre, Healesville. You will also be teachings at Nyima Tashi Centre later in January in Auckland, New Zealand. Both Centres look forward to your teachings. ■

Ani Jangchub Lhamo will be giving a course at the Auckland Buddhist Summer School on Being at Ease with Unruly Emotions.

Ani Jangchub Lhamo is a Buddhist nun in the Tibetan tradition. In 2004 under instructions from her teacher, the 9th Traleg Kyabgon Rinpoche, Ani-la reluctantly agreed to Rinpoche's request to speak on various points of Buddhism, its Philosophy and its Practices. Venerable Jangchub is of Maori/Samoan descent. Ani-la is both the caretaker and resident Nun at Traleg Kyabgon Rinpoche's Nyima Tashi Centre in Auckland, New Zealand. Prior to her movement into Buddhism, Ani La's formative years were spent in the study of Theology, primarily liturgy, ethics, and pastoral care.



Ani Jangchub Reflection on the Importance of Lineage

The movement of Buddhism as a foreign import from India into Tibet saw the transformative nature of the Dharma take root in Tibetan society – its transformation was beyond recognition from its pre-Buddhist nature to its Buddhist nature. But it's also of course instructive to examine the way Buddhism itself was articulated and developed, which brings us to the Vajrayana path.

Within the Vajrayana tradition there is a greater emphasis placed on the relationship between student and teacher, a relationship which can be both intimate and intensely provoking.

Traleg Rinpoche once said that "The student and the teacher must meet halfway." And, in His later years he spoke more and more about the significance of lineage, suggesting that there is a lot of responsibility not only in establishing a lineage but in upholding the lineage of Traleg Rinpoche. It

demands so much more from the student than simple passivity, polite rhetoric, and comfortability with a sense of complacency that shuns challenge.

Lineage is about passing on the entirety of both the practices and the teachings which according to Rinpoche is embodied in the student.

Nyima Tashi has seen an increase in a much younger audience, who bring a curiosity and inquiry into Buddhist thought, which is catalysed through the transformative eloquence of the 9th Traleg Kyabgon Rinpoche, so much so that many are now taking refuge and formalising their commitment to waking up.

Supporting Rinpoche's Centres is a form of upholding lineage, finding creative ways to financially secure the Centres, offering one's time, developing skill, passing on the Teachings.

In the words of the 9th Traleg Kyabgon Rinpoche "If we can help then we should help." ■

For more Information about the Nyima Tashi Buddhist Summer School or to book:

Email: nyimatashi.nz@gmail.com to register.

Information and full program:

<https://nyima-tashi.org.nz/>



News from E-Vam Institute



Ekai Korematsu Roshi

August began with the final session of the Winter Zen residency, with Ekai Korematsu Roshi concluding Master Dogen's Introduction to Fukanzazengi - Principles of Seated Meditation. These teachings not only explored the foundations of Zen meditation, but also how formal sitting practice seamlessly permeates all areas of life. Celebrating a non-conceptual, inward-looking approach, Master Dogen writes:

...Therefore, stop the intellectual practice of investigating words and chasing after talk; study the backward step of turning the light and shining it back....

Thank you, Ekai Korematsu Roshi, for teaching us and providing this opportunity.

E-Vam continued with the 3rd installment of the Meditation and Teaching Series, exploring Buddhism's profound and comprehensive psychology. This mini-retreat, *Meditation & Emotions: Cultivating Positive Mental States & Self-Transformation*, included a full day of meditation and teachings. Rinpoche highlighted the transformative benefits of positive emotions, explaining that Buddhism offers a complete psychology of emotions.

Relating to things in terms of our positive emotions in a proper way adds depth to our own being. So therefore we are able to weather all kinds of upheavals, all kinds of disturbances in a proper fashion. So instead

of being easily provoked, one is able to respond to things with a sense of dignity, strength, insight, wisdom—things of that kind. ... And when one is responding that way, one responds not in a totally dispassionate manner as many people assume...

– Traleg Kyabgon Rinpoche IX

Throughout this period, E-Vam Institute gave consistent opportunities to explore Tibetan deity practices. Monthly Chenrezig Practice connected participants with compassion and wisdom, while the Chariot of Great Merit, centered on Vajrasattva, highlighted indestructible purity and represented one's innate purity.

Green Tara practice, embodying active compassion, protection, and liberation from fear and suffering, was the focus of several sessions. Thank you to Traleg Khandro, who, with E-Vam staff, guided these beautiful and practical sessions, helping participants deepen their understanding of the deity, chanting, and associated rituals.

Two Under 35 Urban Retreats were held, attracting interested younger participants. Focusing on Buddhism's comprehensive training in meditation, wisdom, and ethics, the wisdom element focused on Rinpoche's teachings from *Essence of Buddhism*, highlighting how helping others is deeply connected with helping oneself.

Wisdom is developed through the understanding that the self and others, which we think are totally opposed to each

other, are in fact interdependent. The world and the self, the mind and the material world, subject and object, all are interdependent. Once we have that insight, it is easier to develop compassion.

– Traleg Rinpoche,
The Essence of Buddhism

October welcomed Khenpo Chonyi Rangdrol, who returned online to teach the Shogam Vidhalaya Shedra. Guiding students through *Introduction to the Middle Way*, as always, Khenpo skillfully connected the dense and profound Madhyamaka philosophy to everyday life and compassionate action.



Khenpo Chonyi Rangdrol

Khenpola also gave two teachings on *The Practice of Equanimity, Love, Compassion & Joy* (the Four Immeasurables). The first class explored the importance of these qualities, while the second focused on embodying them through Chenrezig practice. Thank you, Khenpola, for these inspiring and practical teachings.



In-person and online, Traleg Khandro provided a day workshop on LuJong – Tibetan Yoga & Pranayama, a pre-tantric sequence designed to enhance overall well-being. The workshop featured the Tibetan Yoga sequence *Chime Palter*, literally translated as “exercises to extend one's life.” Highlighting Buddhism's recognition of the embodied aspect of practice, the day was highly beneficial,



E-Vam hosted our Annual October 5 day Retreat at Maitripa Centre, and amongst our regular retreat program, we listened to teachings by Traleg Rinpoche on *Understanding Mahamudra, Understanding Myself*. These powerful teachings were supplemented with engaging discussion groups based on the teachings, led by Traleg Khandro.

We have problems and we have disturbing emotions and we are confused about varieties of things in life but that does not mean that in our own real nature, we are evil or that there's something wrong in us in terms of our true condition.

So that is how we begin with the idea of developing some understanding of Ground Mahamudra. Understanding ourselves in that way is to understand Ground Mahamudra. If we think like this, then when we meditate, we will have more confidence in ourselves.

– Traleg Rinpoche IX

Thank you to all the volunteers and participants whose meaningful intentions and connections helped make this such a Dharma-rich time of the year. We are looking forward to *Buddhist Summer School* in January and the wonderful opportunity to practice and learn in the year ahead! ■

Mark Dawson

with participants gaining a solid grasp of the sequence to continue practicing at home.

Alongside these courses, we continued our regular *Weekly Meditation Series*, providing newcomers and regulars with instructions and a weekly meditation quote:

The function of tranquillity meditation is to maintain mindfulness and awareness, not to block out our thoughts and feelings, which is practically impossible to do in any case.

Through this practice, our thoughts will gradually stabilize.

Even if things do not proceed like this and disturbing thoughts continue to arise, you should not feel disheartened.

Simply be aware of them, because if you succeed in focusing your mind on thoughts, —the thoughts themselves can become meditation.

– Traleg Kyabgon Rinpoche IX,
Luminous Bliss

News from Nyima Tashi Buddhist Centre Auckland, New Zealand

Tēnā koutou katoa from the sangha of Nyima Tashi here in Auckland-Tāmaki Makaurau. We hope you are all happy and well. Like many of us in the southern hemisphere, we at Nyima Tashi are slowly winding down as we approach the traditional summer holiday period. It is at this time, that we naturally think about the year which has almost passed and look to the new year ahead. It is a potent time for reflection on what we have been doing well, and doing not so well, and for renewing our intentions with optimism and fresh vigour.

We are delighted to share that Nyima Tashi has recently launched a brand-new website at <https://www.nyima-tashi.org.nz/>. We are most grateful in particular to Natalia Bullon for the extraordinary



amount of work she and Ani Jangchub have put into creating what we anticipate will be a solid foundation which can be built upon in the coming years. The new

website features an online bookshop as well as other resources which include Teachings by Traleg Kyabgon Rinpoche IX which are available to purchase.

From 23 - 26 January 2025, Nyima Tashi will be hosting the 15th Annual Auckland Buddhist Summer School – all sessions will be available to attend both in-person and online. We are really pleased to share the wonderful line-up of Teachers who will be appearing on the panel. We are anticipating some varied and fascinating topics we will have the honour of feasting on over the 3 days. The full programme is available on our new website.

The 2025 ABSS Teaching panel will feature a total of seven Teachers which includes Ekai Korematsu Roshi, who will be attending the Summer School in person. Khenpo Ngawang Sangye will be joining Summer School via Zoom from New York. Francesca Fremantle, a scholar, translator and long-time student of Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche who will be introducing two topics via Zoom from her home in the UK. Lopön Chandra

Easton, who works closely with Tara Mandala, founded by Lama Tsultrim Allione, will be joining Summer School from the USA and teaching two sessions on perspectives of Arya Tara – the noble goddess of compassion. And we are most honoured to welcome to the panel Dr Tony Fernando, an Auckland based Psychiatrist, who has just released a new book called “Life Hacks from The Buddha” and he will be sharing some main points from this book during his session.

In the 2025 Auckland Summer School, there will be two sessions taught by representatives from the Nyima Tashi sangha. Ani Jangchub Lhamo and Meaghan Duffy (myself) will each introduce a topic.

We hope you will be inspired to go online to the new Nyima Tashi website and read in more detail the offerings for 2025 Auckland Buddhist Summer School.

In the days following Summer School, we are joyfully anticipating a visit by Ringu Tulku Rinpoche, from 28 January 2025. Rinpoche will be Teaching 3 sessions at Nyima Tashi during this time, and it is possible to join these talks via Zoom. Bookings are available through our website.

Nyima Tashi will be closed for the summer until March 2025, and we are really delighted to announce that shortly after we re-open, we will be offering a retreat during Easter from 18th - 21st April on Mahamudra as taught by Traleg Kyabgon Rinpoche IX. Our website has all the details.

We want to send our sincere wishes for the health and happiness of you all and we look forward to connecting again in 2025.

Nō reira tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa. ■

Meaghan Duffy

News from E-Vam Buddhist Institute U.S.



Do Tulku Rinpoche

We completed our 2024 online series with a six week course studying LoJong focusing on Absolute Bodhicitta, led by Lama Jinpa. It was a wonderful and profound course. Lama Jinpa skillfully led us through the inner meaning of the first 6 slogans of the LoJong practice on Absolute Bodhicitta. Thank you Lama La.

Here is a snapshot of E-Vam's online

course series for 2025.

Dates and details of the courses will be available and online in the new year.

Raktrul Rinpoche VI (Do Tulku) will be giving teachings on the Heart Sutra.

Do Tulku Rinpoche is the resident lama and spiritual guide at his Centre and online program Aryatara Net <https://www.aryatara.net/>. Rinpoche was

recognized by H.H. Sakyā Trichen as the reincarnation of the 5th Raktrul Rinpoche. His incarnation line goes back to the 1st Raktrul Rinpoche (17th century), a master of the Do Teng Monastery in East Tibet.

Rinpoche received Buddhist philosophy, practice, and debate at the Dzongsar Khyentse Chokyi Lodro Institute in India for over 10 years, from which he graduated with the title of an Acharya (Lopön). As well as providing comprehensive online study programs Rinpoche teaches in Asia, Europe and the U.S. and has an excellent command of the English language.

Lama Jinpa will continue his commentary on “LoJong: Cultivating Compassion through Training the Mind” referencing the book by the same name by Traleg Kyabgon, Shambhala Publications. Fairly early in the 2025 we look forward to Lama Jinpa continuing the study program on the LoJong slogans and bringing these contemplations and practices to life in a very practical and helpful way.

Lama Jinpa (Aaron), is a longtime student of Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche. He



Lama Jinpa

completed the traditional Karma Kagyu three year retreat at Karne Ling Retreat Center in Delhi NY under Rinpoche's guidance. Since this time he has served Rinpoche and the KTD community by teaching regularly at KTCs. Lama Jinpa is a householder practitioner, and enjoys practicing at home with his family. Lama Jinpa regularly gives courses for E-Vam Buddhist Institute and is a valued presenter always bringing such insight and warmth to his courses.

Traleg Khandro will give commentary on aspects of Traleg Rinpoche's teachings in relation to "Working with Whatever Arises," introducing traditional contemplations and meditation techniques from the Mahayana and Mahamudra tradition.

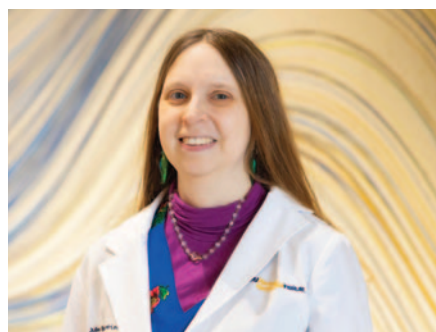


Traleg Khandro

Traleg Khandro (Felicity), long-time student and wife to the late Traleg Kyabgon Rinpoche IX, is a Director at E-Vam Institute in Melbourne and the U.S., and runs Shogam Publications, Traleg Rinpoche's publishing arm. Khandro studied Buddhism under Traleg Rinpoche's guidance for many years and has undertaken numerous long

meditation retreats. Khandro has given commentary of Rinpoche's teachings in Australia, America, Europe, U.K., and South East Asia. At Rinpoche's request Khandro also received traditional LuJong (Tibetan Yoga) training after qualifying as a Hatha Yoga instructor. Khandro has a degree in Psychology.

Dr. Julie Brefczynski-Lewis will be giving a fascinating course on Neuroscience and Meditation Practice. Julie will take us on a science based journey that intertwines her research into the effects of meditation on the brain, and introducing traditional and secular meditation exercises to enhance ones well-being.



Dr. Julie Brefczynski-Lewis

Dr. Julie Brefczynski-Lewis is a Research Assistant Professor in the Department of Neuroscience at West Virginia University. She received her PhD in Cell Biology, Neurobiology, and Anatomy from the Medical College of Wisconsin. Julie has been practicing and researching meditation practices for more than 20 years and is currently testing the effectiveness of compassion meditation to help deal with the stress and negative emotions related to difficult interpersonal relationships, and has helped developed novel neuroimaging methods that allow more natural behavioral testing.

Anthony Bruno (Tenzin Chödrak) will be teaching on Bodhisattva Maitreya and His Teachings on Buddha Nature.

We look forward to welcoming Anthony to the E-Vam teaching program for the first time. With many years of experience studying with great Masters and himself giving teachings at Centres in the US, we look forward to Anthony taking us through this profound text and teachings.

Anthony has expressed how incredibly grateful he feels, due to the kindness of his Dharma teachers, for the opportunity to



Anthony Bruno (Tenzin Chödrak)

receive the teachings of Buddha Shakyamuni during this current time. His first Dharma mentor was Dr. C.T. Shen, a nonsectarian practitioner and benefactor who introduced him to Mahayana Buddhism in the 1990s and emphasized initial study of the sutras. Later, Dr. Shen encouraged Anthony to practice Tibetan Buddhism and helped facilitate his connection with His Holiness Sakya Trichen and other lamas. Since then, for more than 25 years, Anthony has been studying and practicing in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition and has volunteered in various capacities. He also earned a J.D. degree, summa cum laude, from New York Law School and a B.A. degree, magna cum laude, from New York University, with a major in journalism and minor in fine arts.

The E-Vam Annual Retreats for 2025 and 2026

The Path of Mahamudra Meditation Annual In-Person Retreat

17–20 May 2025, held at the picturesque Saranam Buddhist Centre in West Virginia. Led by Lama Jinpa, with Dr. Julie Brefczynski-Lewis, and Tibetan yoga sessions with Kyle Weaner.

Save the dates for 2026

The Path of Mahamudra Meditation Annual In-Person Retreat

24–30 May 2026, held at Vajra Vidya Retreat Centre, Crestone Colorado. Led by Venerable Khenpo Lobzang Tenzin.

Visit: <https://evam.org/> for updated information on courses, news, free teachings, kids corner and more.

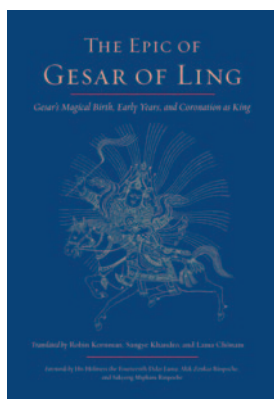
All enquiries: office@evam.org

Donations: <https://evam.org/donate/> Wishing everyone a very safe and happy holiday season. ■

Traleg Khandro

News from Akshara Bookstore

The Epic of Gesar of Ling: Gesar's Magical Birth, Early Years, and Coronation as King Shambhala Publications

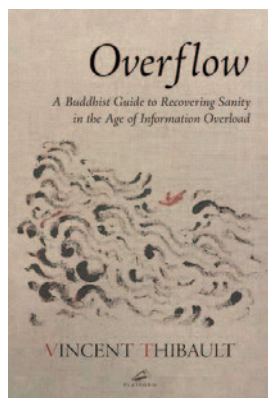


Tibet's great national literary treasure, the epic of Gesar, is the equivalent of the Iliad or the Odyssey in the West. It arose out of a comparable oral tradition, beginning in the eleventh century, and is now considered the longest single work in the world literary canon. King Gesar's exploits are full of magic and high adventure, and are also models of Buddhist teaching: Gesar came to be widely regarded as an embodiment of the

bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara or of Padmasambhava, the figure who brought Buddhism to Tibet. His bravery and heroism demonstrate how the best human qualities, such as loyalty, compassion, and virtue, ultimately triumph over evil, deception, and self-interest. This long-awaited translation of the first three volumes of the vast work is a landmark in the transmission of Tibetan Buddhist culture to the West.

Ringu Tulku Rinpoche will be teaching on "Gesar of Ling" at the upcoming Buddhist Summer School in January.

Overflow by Vincent Thibault Platform Books



Caught in the flood of constant notifications and endless scrolling? Finding it hard to stay balanced in an age of distraction?

Overflow: A Buddhist Guide to Recovering Sanity in the Age of Information Overload is the guide you've been waiting for. Drawing on the wisdom of ancient Buddhist teachings, Thibault offers a clear and compelling roadmap for those seeking mental clarity in today's hyperconnected world. With

insights into the nuances of our digital age and practical advice rooted in mindfulness, this book is a refreshing take on how to regain peace and purpose amidst the noise.

This is more than just a guide—it's a companion on your journey to deeper awareness, offering a way to discern what truly matters from what doesn't and live a life of integrity, calm, and spiritual abundance.

"Overflow is an important original work from a new inspired voice in the world of Buddhism. Vincent Thibault presents a well-written and masterfully organised approach to the development of sanity from the perspective of Buddhist

philosophy and practice. Through his own studies and practice, he has created a work that is written in the language of our time to encourage us to take the enlightened principles and to make them our own. On the path, it is not easy to notice when we are fooling ourselves. The author makes a point of trying to acknowledge and remedy cultural, psychological and especially spiritual blindspots. Highly recommended."

—Samuel Bercholz,
Founder of Shambhala Publications
and author of *A Guided Tour of Hell*.

Excellent secondhand books



Akshara Bookstore continues to receive generous donations of Buddhist books covering a range of topics. Featured here is a small selection of the many excellent secondhand titles that are now available in-store.

The Way of the Bodhisattva

A Translation of the Bodhicaryavatara
Shantideva (First edition)

The Nectar of Manjushri's Speech

A Detailed commentary on Shantideva's
Way of the Bodhisattva
Kunzang Palden

Anger – Wisdom for Cooling the Flames

Thich Nhat Hanh

Embracing Mind – The Common Ground of Science & Spirituality

Ian Wallace

Why Buddhism? – Westerners in Search of Wisdom

Vicki Mackenzie ■

Jarrab Wishart



E-Vam Institute Summer Teaching Program 2025

BUDDHIST SUMMER SCHOOL

11-14TH JANUARY

Held at the Maitripa Contemplative Centre in Healesville and simultaneously streamed for online participation, the Buddhist Summer School brings together the traditions of Buddhism to explore topics related to philosophy, practice, and engagement with Western disciplines such as psychology. Each year the program includes internationally located or remote teachers. The 2025 program includes the following esteemed teachers:

Ringu Tulku Rinpoche

The Four Harmonious Friends – Course 1

Saturday Morning & Sunday Morning

Gesar of Ling – Course 2

Monday Afternoon & Tuesday Afternoon

Ekai Korematsu Roshi

On the Great Wisdom that is Beyond

Discriminatory Thought (Makahannya-Haramitsu)

Saturday Afternoon & Sunday afternoon

Bhanti Buddhavihari

Metta: Loving-kindness meditation

Saturday Afternoon

Bhante Pasadika

Breathing Meditation and Supportive Factors

(Anapanasati & Chaturakkha)

Sunday Afternoon

Sam Bercholz

Raising Windhorse: Developing confidence

and dignity – Course 1

Monday Morning

How to be a Dharmic Person – Course 2

Tuesday Morning

Teishin Shona Innes

Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind: An introduction to

Zen Buddhism

Monday Afternoon & Tuesday Afternoon

Dr Leesa Davis

Zen and the Art of Non-duality

Saturday Morning & Sunday Morning

Dr Kathleen Gregory

Actualizing Tibetan Buddhism in the West ... and

in our lives

Monday Morning & Tuesday Morning

Don't forget the Opening Forum (Saturday 9.30-11.00am) where the Buddhist Summer School speakers engage in discussion of the relevance and application of Buddhism to one of life's big questions.

The Opening Forum is free. Please see the program for course details and registration options:

<https://evaminstitute.org/event/bss2024/>

ONGOING E-VAM INSTITUTE PROGRAM EVENTS

CHENREZIG PUJA

First Friday of every month

7.30-8.30pm

In times of great confusion and suffering in the world, gathering together to invoke Chenrezig who embodies compassion, is a means to care for both others and ourselves from the spiritual point of view.

WEEKLY MEDITATION

Thursday Beginning in March 2025

6:00pm – 6:45pm

The weekly sessions offer the opportunity to begin or renew your meditation practice in a welcoming and supportive environment. With meditation instructions as provided by Traleg Kyabgon Rinpoche IX, these sessions can nourish our motivation to practice by practicing with others.

MEDITATION & TEACHING SERIES:

Introducing Integral Buddhism

“... we do not have to think of the *Buddhadharma* purely in terms of studying the teachings or doing meditation. Buddhism says we have to address the three aspects of our being: the body, our vocal aspect or speech, and mind.... self-transformation is seen as transformation of the totality of one's being.”

– *Traleg Kyabgon Rinpoche IX*

The video teachings in the 2025 quarterly series are Traleg Rinpoche's exposition of what he called Integral Buddhism. *Details coming soon.*

UNDER 35s PROGRAM

UNDER 35s URBAN RETREAT:

Every last Saturday of the Month, 9.30am - 4.30pm

Offering a warm and inviting environment, E-Vam Institute welcomes people under 35 with the unique opportunity to join us to learn from key meditation practices and delve deeply into understand key concepts of Buddhist philosophy.

Rather than only being about meditation or philosophy the Urban Retreat encourages an integrated approach to spirituality through practicing what are know as The Three Trainings of Buddhist Practice: Meditation, Wisdom, and Moral Sensitivity.

MONTHLY VAJRASATTVA PRACTICE FOR UNDER 35s:

First Sunday of Every Month

10am-1pm

For those curious about practice within the Tibetan Buddhist system, we offer a monthly practice of Vajrasattva entitled “A Chariot of Great Merit”, a Vajrasattva Sadhana of the Dudjom Tersar Tradition revealed by the Terton Garwang Drodrul Lingpa Tsal. These sessions are suitable for beginners.

SAVE THE DATE: LOSAR PARTY

Friday 28th of February

Join us at E-Vam Institute to celebrate Losar 2025, welcoming in the Year of the Wood Snake. With music, food and celebration – all are warmly invited to share in the festive spirit.

Please check the website for details as well as other program events.