



MONTHLY GUIDE



International Buddhist Meditation Center

October 2009

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Halloween Meditation on Death

Please Join IBMC on Saturday October 31, at 7 PM for a Halloween Meditation on Death, Impermanence and Rebirth.

Lead by Bhikshuni Kelsang Chitta Karuna.

Contemplation and meditation on death and impermanence are regarded as very important in Buddhism for two reasons: (1) it is only by recognizing how precious and how short life is that we are most likely to make it meaningful and to live it fully and (2) by understanding the death process and familiarizing yourself with it, we can remove fear at the time of death and ensure a good rebirth. Because the way in which we live our lives and our state of mind at death directly influence our future lives, it is said that the aim or mark of a spiritual practitioner is to have no fear or regrets at the time of death. People who practice to the best of their abilities will die, it is said, in a state of great bliss. The mediocre practitioner will die happily. Even the initial practitioner will have neither fear nor dread at the time of death. So one should aim at achieving at least the smallest of these results. There are two common meditations on death in the Tibetan tradition. The first looks at the certainty and imminence of death and what will be of benefit at the time of death, in order to motivate us to make the best use of our lives. The second is a simulation or rehearsal of the actual death process, which familiarizes us with death and takes away the fear of the unknown, thus allowing us to die skillfully.

Western Monastic Gathering

Ven. Karuna and Bhikshuni Kelsang Chitta will be attending the 15th Western Buddhist Monastic Gathering at The City of Ten Thousand Buddhas in Talmage, California October 5-9 2009. The theme for 2009 is Monasticism and the Environment. The discussion topics will include: Monastic responses to global warming/climate change – what practices are helpful, both internally & externally, personally and nationally. Cultivation of potential & hope through education & renunciation – particularly environmental education and creating more awareness of simple living in the younger generation. Alternative technologies in use & prospective. Buddhist attitude towards the treatment of animals: in the monastery & in factory farming; also animal rights & welfare, & the relationship of diet to the animal realm. Working with anxiety & the threat to future generations Genetic engineering, cloning & robotics – blessing or curse? What to do?

Among the confirmed presenters are: Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi, Ven. Bhikshuni Heng Yin, Ven. Ajahn Sona, Ven. Heng Sure, & Ven. Tenzin Chogyi.

There will also be a small 'Environmental/Spiritual Film Fest' on two of the evenings, curated and presented by Ajahn Sudanto.

IBMC is Updating our Land Mail Listing and Going Green!

IBMC now offers it's monthly newsletter delivered straight to your inbox, you can also read it in **PDF** form posted on our web site at www.ibmc.info

We would like to be Eco-responsible by January 2010 ! Here is how you can help!

If you have already signed up for our online newsletter and wish to be removed from our land mail list please send an eMail to ibmc09@yahoo.com with your name and address, so we can update our Land Mail Listing,

If you would like to **begin receiving** our newsletter by **eMail** please go to our web site and click on the "newsletter" button at the bottom of the page. Our calendar and special events are also posted at www.ibmc.info

Please remember to send an email to ibmc09@yahoo.com if you wish to be removed from our Land Mail Listing

The Three Yanas

As promised, in this, the third installment of the "Three Yanas" series, we will continue to share with you the history and teachings of the three schools of Buddhist thought. In this month's focus we will continue with the Mahayana, in our study of the Japanese schools. And begin our exploration of the Vajrayana or Tibetan based Schools.

We hope you have enjoyed these teachings as much as we have enjoyed presenting them.

Please remember, IBMC offers meditation, instruction and guidance from all three traditions, from westerners - from a western point of view. Please join us each Sunday morning for our Dharma talks and during the week for classes in meditation, Sutra study, and group practice. All class and meditation times can be found on the back page of this Guide.

See You Along the Path....

Japanese Buddhist Schools

Tendai (T'ien Tai, Chinese): Founded in Japan by Saicho (d. 822 C.E.), this lineage quickly rose to prominence as the most important lineage in Japanese Buddhism. The basic doctrine of this lineage and the Chinese T'ien Tai are the same, as in their reverence for the *Lotus Sutra*, but Tendai differs in its emphasis on the mystical and esoteric aspects of Buddhism. The four primary categories of this lineage are (1) morality, (2) monastic discipline, (3) esoteric practices, and (4) meditation.

Shingon: Founded by Kukai (d. 835 C.E.), this lineage grew to rival the Tendai lineage as early as the late ninth century. The Shingon belief system was tantric and taught that through mantras (short, repetitive incantations), meditation and the performance of hand gesture one can gain access to the power of the Buddhas and Bodhisattva.

Jodo or Pure Land: Began at the time of the publication of the treatise of Honen (d. 1212 C.E) entitled *Senchaku-shu*, this lineage traces its scriptural heritage to the *Pure Land Sutra* (*Sukhavati Vyuhā*), which prescribes loving devotion to the Buddha Amida as a means of being reborn in the Pure Land, or the paradise over which he presides. Pure Land prayer centers on the repetition on the phrase *Namu Amida Butsu* (Homage to Amida Buddha) and became one of the most popular forms of Buddhism in Japan.

Joho Shinshu or True Pure Land: Founded by Shinran (d. 1262 C.E), this lineage takes Pure Land teaching one step further, claiming that humility and faith in Amida's love are in themselves true signs that the redeeming grace of the Buddha has already been bestowed. Amida Buddha seeks and saves without first requiring faith and good works. These spring up spontaneously from Amida's spiritual presence in the heart.

Nichiren: Named after its founder Nichiren (d. 1282 C.E), this lineage was founded on the Lotus Sutra and taught that the mere repetition of the title of that Sutra; *Nam-Myoho Renge-Kyo* ("Homage to the Lotus Sutra") was sufficient to gain one access to paradise.

Zen (Soto and Rinzai Sects): The monk Eisai (d. 1215 C.E) is usually considered the first proponent of Zen in Japan, although Ch'an had existed since the early sixth century and probably existed also in Japan before Eisai's time. The earliest forms of Zen generally avoided intellectualism and de-emphasized scriptures, doctrines and ceremonial. Eisai, whose form of Zen took on the name of Rinzai (Lin-chi, Ch.) af-

firmed the authority of the traditional Buddhist scriptures and used the koan or meditational riddle as a means of transcending linear thinking. Soto Zen (Ts'ao-tung, Ch.), tracing its roots back to Dogen (d. 1253 C.E), also affirmed the validity of the Buddhist scriptures but de-emphasized the use of koans and focused solely on extended, silent meditation.

The Vajrayana -A preface; By Bhikshuni Kelsang Chitta Karuna

Many times I have heard The Buddha being quoted as saying "I have no secret teachings" therefore the Vajrayana teachings are sometimes under suspect as not being the teachings of the Buddha. With the descriptions that follow of the Tibetan lineages, we hope to help you to understand the uniqueness of Vajrayana school, where many aspects of the traditional Bön Religion are mixed together with Buddhist beliefs and practices to form a unique expression of Buddhism. Secret is an often misunderstood term in Tibetan teachings. Frequently this word induces in westerners negative emotions, generally because we do not like things that are hidden especially in the religious or spiritual aspect. Further more the English language is not well equipped for the translation of Spiritual concepts, and leaves the word secret as the general word used to describe these teachings.

We should also come to understand, the teachings of the Tibetan tradition were and are not kept 'secret' because the Buddha made them secret, but they are 'secret' because they are a traditionally a whispered, or oral lineage and are only to be passed from teacher to disciple in order to keep them pure or unbroken, and so that those who have not had the proper training, foundations, and blessings will not read about them and misunderstanding them try to teach them to others, as is so often done to day. And this is why when we take tantric empowerments we make a vow to keep them 'secret' from those who have not had the empowerments. Discussing the teachings only with other practitioners, and our teachers.

We can easily buy 'authentic' tantric books in Barnes & Nobel's and Borders and online at Amazon.com, but with out the proper training from an authentic Vajra Holder the teachings are misunderstood at best.

Concluding with misunderstandings and discarding the Vajrayana as Hindu Practice or 'the degenerate' Buddhist teachings of Tibet that have nothing to do with the Buddhadharmā. That being said, we Present the Vajrayana with open heart and a pure mind.

The Vajrayana

This type of Buddhism is predominant in the Himalayan nations of Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, and Mongolia. It is known as Vajrayana. The diamond, or supreme vehicle. At the center of Tibetan Buddhism is the Lama, Tibetan for "teacher". Several major schools developed, beginning in the ninth century, with the Nyingma school, two centuries later the Sakya and the Kagyu schools developed, Three hundred years after that, one of Tibet's most revered Lama, Tsong Khapa, founded the Gelug school.

Buddhism emerged in Tibet in the 7th Century during the reign of Song Tsan Gampo, the first Dharma King of Tibet. Under his royal patronage the scholar Thon-mi Sambhota devised a Tibetan alphabet suitable for the translation of Buddhist works coming from India, Nepal and China. when the second great Dharma King, Trisong Detsen, invited the Bodhisattva Santaraksita to teach the Dharma to his people he was beset by insurmountable obstacles in the form of wild demonic beings.

Understanding that he could not control these forces himself he suggested to the King that he invite the great master Padmasambhava, who was then residing in India, to pacify the land and clear away the obstacles that threatened to halt the development of Buddhism in the

Land of Snows.

Together they built a great monastery at Samye in the shape of a mandala, which became the first institution of Buddhist learning in Tibet. Santaraksita ordained the first monks there and many translators were invited from India to train apprentices to begin the monumental task of translating the Buddhadharma into Tibetan.

It was here also that Padmasambhava, known as Guru Rinpoche, began the Oral Transmission of the Mantrayana tradition. Beginning with twenty-five close disciples, his teachings have been passed down through an unbroken lineage to the present day. Guru Rinpoche and his disciple and consort, Yeshe Tsogyal, concealed many teachings, called Terma, to be revealed for the benefit of future generations.

Guru Rinpoche concealed many teachings as treasures in the mind streams of his twenty-five closest disciples. In each generation, these disciples manifested as treasure finders, called Tertons, who revealed precious texts and teachings from the earth and water, from the sky, and from their own mind streams.

Among the most famous Tertons of the 19th century was Dudjom Lingpa (1835-1904). He was a body emanation of Kheuchung Lotsawa, one of Padmasambhava's twenty-five main disciples. His incarnation was prophesied for centuries by many sublime beings, including Padmasambhava himself.

During his life, Dudjom Lingpa revealed the lineage known as Dudjom Tersar, consisting of a number of texts and twenty-two volumes of teachings. He stated that these teachings were especially profound and appropriate for these degenerate times. Following this fresh and undiluted path, thirteen of his disciples attained the rainbow body in that very lifetime and a thousand others attained the level of Rigdzin, or awareness holder.

Before passing away, Dudjom Lingpa prophesied the site of his own rebirth, in a province of southeastern Tibet called Pema Kod. This incarnation was His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche (1904-1987). Although he had no formal education, he became one of the greatest and most famous scholars in Tibet. He restored many old texts and terma and revealed many treasures of his own: profound teachings and sadhanas presenting a complete and perfect path for Vajrayana practice.

Nyingma [Ancient School]: Traces its origins to the Indian adept, Guru Padmasambhava, who came to Tibet in 817 C.E. at the invitation of King Trisong Detsen (742-797) in order to subdue the evil forces then impeding the spread of Buddhism. This is the lineage of Buddhism is most uniquely Tibetan in that many aspects of the traditional Bön religion and practices are mixed with Buddhist beliefs to form a unique expression of Buddhism. This lineage emphasizes the move towards more advanced stages of enlightenment through "preliminary practice" that emphasize the beliefs and practices of Buddhism before the practice of Tantra, and through the "higher practices," which involve the attainment of enlightenment through the chanting of mantra, special hand gestures and mystical diagrams. At the request of the Tibetan Government in Exile the Nyingma lineage has started to have a lineage head. They have been: Kyabje Dudjom Rinpoche (the 1960's until his death in 1987) Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche (1987- until his death in 1991) Penor Rinpoche (1991 until his retirement in 2003) Mindroling Trichen Rinpoche (2003 until his death in 2008) The successor to Mindroling Trichen Rinpoche has not yet been named.

Sakya [Scholastic School]: This lineage has descended intact up to the present time from Khon Könchok Gyelpo (1034-1102), founder of the Sakya tradition. From the doctrinal point of view the tradition traces its origins to the Indian Yogin Virupa through

Gayadhara. His disciple Drogmi Shakya Yeshe (992-1074) traveled to India where he received teachings on the Kalachakra, the Path and its Fruit, and others from many Indian masters and returned to Tibet. Later, Khon Könchok Gyelpo, one of his main disciples, built a monastery in the Tsang province of central Tibet and named it Sakya, or Grey Earth monastery. So the school took its name, Sakya, from the location of the monastery. Succession to the position of head of the Sakya tradition has been hereditary since the time of Khon Könchok Gyelpo. The present leader is H.H. Sakya Trinzin the 41st incumbent of the Sakya Throne. The central teaching and practice of the Sakya-pa, called *Lam-dre*, the Path and Its Fruit, ultimately leads a practitioner to the state of *Hevajra*. The Path and Its Fruit is a synthesis of the entire paths and fruits of both the esoteric and esoteric classes of teachings.

Kagyu [Oral Tradition]: The lineages of the Kagyu school of Tibetan Buddhism derive primarily from two sources: Marpa Chökyi Lodro (1012-1099) and Khyungpo Nyaljor (978-1079). Marpa received the lineage of tantric teachings called the Four Commissioned Lineages - concerning the Illusory Body and Consciousness Transference, Dreams, Clear Light, and Inner Heat directly from Naropa (1016-1100), who had been given them by his teacher Tilopa (988-1069). Mahamudra, the unique feature of Kagyu tradition, can be explained according to interpretations of Sutra and tantra. Both aspects of the teachings are aimed at direct understanding of the real nature of the mind. The approach to Mahamudra, which differs slightly within each Kagyu school, generally follows through the stages of foundation, path and fruit. Tantric practices unique to Kagyu tradition are the Six Yogas of Naropa, Chakrasambhava and Mahakala. In the context of tantric practice, the application of Mahamudra becomes much more profound and sophisticated. While there are many sub-schools of the Kagyu lineage, the two most well know are the Karma Kagyus and the Drikung Kagyus. H.H. the 17th Karmapa, Trinley Thaye Dorje is the head of the Karma Kagyu tradition while the two Kyabgon Rinpoches, H. H. Drikung Chetsang and H.H. Drikung Chungtsang head the Drikung Linage.

Gelug [Tradition of Virtue]: Founded by Lama Je' Tsong-khapa (1357-1419) as a reform movement within Tibetan Buddhism, followers claim the third teacher as an incarnation of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, thus inaugurating the line of the Dalai Lama, the fourteenth and most recent of whom is H.H. Tenzin Gyatso Rinpoche. Emphasis in this lineage is on a strict monastic discipline and on the conviction that the Bodhisattva, a Buddha who has foregone final nirvana out of compassion for all sentient beings, is continually present. This tradition remains dynamic even after Tibet being forced into exile. The major Gelug monasteries, Sera, Drepung, Ganden, Tashi Lhunpo, and Gyumey Tantric College have been re-established in various Tibetan settlements in Karnataka. And Gyutö Tantric College has been re-established in Bomdila, Arunachal Pradesh, India.

Dzogchen [Mahamudra Practice]: This is a very advanced teaching whose end result is the same as for the rest of tantric path. Although its techniques and emphasis are a bit different. Primarily, Dzogchen underscores direct perception of the fundamental nature of reality. So instead of working to create higher energy bodies such as the astral body, it seeks to ground awareness directly back into the Truth Body. And this Body reaches the limits of human experience and expression so that its subjective experience is one of all-encompassing emptiness. The main practice is similar to Zen meditation and consists of holding a constant perceptual openness to all experience.

October Events

10 AM - 108 Bows
10:30 AM - Meditation

11 AM - Sunday Dharma Talks

10/4 - Ven. Kusala Bhikshu
10/11 - Ven. Karuna Dharma
10/18 - Ven. Kusala Bhikshu
10/25 - Ven. Karuna Dharma

Special Events

10/31 - 7 PM- Halloween Meditation

Meditation Times

Friday: 7:30 PM Zendo - led by Ven. Kusala

Sunday: 10:30 AM & 7:30 PM Zendo - led by Ven. Kusala

IBMC Classes

Mon. 7 PM Tibetan Buddhism - Palmo Ling Nunnery - Bhikshuni Chitta Karuna

Tue. 7 PM English Conversation - Palmo Ling Nunnery. Bhikshuni Chitta Karuna

Wed. 7:30 PM Everyday Buddhism - Zendo Ven. Kusala Bhikshu

Thur. 7 PM Jataka Tales - Palmo Ling Nunnery Ven. Havanpola Shanti

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<http://palmoling.tripod.com>
<http://bsila.tripod.com>

Prison Dharma, a column devoted IBMC's Prison Outreach Ministry.

A PERSON CANNOT BECOME WHO THEY NEED TO BE BY REMAINING WHO THEY ARE By Wesley I. Purkey / FEDERAL DEATH ROW

My great aunt Ga-ga, who adopted me when I was a kid, and who didn't weigh a buck-five soak-n-wet inundated me with an assemblage of conventional words of wisdom which left an indelible imprint on me throughout the years. This collection of 'golden sayings' were generally flaunted when she was trying to school me on the paramount importance of obtaining and continuing my education, and the need to learn from past mistakes. I thought her fervor for driving these lessons home bordered on being crazy, but if there was anything crazy about this lady its that she was 'crazy like a fox'. One of her favorite sayings that is still deeply embedded in my heart today is, "A person cannot become who they need to be by remaining who they are". It has taken me many years and experiences to begin to comprehend the true meaning of these words, but in my opinion, no words ring truer! Generally with a slight smile and light chuckle, without animosity or criticism Ga-ga would patiently sit by and listen to the rather pathetic and ridiculous excuses I offered to justify my stupidity, which hinged on good old fashion ignorance. Looking back now I realize that she relished these fertile opportunities for reiterating the lessons that she was so desperately trying to instill in my life. Unfortunately' I was so engulfed in my own ignorance, believing that I knew everything that I needed to know, that more often than not these hard fought lessons fell on deaf ears. Through astute tenacity and attrition little by little she began to penetrate my seemingly impenetrable ignorance and I began to recognize the enormity and value of the lessons this lady was so sedulously and assiduously trying to teach me. After one truly fragrant bungling screw-up (one of many that is) I committed, Ga-ga used the opportunity to clarify and underscore the core root of my stinking thinking. Ardently she declared that the root of my problem was pretty much analogous with what caused the majority of suffering, prejudice, hatred and violence throughout the world. "Unadulterated ignorance." She further proclaimed that the best antidote for such ignorance and suffering was found through education, education and more education! She was unwavering and passionate in this declaration, and maintained it throughout her life that the only true way to eliminate such suffering, prejudice, hatred and violence in both an individual's life, as well as that which is permeated throughout the world, was to nip the main culprit in the bud; ignorance! She emphasized the point that true growth in a person's life comes to bear when they are willing to embrace and recognize the depth of their own ignorance, and see the suffering it is causing themselves and others. Further more she underscored the prerequisite for a person to actually learn from their past mistakes, and that is for them to stand completely responsible and accountable for them. In the same vein she noted that after a person has demonstrated the ability of such accountability and responsibility that they needed to move past those mistakes no matter how dire or otherwise they may or may not have been, because, as she said, "Every moment looking back is time wasted for a person to move forward" Despite Ga-ga's absence from this world for almost two and a half decades, her unconditional love and precious lessons continue to nourish and have significant impact on my life. She is so very dearly missed, but not forgotten! Amongst the lessons she so painstakingly taught me that continue to stand out in my mind today are: A person's true worth is found through the empathy and compassion they show others; It is through helping others that ultimate happiness is found; A person need not worry about the efforts required for achieving their goals, as the most important effort is taking the first step; A person who relies on the opinions of others will remain restless and discontent throughout their life; An empty head rattles the loudest; Only a fool values the opinions of an idiot. These golden sayings announced by my aunt continue to imbue my life through innumerable ways, but the one I find superlative to all the others is, "A person cannot become who they need to be by remaining who they are?"

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