



Monthly Guide



International Buddhist Meditation Center

December 2009

928 S. New Hampshire L.A. CA. 90006

213.384.0850

A Day with Guru Rinpoche

Please join IBMC on Saturday December 5, at 10:30 AM for a day of Teachings and Empowerment of Guru Padmasambhava



Ven Lama Tsultem Sangbu is visiting from Ulaanbaatar Mongolia, and teaching at Palmo Choling Nunnery. He has been giving teachings on Chöd Practice and Mantra-yana meditations. Lama Sangbu is a Mongolian Chöd Master and Spiritual Oracle. Venerable Sangbu received his Chö lineage from Mongolian, Bhutanese, and Tibetan masters.

Lama- La, was born in 1965 to a family of Gurten oracles. He was ordained in 1986 by Geshe Drakpa Dorje, the late abbot of Gandanteg Chöling monastery. Geshe Drakpa Dorje is his Root Lama. From him he received major tantric empowerments, including Naro Khajo, and transmissions of divination. His other root gurus are Geshe Sangye Mitab and Geshe Gemphel. From them he received empowerments on Chö and Lujin practice, Khrid Bgya Man Naga as well as teachings in Buddhist Philosophy.

In 1996, he received teachings from his lineage gurus in Nepal and Bhutan including Lobpon Tsechu Rinpoche (Nepal), from whom he received Guru Rinpoche empowerment and Phurbu empowerments. HH Ngawan Tenzin Rinpoche (Bhutan), from whom he received 'Pho Khrid empowerment and teachings. From Je Khenpo Tenzin Dhendup, he received Dorje Mitab empowerment, and tantric teachings. In 2002, he travelled to Russia, Kalmykia, Buryata and Tuva to teach Guru Yoga, Chö, Lujin and Naro Khajo transmissions. His main practice is Naro Khajo, Chö and Lujin.

IBMC and Ven. Lama Sangbu, will present a morning of teaching on the importance of Guru Rinpoche and the recitation of his name mantra and the afternoon sessions will include the blessings and empowerment of Guru Rinpoche.

Depending on the number of participants lunch may be

served. Otherwise a break will be included, to allow participants to enjoy the rich array of local cuisine.

Please call Palmo Chöling to register, at 213.706.0039. Or email to palmoling@yahoo.com. Suggested donation for the day is \$50. No one will be turned away due to lack of funds.

Ven. Lama Sangbu will also be available for private consultation, and divination. If you wish to have a private reading with Ven. Sangbu please make an appointment. Ven. Sangbu will also be available for private appointments on December 6th, 7th and 8th.

Joyous wishes for the Holidays

IBMC Wishes to extend to all a Very happy and prosperous New Year and holiday season. May you be blessed with the Dharma Realizations of Samadhi, Metta and Mudita.

We hope to continue to walk with you in 2010.

See you along the path...

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

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

Integrating Lam- Rim into daily life, by Ani Khadro-la at Losang Dragma Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, July 16, 2009. Lightly edited for inclusion in IBMC Monthly Guide

As Buddhists, we should be proud of ourselves as we have chosen a path of non-violence and caring for all beings. The intrinsic nature of all beings is that of wanting happiness and not wanting suffering. The benefits received from a guru are no different from that received from the Buddha. Therefore, the guru should be regarded as Buddha because there is no kinder person than the person who introduced Dharma to our life.

We should always put effort to studying well. Practicing Dharma is not merely collecting intellectual knowledge but to practicing from the heart.

Many times we find all sorts of lamas without proper study and lineage, claiming to be lamas. If you follow such persons, you will end up wasting your precious human rebirth. Therefore, think how fortunate you are to have access to a center guided by true lamas and where proper teachings are being given – please don't waste such a precious opportunity.

Many Buddhist practitioners give up Dharma when facing great difficulties. This is solely because of the person herself. The main purpose of Dharma is not about power. It is not about running after initiations and hunting for high-titled lamas. If you do that, you could end up being overwhelmed by your own superstitious thoughts, and when great problems arise, you give up Dharma altogether. Instead, you need to study. You need to understand well the teachings of lam-rim and lo-jong. Even if you take 100 initiations and have 100 ritual implements, as long as you don't fully comprehend mind-training and lam-rim, you will deceive yourself and you will become disappointed. Therefore, it is very necessary to engage in the study of mind-training and lam-rim.

Why is it necessary to practice mind-training? Because the purpose of learning Dharma is to find solutions in life, to overcome the samsaric aggregates which keep us in suffering.

In ordinary life, gaining wealth, food and shelter brings some pleasure at a physical level but not at a mental level. The worst suffering is mental suffering.

Therefore, we have no choice but to learn how to transform such suffering. To do this, one needs to transform the mind. Wealth, rank and position can never stop mental suffering. Even having a large number of friends or guardians does not help because when faced with mental suffering, nothing can help except for mind-training.

All the sufferings, fears and problems arise due to our hallucinations, wrong concepts, wrong perceptions and therefore, we must subdue our minds through applying Dharma. The root cause of suffering is self-grasping [and the belief in inherent existence]. This gives rise to all sorts of suffering and superstitions. In order to purify the grasping to self and the grasping to phenomena, one must learn about and understand the true nature of existence. Otherwise, there is no way to eliminate suffering.

Since we seek happiness and wish to avoid suffering, it is necessary to investigate where happiness comes from. Every experience is dependent on causes and conditions. Positive experiences come from positive causes and negative experiences come from negative causes. There is nothing existing that is not in the nature of dependent arising. By being able to understand this, one will gain conviction that nirvana is definitely possible.

If we honestly investigate how Buddha revealed his teachings in the various schools of philosophy – in sutra teachings, in tantra teachings – we see that Buddha was teaching according to the mental capabilities of the sentient beings he was teaching to. This in itself shows how Buddha's teachings themselves are based on interdependence.

For people in contemporary times, it is recommended to follow lam-rim teachings and in particular, the teachings on Bodhichitta. To achieve Bodhichitta, one needs to first realize all sentient beings as mother. In these times, this idea of sentient beings as mother might appear strange or contradictory. Practices such as exchanging self for others also seem to be difficult practices. It is difficult only because we don't realize that our happiness is dependent on other sentient beings. Again, the realization of dependent arising is important. Without engaging in the six perfections, it will be impossible for us to gain liberation. Yet, there is no way of gaining realizations in the six perfections without sentient beings.

The self-cherishing mind and self-grasping are reasons why we cannot see others as mother sentient beings. Buddha's teaching on refuge itself is already emphasizing to us the need to relate our Dharma practice to other sentient beings.

We have reached the 21st century and we are engaging in preliminary practices which is very good. However, we should not expect ourselves to achieve the benefits tomorrow. When you analyze the nature of cause and effect, as well as the nature of dependent arising, you find so much excitement and interest in wanting to study Dharma.

There is no miracle to enable one to change one's life, but there is a solution: to know the right cause to gain the right result. After all, even in the case of machines, without the right causes and conditions, the machines cannot function. Therefore, similarly with happiness, even though we do understand lam-rim and chant prayers, without dedicating our lives to carrying out what is taught in the lam-rim [and creating the right causes], we will continue to trigger all our problems.

There are various ways of accumulating merit and virtue, but one of the greatest ways of doing this is to learn about and understand the true nature of existence. As long as one cannot eliminate self-grasping – thinking of “I, I, I” all the time – it will be difficult to gain lasting happiness. The stronger the self-grasping, the greater the suffering.

Going after physical comforts, serving the self-grasping mind brings only insecurity. Why not fight with this trouble-making self-grasping mind instead? Be more contented. Be more renounced.

There are many self-appointed lamas providing initiations. They do this because they don't know how to teach, and just confer initiations by ringing bells and say “goodbye” without even giving a proper teaching on refuge. There is even the danger of their giving commitments to people to recite powerful mantras, but a person receiving such a commitment [without proper understanding and motivation] can end up having enhanced anger, attachments and other delusions which cause them to end up in the lower realms. To really learn Dharma, one has no choice but to learn lam-rim and lojong. Thus in daily life, the transformation of delusions can only happen by applying mind-training. If one meditates without understanding Dharma, one might gain the benefit of some relaxation but otherwise, the meditation is wasted.

The actual power of Dharma is its ability to help us subdue our minds and therefore enable us to handle samsaric life better and equip us to cope with the pressures

of daily life. Since delusions are always active in our mental continuum, it means that we have the opportunity to meditate on antidotes and we should do so. In any situation, including in family situations, there will be more harmony, less fights, less problems if we understand dependent arising, by understanding that care and respect must be mutual.

In short, try your best to gain the understanding of emptiness through the knowledge of dependent arising. Actualize Bodhichitta through practicing non-harmful thoughts. Reduce anxiety, fear and insecurity in your daily life because these bring out problems and suffering in your daily life. As long as one has proper refuge, the blessings of the guru and one puts effort in understanding and applying Dharma happiness can be gained.

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**ZEN POETRY**  
*Submitted by Ven. S'raddha Karuna*

*Zumi Shikbu (974-1034)*

*Watching the moon  
at midnight,  
solitary, mid-sky,  
I knew myself completely,  
no part left out.*

*Yoka Genkaku (665-713)*

*One moon is reflected in many waters;  
All the water-moons are from the one  
moon.  
The Dharma-body of all Buddhas  
has entered my own nature.  
All my nature becomes one with the  
Tathagata.*

## December Events

### 10:30 AM - Meditation

### 11 AM - Sunday Dharma Talks

12/6- Ven. Kusala Bhikshu  
12/13 - Ven. K'shanti Karuna  
12/20 - Ven. Havanpola Shanti  
12/27 - Ven. Sārani Karuna

### Special Events

12/5- 10:30 AM-Guru Padmasambarava empowerment and teachings

### 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 Choling Nunnery - Bhikshuni Chitta Karuna  
Tue. 7 PM English Conversation - Palmo Choling Nunnery. Bhikshuni Chitta Karuna  
Wed. 7:30 PM Everyday Buddhism - Zendo Ven. Kusala Bhikshu  
Thur. 7 PM Jataka Tales - Palmo Choling Nunnery Ven. Havanpola Shanti

### IBMC eMail addresses

Ven. Karuna's eMail: karunadh@ca.rr.com  
Ven Shanti's eMail: hshanti1@yahoo.com  
IBMC office eMail: dougibmc@yahoo.com

### IBMC Web Pages:

www.ibmc.info  
www.karunadharma.info  
www.urbandharma.org  
http://palmoling.tripod.com  
http://bsila.tripod.com

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

Dear Venerable Karuna Dharma,

Throughout my incarceration of the last 3 years you supported me in my practice of Buddhism through your kind correspondence. The insight and remarks you shared in response to my answers to the questions of the books was invaluable. Many times people think they can learn all they need to know from books alone, however, I have come to realize that one must have a teacher to explain things or bounce things off of. Your being that teacher, that living Buddhist example for prisoners, is more a needed blessing than you may even imagine.

You gave me a voice by publishing one of my letters in the June 2009 Monthly Guide which somehow gave me more diligence in practice.

You will be happy to learn that I was released from custody on July 29, 2009. I am now back in San Francisco. I am continuing my Buddhist study and practice at Tse Chen Ling, Center for Tibetan Buddhist Studies, a part of the FPMT mandala. I have taken formal refuge under Venerable Geshe Ngawang Dakpa and established a Dharma link with a most skillful teacher. I had the great fortune to attend teachings by His Holiness the Dalai Lama in September, at which time I took the pratimoksha and bodhisattva vows. I am making as much of my life Dharma as possible by studying and practicing at home, attending teachings and retreats and volunteering at Tse Chen Ling and Liberation Prison Project. I only had enough karma to volunteer in the LPP offices for a month (they moved to Raleigh in September) but am still helping by collecting mail from their post office box to be scanned and I will soon be a corresponding teacher to others who are like I was, in a self-created hell, desperately seeking escape.

I thank you for your shining example and dedication to those incarcerated. You are truly a most worthy role model and I would do well to emulate even 1/8 of your wisdom and kindness. I pray you have a long life and continue to point your finger towards the moon for those of us still suffering.

With Respect, Reverence and Love,  
Christopher  
Ngawang Dakpa

International Buddhist  
Meditation Center  
928 S. New Hampshire  
Los Angeles, CA  
90006

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