

Buddha Days

June 8 – Lord Buddha’s conception (or birth)

June 15 – Lord Buddha’s birth, enlightenment and parinirvana (or latter two)

Full and New Moons

(Tibetan 15th and 30th days)

April 3, 18

May 3, 17

June 1, 15

The FPMT Foundation Store offers for sale the LIBERATION calendar, a traditional Tibetan lunar calendar including auspicious days and more, produced by Liberation Prison Project: www.fpmt.org/shop

to change. The mind can change from ignorance into the wisdom realizing emptiness, from a selfish mind into bodhichitta – cherishing others – etc. Like a seed planted, there is the imprint. Doing one pointed requests to the guru with devotion is like pouring water on the seed to grow the realizations.

It is unbelievably important, the benefit that you get from doing this practice. This *Lama Chöpa [Jorchö]* contains the advice of the ear whispered lineage of Ganden. That is the name of the teachings that were passed down from Lama Tsongkhapa. This is like the very heart of the advice of the transformative scripture of Ganden, passed down from ear to ear. It is the most precious thing. ♦

Collected from the teachings of Lama Zopa Rinpoche from the Light of the Path retreat in North Carolina, September 2009 and 2010. Edited by Kendall Magnussen and Merry Colony, January 2010.

Now, without having to wait for the whispers of the lineage to reach you, the complete *Lama Chöpa Jorchö* is available from FPMT Education Services through the Foundation Store (shop.fpmt.org), complete with annotated references to the origins of each commentarial addition. It is a must have, must do practice.

for an unimaginable length of time, eons. You can quickly enlighten them. You can’t imagine the fortune that we have. You can’t imagine how it happened. It is inexpressible.

First, there is buddha-nature: the potential of the mind

REJOICE!

Every year, students quietly complete retreats, commitments or progress further along the path than seems possible. This section allows us to REJOICE! in these incredible efforts. For more rejoice-worthy stories, please subscribe to this section’s blog on www.mandalamagazine.org.

After completing a ten-day retreat, Spanish FPMT student, **Enrique Flames De Tienda**, reflected on what he had gained, and given up, following ten days of introspection.

No More Games!

By Enrique Flames De Tienda

During the very first three days, we were taught to do a very simple meditation: focusing the awareness on the breath. It was just too much! Ten hours sitting, just thinking, “I am breathing out and in.” I did not know how I could bear the first day only having awareness on that. I thought of quitting and going home – I saw this meditation as very simple and stupid.

At night, the teacher explained that all problems in life are because our awareness is focused on the future and that we are not satisfied with what we already have because of our lack of proper focus and a calm mind. The essence of the explanation made me stay the second day.

During the second day, after 10 hours meditation in the lotus posture, it was like being in hell. And even though the teacher explained that problems in this life occur because of our lack of tranquil mind properly focused on an object of meditation, I wanted to quit – there was too much pain for no result. The teacher said that the next day will be the last for us learning how to focus the mind. He explained that once the mind is focused, the sensation of pain disappears or becomes bearable, and that our mind has to be concentrated not only on our breath but on how the air is touching the area within our nostrils and on our upper lip, and that we have to observe any changes.

■ Practicing Dharma in DAILY LIFE

During the following day, I experienced how pain vanishes when you are very focused on a single point of that painful area and turns up again whenever your focus goes to the pain [in general]. I discovered this through my own experience (instead of through the experience of another person such as the teacher) that pain and suffering comes from not focusing properly.

My fault is that I always focused on knowledge. I became arrogant, and that is why I claimed that the meditation technique I was learning was stupid. I know so many meditation mantras and meditation chakras, etc. But that was only knowledge – I realized nothing but arrogance with that. I experienced fear and the need to fight with others to prove that my knowledge was real while the other's was wrong. *That* was very stupid.

With the wisdom that one discovers by doing simple meditation, one begins to feel that the knowledge of any human is to be respected. If that point of view is driving the holder to a peaceful and concentrated mind, then I

would say that that point of view carries some sort of wisdom. If instead, that point of view drives people to manipulate and become arrogant, thinking that that is the ultimate truth, those people have strayed from the point, fallen between the prison walls of hope and fear, attached to the future, unable to enjoy the present moment, just suffering for themselves and for others.

I am finally becoming a very simple human who just looks through meditation and discovers truth within himself. No more games. No more fighting for the world. No fighting against politicians, or injustice, or to make others follow Buddha, or to make others follow meditation, or to make others follow or abandon something, or to make them believe in what I say to prove I have truth. I try to just be equanimous and be simple, help anyone whether a good or bad person, never be in politics, never influence anyone, just be in harmony. If someone has to be influenced, it will be by harmony itself, not by me. That is my goal and I am working for it. ♦

DETERMINATION ON THE PATH:

Don't Believe Everything You Think!

By Mark Evans

I have attempted to complete the commitment of 100,000 prostrations as part of the *Discovering Buddhism at Home* program three times now. In all three cases, I made time and space for the practice at home in my daily life, but twice found reasons to stop altogether.

On my first attempt, I thought I could complete the practice in six months. This turned out to be too physically demanding. But instead of adjusting my schedule, I used my fatigue as a reason to stop. At the time, this seemed perfectly reasonable. In retrospect, it is easy to see my ego was at work, setting such an aggressive goal and walking away without making adjustments.

After some time passed, I was inspired to begin the practice again when I heard Lama Zopa Rinpoche talk about the benefits of prostrations. I developed a heartfelt determination to rid myself of karmic debt for the sake of others and a certain acceptance that I would confront my own pride, stubborn confusion and physical limitations in

the process. I did start, but an old injury combined with the repetitive motion of prostrations caused me great pain. I went to see a doctor and explained that I had hurt myself while prostrating; naturally, he said, "Stop doing that." I felt defeated. How could I possibly ignore the potential for permanently injuring myself?

I often reflected on Lama Zopa's words, my prostration practice and the positive impression left by it on my mind. I talked with my sangha and came to see my physical problems as the purification process at work. Several years passed by before a good Dharma friend and I decided to do the practice together, even though we live 1,300 miles [2,092 kilometers] apart. So, with new-found determination and the support of a good friend, I have begun the practice again.

This time, even more physical issues have arisen. At one point, I was lying motionless on the floor and my wife asked what hurts. I told her, "From the chin down!"