

ISTITUTO LAMA TZONG KHAPA

MASTERS PROGRAM



The Outcome of
the FPMT Masters Program 1998-2004
and
an Overview of the
the FPMT Masters Program 2008-2013

Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, Pomaia, Italy

A report prepared by the Masters Program Coordinator
October 2008

Introduction

- The FPMT Masters Program of Buddhist Studies of Sutra and Tantra was established by the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT) at Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, Pomaia, Italy with the intention to train qualified non-Tibetan Dharma teachers.



- From January 1998 to December 2004 it provided seven years of intensive Buddhist education to both residential and correspondence course students from all over the world.



Main curriculum



- *Ornament for Clear Realizations (Abhisamayalamkara)*
January 1998-December 1999



- *Supplement to the 'Middle Way' (Madhyamakavatara)*
January 2000-July 2001



- *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge (Abhidharmakosha)*
September 2001-February 2003



- *Grounds and Paths of Secret Mantra*
March-December 2003



- *Guhyasamaja Tantra*
January-December 2004

Supplementary subjects

In addition, several supplementary subjects were briefly covered:

- Interpretable and Definitive Meanings (Drang-nge) according to the Chittamatra school taught by Geshe Jampa Gyatso
- Twenty Sangha taught by Geshe Jampa Gyatso
- Awarenesses and Knowers (Lo-rig) taught by Geshe Tenzin Tenphel
- Tenets (Drup-ta) taught by Geshe Tenzin Tenphel
- Buddha Nature taught by Geshe Tenzin Tenphel



MP staff



Main Teacher

Geshe Jampa Gyatso

(Lharam Geshe, Ngagram Geshe, and Acharya degrees)

Assistant Teacher

Geshe Tenzin Tenphel

(Lharam Geshe degree)





- English Teaching Assistant
Jampa Gendun
- Italian Teaching Assistants
Ven. Lorenzo Rossello and
Andrea Capellari
- Tibetan to English Interpreter
Thubten Sherab Sherpa
- Tibetan to Italian Interpreter
Andrea Capellari
- Coordinator, Text Translator,
and Transcriber
Ven. Joan Nicell



MP classes



The Masters Program 1998-2004 took place nine months a year (mid-January to mid-July, and mid-September to mid-December), for a period of 7 years, and included:

- 8 teachings a week (totaling $12 \frac{1}{2}$ hours) with the resident teacher (teachings were given in Tibetan and translated into both English and Italian)
- 4 review classes a week (totaling 6-8 hours a week) with the teaching assistant (separate review classes were held in English and Italian)
- 1 forty-minute guided lam-rim meditation a week led by an MP staff or student



Residential students



- Due to the fact that new students were admitted at the beginning of each subject, there were people who studied all 5 texts as well as people who studied between 1 and 4 texts.
- A total of 49 full-time residential students studied and wrote the exams related to one or more subjects, while 2 students regularly attended classes related to all 5 subjects but did not write the exams related to them.
- Students ranged in age from 21 to 65, were divided fairly evenly between men and women, and came from Italy (22), USA (11), France (3), Australia (2), Singapore (2), Brazil (1), Canada (1), England (1), Germany (1), Israel (1), Japan (1), New Zealand (1), Poland (1), Spain (1), Uruguay (1), Wales (1).

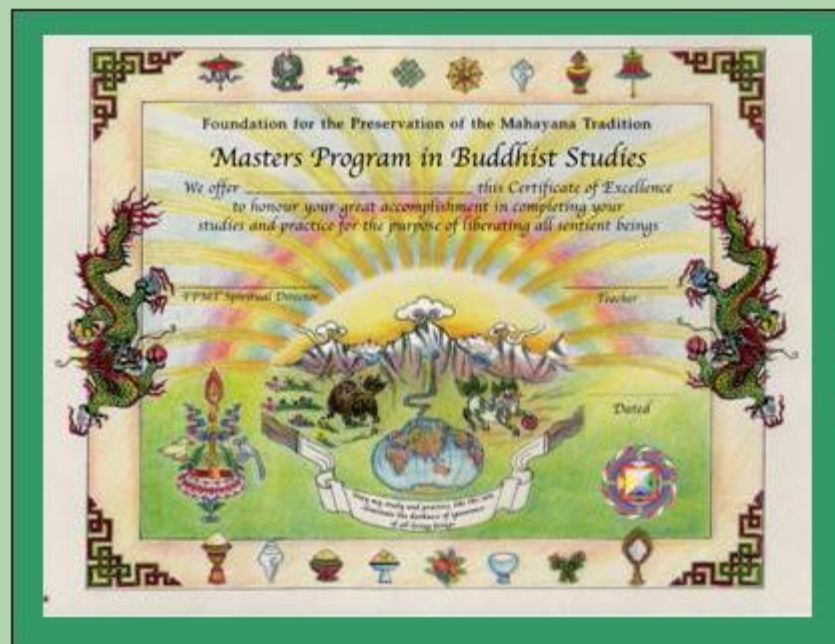
Correspondence course students



- The number of students in the correspondence course varied greatly over the seven-year period as new students joined the program and others left it. While initially more than 100 people joined the correspondence course, the number of people soon averaged about forty, with the addition of a number of people in US prisons who received the materials through Liberation Prison Project.
- Correspondence students initially received all written MP materials either by regular mail or e-mail, whereas later on they were able to download them directly from the MP website.

20 people studied all 5 subjects, of whom:

- 18 successfully completed all 5 subjects and received the final FPMT MP certificate
 - 6 graduated with high honors (average mark 95-100)
 - 4 graduated with honors (average mark 90-94)
 - 5 graduated with an average mark between 80-89
 - 3 graduated with an average mark between 70-79
- 1 successfully completed 2 subjects, but did not achieve the passing mark of 70 in three subjects
- 1 did not achieve an average passing mark of 70 on any of the 5 subjects





- 7 people studied 4 subjects, of whom:
 - 4 successfully completed all 4 subjects
 - 1 successfully completed 3 subjects
 - 1 successfully completed 2 subjects
 - 1 successfully completed 1 subject
- 2 people studied 3 subjects and successfully completed all of them

- 5 people studied 2 subjects, of whom:
 - 2 successfully completed 2 subjects
 - 1 successfully completed 1 subject
 - 2 did not achieve an average passing mark of 70 on the 2 subjects
- 15 people studied 1 subject, of whom:
 - 13 successfully completed the subject
 - 2 did not achieve an average passing mark of 70 on the subject

Financial support for the Masters Program 1998-2004

Without the support of
the FPMT Education Department
and its kind sponsors,
it would not have been possible for
Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa
to have hosted this program.

The FPMT Education Department also provided a **scholarship fund** for MP students experiencing financial difficulties, making it possible for eight students to continue their participation in the program.

In addition, the FPMT Education Department provided funding for students to work on **the production of several texts**:

1. the production of a Basic Program study manual related to the fourth chapter of the Ornament by two students
2. review by two students of the translation of Geshe Jampa Gyatso's written commentary to the Ornament and Seventy Topics with insertion of extensive footnotes from the oral commentary
3. initial merging of the transcripts from Geshe Jampa Gyatso's two extensive commentaries on the Middle Way by two students

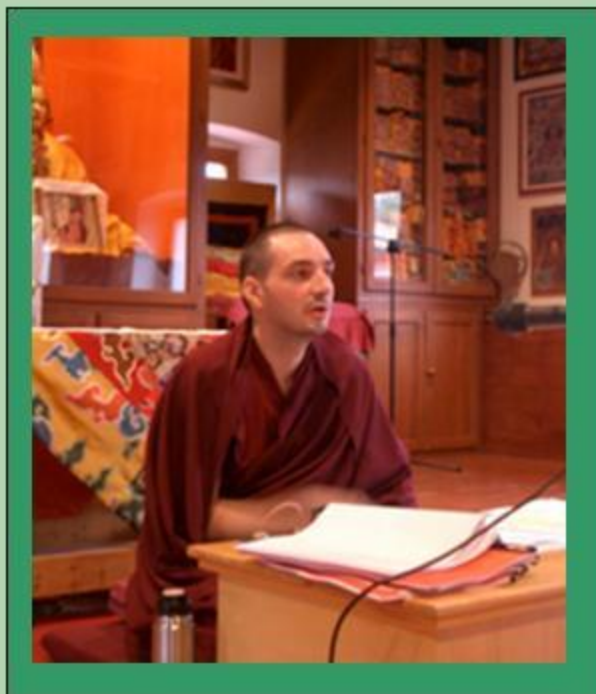
Meanwhile Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa bore the monthly costs of room and board, as well as pocket money, for the Italian staff.

OUTCOME OF THE MASTERS PROGRAM 1998-2004

The results of the in-depth Dharma education provided by the seven-year Masters Program would seem to have fulfilled its creators - Lama Thubten Yeshe and Geshe Jampa Gyatso - hopes by providing the FPMT Dharma centers with:

- ❖ **qualified Dharma teachers and teaching assistants**
- ❖ **excellent translators and interpreters**

In addition, some graduates are contributing to the flourishing of the Dharma in other roles, such as spiritual program coordinators, center directors and managers, financial consultants, counselors, etc.



The teachers...



Ven. Olivier Rossi
(FPMT final MP
certificate with
honors)

Basic Program Teaching
assistant

Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa,
Pomaia (FPMT center)

2005- 2007

Masters Program
Teaching assistant

Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa,
Pomaia (FPMT center)

2008-to present



Ven. Birgit Schweiberer
(FPMT final MP
certificate with high
honors)

Basic Program teaching
assistant

Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa,
Pomaia (FPMT center)

2005-2007

Visiting teacher

FPMT & non-FPMT centers
in Italy, Switzerland,
Germany, Austria

2005-to present



Toh Sze Gee
(FPMT final MP
certificate with high
honors)

Resident teacher

Kong Meng San Phor Kark
See Monastery,
Singapore (non-FPMT)

2005-2007

Masters Program
teaching assistant

Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa,
Pomaia (FPMT center)

2008-to present



Patrick Lambelet
(FPMT final MP
certificate with
honors)

Discovering Buddhism
teacher

Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa,
Pomaia (FPMT center)

2006-2007
2008-to present

Masters Program
On-line teaching
assistant

Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa,
Pomaia (FPMT center)

2008-to present



Ven. Laura Coccitto
(FPMT final MP
certificate)

Basic Program On-line
teaching assistant

Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa,
Pomaia (FPMT center)

2005-2007

Masters Program
On-line teaching
assistant

Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa,
Pomaia (FPMT center)

2008-to present



Don Handrik
(FPMT final MP
certificate with
high honors)

Resident teacher of
the Basic Program
and Discovering
Buddhism

Thubten Norbu Ling Center,
Santa Fe, NM /
Ksitigarbha Study Group,
Taos, NM (FPMT centers)

2007-to
present

Teacher of
introductory
Buddhist courses

Liberation Prison Project,
Santa Rosa, NM (FPMT
activity)

2006-to
present



Emily Hsu
(FPMT final MP
certificate with
high honors)

Basic Program teacher

Tse Chen Ling, San Francisco,
CA / Gyalwa Gyatso
Buddhist Center, San
Jose, CA (FPMT centers)

2006-to
present

Basic Program and Lam-
rim teacher

Machig Labdron Study Group,
CA (FPMT study group)

2008-to
present



Kok Wai Cheong
(FPMT final MP
certificate with
high honors)

Resident teacher of
Discovering
Buddhism and
meditation

Vajrayana Institute, Sydney
(FPMT center)

2005-to
present

Basic Program teaching
assistant

Vajrayana Institute, Sydney
(FPMT center)

2005-to
present



Ven. Nerea Basurto
(FPMT final MP
certificate)

Resident teacher of
the Basic Program

O.Sel Ling Retreat Centre,
Spain (FPMT center)

2008-to
present



Sixte Vinçotte
(successfully completed
3 subjects)

Resident teacher and
Basic Program
teaching assistant

Vajra Yogini Institut, France
(FPMT center)

2007-to
present



Ven. Jonathan Raichart
(FPMT final MP
certificate with
honors)

Resident teacher

Shiwalha Center, Brazil (FPMT
center)

2006-2007



Glen Svensson
(FPMT final MP
certificate with
high honors)

Visiting teacher

Chenresig Institute, Langri
Tangpa Centre, & Chagtong
Chentong Centre, Australia
/ Tushita Meditation
Centre, Dharamsala / Root
Institute, Bodhgaya (all
FPMT centers)

2006-to present



Davide Cova
(successfully
completed 2
subjects)

Teacher of
introductory
Buddhist courses

Various FPMT and non-FPMT
centers in Italy, France and
Switzerland

2006-to present



Patrizia Garberi
(successfully
completed 4
subjects)

Teacher of
introductory
Buddhist courses

Various FPMT and non-FPMT
centers and study groups in
Italy

2005-to present



Joan Stigliani
(successfully
completed 3
subjects)

Occasional visiting
teacher of
introductory
Buddhism and
meditation

Thubten Norbu Ling, Santa Fe
NM (FPMT center) /
RigDzin Dharma Foundation,
Albuquerque, NM (non-
FPMT center)

2006-2007



Nanni Deambrogio
(FPMT final MP
certificate)

Teacher of
Discovering
Buddhism,
meditation
retreats, and
Buddhism
integrated with
psychology

Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa,
Pomaia, (FPMT center) /
Mindfulness Project, Pomaia
and Milan, as well as
teaching counseling and
psychotherapy at schools
and universities

2005-to present

For a total of 16 residential and visiting FPMT teachers!!!

The interpreters/translators



Toh Sze Gee
(FPMT final MP
certificate with
high honors)

Masters Program Tibetan-English
interpreter

Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa,
Pomaia (FPMT center)

2008-to
present

Basic Program Tibetan-English
interpreter

Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa,
Pomaia (FPMT center)

2006

FPMT Text Translator for Basic
Program and Masters
Program materials (Tibetan-
English)

FPMT Education Services,
Portland, OR

2005-to
present



**Ven. Cristiana
Costa**
(FPMT final MP
certificate)

Masters Program
interpreter/text translator
(English-Italian)

Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa,
Pomaia (FPMT center)

2008-to
present



Leonardo Grulli
(FPMT final MP
certificate with
honors)

Basic Program Text Translator
(English-Italian)

Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa,
Pomaia (FPMT center)

2005- 2007

Masters Program Text
Translator (English-Italian)

Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa,
Pomaia (FPMT center)

2007-to
present



Aurora Maggio
(FPMT final MP
certificate)

Basic Program Text Translator
(English-Italian)

Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa,
Pomaia (FPMT center)

2005- 2007

Masters Program Text
Translator (English-Italian)

Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa,
Pomaia (FPMT center)

2007-to
present



Ven. Nerea Basurto
(FPMT final MP
certificate)

Founder/Coordinator

FPMT Spanish Translation
Office

2005-2007

Interpreter English-Spanish

For HH Dalai Lama, Lama
Zopa Rinpoche, and
many other lamas



Sophie Labrousse
(successfully
completed 3
subjects)

Text translator English-French

Vajra Yogini Institut
/Nalanda Monastery
(FPMT center)

2006-2008

Students who continued their Dharma education

Ven. Irene Turner (successfully completed 1 MP subject)	Basic Program	Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, Pomaia (FPMT center)	2005-2007
		Nalanda Monastery	2008
Sixte Vinçotte (successfully completed 3 MP subjects)	Basic Program	Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, Pomaia (FPMT center)	2005-2007
Ven. Libat Kimmhi (successfully completed 3 MP subjects)	Masters Program On-line student	Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, Pomaia (FPMT center)	2008-to present
Patrizia Garberi (successfully completed 4 MP subjects)	Masters Program On-line student	Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, Pomaia (FPMT center)	2008-to present
Ven. Jonathan Raichart (FPMT final MP certificate with honors)	Studying Tibetan as preparation for geshe studies	Sera Je Monastery, India	2008-to present
Ven. Birgit Schweiberer (FPMT final MP certificate with high honors)	Masters Program On-line	Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, Pomaia (FPMT center)	2008-to present
Anna Giachi (successfully completed 3 MP subjects)	Basic Program On-line	Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, Pomaia (FPMT center)	2005-2007
	Masters Program On-line	Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, Pomaia (FPMT center)	2008-to present
Ven. Lucia Bani (successfully completed 2 MP subjects)	Masters Program	Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, Pomaia (FPMT center)	2008-to present
Sophie Labrouse (successfully completed 3 MP subjects)	Lotsawa Rinchen Zangpo Translator Programme	Dharamsala, India (FPMT project)	Beginning October 2008

Students who did or are doing other Dharma related jobs

Don Handrick (FPMT final MP certificate with high honors)	Spiritual Program Coordinator	Thubten Norbu Ling Center, Santa Fe, NM (FPMT center)	2005
Silvia Bianchi (FPMT final MP certificate)	Member & teacher of Give Protection (a support group for the terminally ill)	Livorno, Italy (associated with Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, Pomaia)	2006-to present
Bethwyn Malcom (successfully completed 2 MP subjects)	Manager	Sudarshanloka Retreat Centre, Thames, New Zealand (non-FPMT center)	2008
Joan Stigliani (successfully completed 4 MP subjects)	Heart Shrine Relic Tour coordinator	Albuquerque, NM (FPMT project)	2008
	Tour manager for Ven. Tenzin Palmo	New Mexico	2008
Ven. Massimo Stordi (successfully completed 1 MP subject)	President of Sangha NGO for the construction of a new monastery	Pomaia, Italy (project of Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, Pomaia)	2006-to present
Maurizio Cacciatore (successfully completed 1 MP subject)	Director	Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, Pomaia (FPMT center)	2002
	Financial consultant	Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, Pomaia (FPMT center)	2003-to present
Laura Pellati (successfully completed 1 MP subject)	Director	Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, Pomaia (FPMT center)	2003-to present
Nanni Deambroggio (FPMT final MP certificate)	Member & teacher of Mindfulness Project	Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, Pomaia (FPMT center) /Centro Mindfulness Project, Milan, Italy (non-FPMT)	2005-to present
Ven. Carla Freccero (successfully completed 1 MP subject)	Spiritual Program Coordinator	Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, Pomaia (FPMT center)	1999-to present

Study materials produced by the Masters Program

In addition to providing qualified non-Tibetan Dharma teachers to the FPMT centers, the FPMT Masters Program was created with the aim of producing and publishing high quality translations of the root texts and commentaries included in the curriculum together with contemporary oral commentaries aimed specifically at non-Tibetan Dharma students.

Study materials produced during the seven-year Masters Program in relation to the five main texts total more than 11,000 pages and include:

- **translations, new or revised, of the root texts and commentaries** upon which the oral commentaries were based,
- **transcripts of the oral commentaries** by Geshe Jampa Gyatso and Geshe Tenzin Tenphel (these were typed simultaneously with the teachings and then checked and roughly edited),
- **transcripts of the review classes** conducted by the teaching assistants,
- **supplementary study material** developed during the program including charts, quizzes, exams, and answer keys.

Geshe Jampa Gyatso's oral commentaries alone on the five subjects total 7,500 pages. In addition, his previous commentaries given at Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa over the period of 1983 to 1997 consist of 2100 pages of transcripts. Thus, Geshe Jampa Gyatso's extensive commentaries on these subjects total almost 10,000 pages!!!

Other outcomes of the MP...

A two-and-a-half year residential and on-line
Basic Program (January 2005-July 2007)
at Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, staffed mainly
by Masters Program graduates

Teaching assistants

Ven. Birgit Schweiberer (English-language students)
Ven. Olivier Rossi (Italian-language students)

**Tibetan-English interpreter and translator
for the Fourth Chapter of the Ornament**
Toh Sze Gee

**English-Italian
text translators**
Leonardo Cirulli
Aurora Maggio

➤ **48 residential students**
participated in the study of one
or more of the nine subjects, 16
of whom completed all 9 subjects,
the final exam, and the three-
month final retreat

➤ **74 on-line students**
participated in the study of one
or more of the nine subjects, 4 of
whom completed all 9 subjects,
the final exam, and the one-month
final retreat.



Unexpected outcomes of the Basic Program



An Italian-language five-year on-line Basic Program,
run in parallel with the residential Masters Program 2008
2013 and taught by a BP graduate - Vania Tesser -
who is also presently an MP student
(program based at Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, Pomaia)

- 100 people have enrolled in this program
-



A Czech-language five-year on-line Basic Program,
run in parallel with the residential Masters Program 2008-2013
and taught by a BP graduate - Ven. Kevin Middleton -
who is also presently an MP student, while the texts and
commentaries are translated into Czech by another
BP graduate - Ester Bilkova Vinçotte
(program based at Dompipa Study Group, Czech Republic)

- 8 people have enrolled in this program
-



And one more outcome of the MP...

A second residential and on-line
Masters Program,
(January 2008-December 2013),
staffed entirely by
MP 1998-2004 graduates!!!

Teaching assistants

- Toh Sze Gee (English-language residential students)
- Ven. Olivier Rossi (Italian-language residential students)
- Patrick Lambelet (English-language on-line students)
- Ven. Laura Coccitto (Italian-language on-line students)

**Tibetan-English interpreter and
translator for the *Ornament***
Toh Sze Gee

English-Italian interpreter
Cristiana Costa

English-Italian text translators
Leonardo Cirulli and Aurora Maggio





- The residential Masters Program 2008 has approximately sixty full-time students, of whom more than 20 are ordained monks and nuns (sangha receive teachings and materials free of charge as long as they participate fully in the program and write all exams).
-
- The on-line programs in English and Italian total 130 students (sangha in this program also receive materials free of charge as long as they participate fully in the program and write all exams).

(as of October 2008)

What some of the Masters Program 1998-2004 students and graduates have to say about their experience four years later ...

There has been INCREDIBLE benefit from my taking part in the MP. I feel that, without having deepened my Dharma knowledge through the kindness of Geshe Jampa Gyatso and everyone involved in the MP, although I certainly can't say where I would be, I doubt that I would be spending most of my time focused on studying and teaching the Dharma as I currently am. I truly feel like I am the most fortunate person in the world to be doing this with my life and I owe it all to Geshe-la and the Masters Program.

Don Handrick (MP high honors graduate)
Resident teacher at Thubten Norbu Ling
Center, Santa Fe, NM (FPMT center) /
Ksitigarbha Study Group, Taos, NM
(FPMT study group)



It has been a wonderful opportunity to study the Dharma so intensively with a special teacher like Geshe-la. I have gained much knowledge about the Dharma. More importantly I think my thinking and understanding have been challenged and stretched beyond my past limits. I find myself continuing this process of deepening my understanding even today, so MP has really given me momentum to continue learning. MP has also given me confidence in the Dharma, in the sense that I feel comfortable raising doubts and difficult issues related to Dharma study or practice in class and discuss them with students, working on things they find hard to accept or have doubts about. MP also provided me with a good foundation of knowledge so that I can now happily explore other Buddhist traditions and learn from them. The experience of giving up 7 years of my life for Dharma study also helps to integrate Dharma into my life, even after MP. So, for myself it has strengthened my commitment to the Dharma.

The other important point I see is that the MP has provided non-Tibetan students like myself the chance to tap into the vast knowledge of the geshees trained in the great monastic university. I see it as a beginning of the long process of transmitting the precious Dharma of the Geluk tradition to a wider, non-Tibetan audience, something which has been hampered so far by the language barrier and the cultural difference - the necessity to be ordained as monks (and really only for monks) in the three great monastic seats of Geluk tradition in order to study in-depth this kind of Dharma teaching. I feel privileged to be part of it, especially the first MP ever, despite all our difficulties and challenges. It will always be hard and demand great sacrifice, but it is good that people in the future can access such a program and further the journey of Dharma coming to the West. I feel that this is something that takes time, so initially there are some benefits on the individual students' level but harder to see the overall benefit of the program. Yet, without doing this, there will never be a chance for the whole of Buddha-Dharma of Geluk tradition to be transmitted completely to the West. I think it would be sad if in twenty or thirty years time, we still have this big gap, with Western (or non-Tibetan) teachers teaching introductory Buddhism and Tibetan geshees/rinpoches teaching advanced topics, giving initiations. Something would have gone wrong with the transmission process. So, there is definitely a historical importance to the Dharma for having programs like MP, if we really want to have the whole, living tradition of Lama Tsong Khapa flourishing in the rest of the world.



Kok Wai Cheong (MP high honors graduate)
Resident teacher at Vajrayana Institute, Sydney (FPMT center)



Where to start?! The Masters Program totally changed my life, gave me an incredible Dharma education from a wonderful, kind, superbly qualified lama, Geshe Jampa Gyatso, and enables me to teach the Dharma and try to bring some benefit to others. It created a solid foundation of understanding out of which I can, hopefully, accurately and validly teach others, deepened my practice tremendously, and generated a momentum of practice that I hope will continue to carry me sincerely along the path throughout at least the rest of this life and hopefully future ones as well.

Emily Hsu (MP high honors graduate)

Teacher at Tse Chen Ling and Gyalwa Gyatso

Buddhist Center, CA (FPMT centers) /

Machig Labdron Study Group (FPMT study group)

A wealth of scriptural knowledge which has helped me immensely in my teaching programs and also in my personal practice. The guiding influence of Geshe Jampa Gyatso has also been of immense benefit.

Glen Svensson (MP high honors graduate)

Visiting teacher at Chenresig Institute,

Langri Tangpa Centre, and Chagtong Chentong Centre, Australia

/ Tushita Meditation Centre, Dharamsala / Root Institute,

Bodhgaya (all FPMT centers)



It was the experience that has become the very basis of all my joy and happiness in life, it has given meaning to what I had mainly perceived as aimless and restless until then, and thus I look back to it with utmost fondness and gratitude. Not only did it give a scope to my life in terms of true benefit for myself and others, but skillfully and generously provided all the necessary means, studies, time and guidance for practice and many occasions to accumulate merit and purify negativities. In Geshe Jampa Gyatso, I had the most fantastic lama I could have wished for: teacher, parent and incomparable spiritual guide. I had great fellow students and the possibility to bond on a deep and lasting personal level, hopefully for many lives of fruitful studies to come. And the program was well structured and organized and continuously improved with much effort in terms of organization, study materials, housing facilities etc....

My life has changed as it would not have without the MP and so have my family, my friends, my knowledge, my lifestyle, my perspective, my ways of thinking, speaking, and acting, and I think much for the better. So I am definitely happy to say it was worth a million times the time and the hardship, and if any further benefit ever issues forth from this, it must be fully dedicated to the kind people who made this possible.



Birgit Schweiberer (MP high honors graduate)

Basic Program teaching assistant at Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa (2005-2007) and visiting teacher at FPMT and non-FPMT centers in Italy, Germany, Austria, and Switzerland

The benefits of the study of Buddhist philosophy are innumerable and go far beyond what I can presently see and conceptualize. The first major benefit that you gain is in terms of the quality and level of faith that you develop. You gain a very clear and aspiring faith. You understand how the whole path works, the feasibility of its every aspect. It is like standing on the top of a mountain and in front of your eyes the whole landscape unfolds up to the limit of the horizon. You come to have a very precise idea of the path and you understand why and how it is possible to attain liberation or buddhahood. It makes you very stable and unwavering.

Once you have gained some knowledge and understanding, even the very little that you can apply to your own personal reflection makes it very rich and broad and has a far deeper impact on your mind.

Your capacity to serve your own teacher is greater, since he can then use you to explain the principles of Dharma to others by sending you here and there, as your understanding of the Lam-Rim is very different. And, even if you have zero realizations, others say that they still get some kind of benefit from your teachings.



Olivier Rossi (MP honors graduate)
Teaching assistant for the Basic Program
2005-2007 and Masters Program 2008-2013,
Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, Pomaia, Italy

The MP allowed me to completely live and breathe the Dharma. The benefit is incalculable and my gratitude runs deep. It opened a door and gave me entry into Dharma not previously accessible. It gave me a language with which to communicate and a means with which to explore and comprehend the teachings. Living and studying with my fellow students so intensely, was a deeply satisfying way to live. There was much difficulty and very much learned throughout the entire time at ILTK. There were also very many happy times and not a few insights gained along the way. The richness of it all will abide with me always. Thank you.



Bethwyn Malcolm
(successfully completed
2 subjects) Manager of
Sudarshanaloka Buddhist
Retreat Centre, Thames,
New Zealand



I feel that I have received an immense treasure of knowledge and an awakening on the path of Dharma that I would like to share with all beings.

Aurora Maggio (MP graduate)
English-Italian Text Translator for
the Basic Program and Masters Program,
Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, Pomaia, Italy

Immeasurable benefit. This type of program, where you learn in a systematic, organized way, step by step, provides an invaluable firm foundation of the Dharma. Then any time you hear teachings from any Buddhist tradition or any lineage, you can put them in context and understand them better. It provides a basis for meditation, so you know what to meditate about! It sharpens reasoning skills and intellect so you can better cut to the heart not only of Dharma topics but ethical issues and everything related to daily living and interactions. The consistent contact with Geshe-la over the years was a rare and wonderful way to see the teachings embodied and to learn by example. This ongoing proximity to and guidance from a lama keeps the Dharma from being only an intellectual pursuit. To have done this program is for me a great source of joy and I am filled with gratitude for having been able to do it.

Student who successfully completed 3 subjects
(prefers to remain anonymous)

The Masters Program has been a thoroughly transforming experience. The most demanding and yet the most rewarding process of my life so far.

Davide Cova (successfully completed 2 subjects)
Teacher of introductory Buddhist courses at various centers in Europe





The benefits I have received from the Masters Program are just limitless, but basically it gave me the perfect Dharma education in term of knowledge that I could ever receive in the West, with a perfect opportunity to apply it in daily life due to the kindness of Geshe Jampa Gyatso. It also gave me the perfect basis for meditation, and, like Choden Rinpoche has said, the perfect basis for realization, and therefore for enlightenment.

Sixte Vinçotte (successfully completed 3 subjects)

Resident teacher and Basic Program teaching assistant,
Vajra Yogini Institut, Lavour, France (FPMT center)

The Masters Program was the best experience of my life in that it is truly a gift from one's lama to receive such profound and special teachings. I think that it has changed my life... even if my mind is just as afflicted as ever!

Ven. Laura Coccitto (MP graduate)

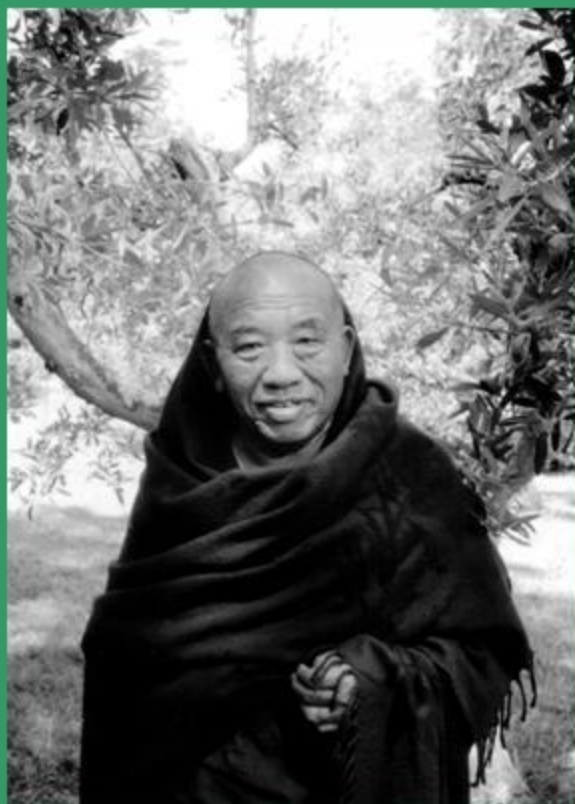
BP and MP On-line teaching assistant,
Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, Pomaia, Italy (FPMT center)



I studied Madhyamaka for two years and it completely changed my point of view. My view of the world and of life expanded and transformed into a view that is less neurotic and anxious. I found a more stable balance between this life and coming lives, and improved my objectives and increased my attention toward others. I have become happier through discovering that I can give more without fear.

Laura Pellati (successfully completed 1 subject)

Director Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, Pomaia, Italy (FPMT center)



The Masters Program definitely opened my mind, revealing the marvels hidden within.

Ven. Lucia Bani
(successfully completed 2 subjects)
 Student of the MP 2008, Istituto
 Lama Tzong Khapa, Pomaia

The learning opportunities and the general atmosphere at the centre are great and they have much enhanced my life - something for which I am very grateful.

Anna Giachi
(successfully completed 3 subjects)
 Student of the BP and MP 2008 at
 Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, Pomaia

It isn't possible in just a few words to list all the transformative benefits that participating in five years of the Masters Program have brought me, but the main one is that I notice that even though I live my life in the ordinary world and not in a Dharma context, my point of view has changed so much that I am no longer consumed by it.



Patrizia Garberi
(successfully completed 4 subjects)
 Teacher of introductory
 Buddhist courses at
 various centers in Italy

The Masters Program has been the most amazing experience I've ever had. The depth of Geshe-la's knowledge was unbelievable and the number of hours he spent patiently teaching us was beyond belief. I personally found the MP very challenging at first because of the new (and strange) terminology, but I was very grateful to be there and as time went by I enjoyed the teachings more and more as I could slowly understand them better. I now am in the process of studying all of the MP subjects again on my own, as I remember Geshe-la often telling us that the MP was just the beginning and that we should read the texts and commentaries again and again. I find that Geshe-la's teachings have been invaluable. Without his help, I would never have the slightest chance of understanding any of these teachings or understanding how to put them into practice. When I meet Dharma friends who haven't studied in the MP I see over and over how precious and unique Geshe-la's teachings were, and I appreciate them more and more. If I could relive the past seven years of my life since I met Geshe-la and joined the MP, I wouldn't have changed a thing. I wouldn't give up a single moment I had with Geshe-la or a single hour of teaching I had the privilege to hear from him. I believe we're all very fortunate; meeting a teacher of that caliber is probably nearly impossible in this day and age, not to mention receiving so many hours of teachings on a daily basis on such complex topics, which is almost unheard of. The MP has given me the necessary basis that now enables me to continue studying the Dharma on my own and slowly be able to make sense of the teachings. I can't imagine where I would be without Geshe-la and the MP. I have no words to express how valuable it has been and still is for me, especially in dealing with hardships and trying to combine them into Dharma practice. The more time passes the more I'm appreciative of Geshe-la's great kindness towards us all. It's hard for me to think of all that he gave us during the MP without being overwhelmed by its enormity and by his dedication.



Ven. Libat Kimmhi (successfully completed 3 subjects)
Student of the BP 2005 and MP On-line 2008, Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, Pomaia



The Masters Program was the best thing I ever did in my life and the benefits have been huge for my life and the people around me. I feel like I have finally come home and I have a sense of deep gratitude for all those who made that Masters Program possible.

Nanni Deambrogio (MP graduate)
Teacher for Mindfulness Project
(school of counseling) (non-FPMT project)

Although I am a nun and I was under the special care of holy masters such Geshe Jampa Gyatso, only due to having studied the Masters Program did I find the energy to actually take the responsibility to change my mind.

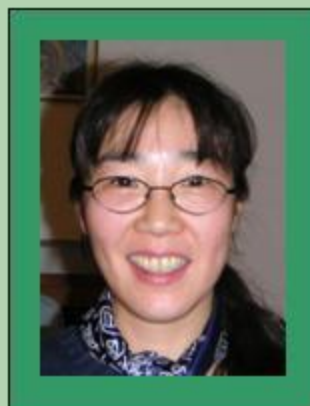
Ven. Cristiana Costa (MP graduate)
English-Italian interpreter for the Masters Program,
Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, Pomaia



The material we covered is beginning to percolate personally for me, in that I will be thinking about something and all of a sudden I will realize that we covered that in *Abhisamayalamkara* (or whatever) and will go to the transcripts to review the material. I have found that it takes a while for the teachings to become manifest in my life, but that it does happen. And it isn't simply recalling what we heard in class, but is a deeper understanding. This has been the biggest benefit for me.

Ven. Phil Baker
Attended classes for much of the MP but did not write exams

The program gave me a huge opportunity to be able to grow out of my own narrow mind and open my heart to others, and to be courageous to do whatever needs to be done to have a fulfilled life. There were many challenging moments during the program, but all of those experiences helped me to realize the very teaching of the Dharma we were studying at the time.



Nahoko Watanabe
(MP graduate)
Presently studying
to be a chiropractor

The Masters Program benefited me immensely! Due to the extraordinary kindness and skillfulness of Geshe Jampa Gyatso. I feel that it is impossible to measure the extent to which the MP benefited me in many ways... It is probably the most meaningful thing I have done so far. The entire experience (not just the study) was beneficial and I think the positive results are endless! Especially if we keep on rejoicing.

**Student who successfully
completed 3 subjects**
(prefers to remain anonymous)

A systematic and accurate study like the Masters Program, in addition to allowing us to examine marvelous texts, also allows us to put our mind in touch with the flow of blessings from all the lamas, an opportunity that everyone should have!

Maria Bianca Campanini
(attended Guhyasamaja teachings)
Student of BP 2005 and MP 2008,
Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, Pomaia

Doing a nine-month Lam-rim retreat would probably not have been possible for me without having the Masters Program as a basis. The blessings, mental imprints, and incredible benefit due to receiving oral transmissions of all the teachings of the Masters Program is too great to be able to verbalize. The experience of and opportunity to have attended the Masters Program is one of the most significant events of my life. It definitely has laid the foundation for my being able to understand the Dharma more deeply and to be able to continue to study/practice the Dharma at a more profound level. Since leaving the Masters Program and since having completed the Lam-rim retreat, I feel that Dharma is a more integral part of my life. In comparison to how I was before the Masters Program, I reflect upon the Dharma more in my daily life, rather than the Dharma being something that I reflect upon only when I attend a retreat or after attending teachings.

Student who successfully completed 4 subjects with honors
(prefers to remain anonymous)



I have developed a slightly deeper understanding of Dharma and some ability to explain it to others. Inside, I have not changed much, but I do have more faith in Dharma and the Three Jewels than I used to. I don't know if I am actually able to benefit others with it (I hope so), but since my teachers, especially Geshe Jampa Gyatso, encouraged me to teach, I have tried to do so.

Patrick Lambelet (MP honor graduate)
Teacher of Discovering Buddhism and teaching assistant
for the Masters Program Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, Pomaia

Geshe Jampa Gyatso [...] was one of the greatest teachers of our time. He showed an extraordinary aspect of loving kindness that [...] would be hard to find again in this world. Having a chance to study the Great Texts with such a fully qualified teacher as Geshe Jampa Gyatso was remarkable and priceless. Also after spending some time with thousands of Tibetan monks in Sera, I feel that Geshe Jampa Gyatso really took special care of his Western students in quite an uncommon way, making the Dharma accessible not only to Tibetans but to Westerners from around the world. This seems to be quite rare.



Ven. Jonathan Raichart (MP honors graduate)

Former resident teacher at Shiwalha Center, Brazil (FPMT center) /
Presently studying Tibetan at Sera Je Monastery, India

I think I've become stronger mentally as a person. I have also learned that idiot compassion does not help anyone in the long run. Most of all I had the opportunity to live with my lama and be at his feet for the most part of the time that I was there. That's more than anyone could ask for in these degenerate times. It is true that, as the teachings say, the Guru is the foundation of all good qualities; I have this experience first hand. My faith in the Dharma has been solidified (conventionally) under the tutelage and presence of Geshe Jampa Gyatso and since the MP it has only grown.



Charmaine Mak (attended classes for all 5 subjects)

Teacher of introductory Buddhist courses, studying Traditional Chinese Medicine

I am extremely grateful for having had the opportunity to get those precious teachings, and cherish my time in ILTK very much. . For this year, I am living in France, near Nalanda Monastery, to follow the teachings with Geshe Jamphel there, but intend to go back to the Madhyamika teachings in ILTK in 2009. In terms of teaching the Dharma, I will be going to my native Brasil to help out with Lam-rim next week, and intend to do this in the next few months again. All thanks to this special opportunity I have had in Pomaia to follow the excellently structured programs that are on offer there.

Ven. Irene Turner (successfully completed 1 subject) Student of the Basic Program 2005-2007, presently studying at Nalanda Monastery, will join the Masters Program in October 2008

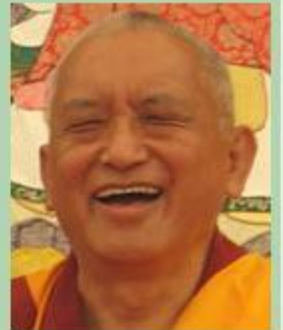
I felt the program answered my burning desire to understand the crazy world we live in. I came to the program for my own selfish reasons, I was drawn to study and knowledge for myself, the truth of all I did not understand. Geshe-la was the perfect teacher, of course. I find that I am not confused by the world anymore, I developed a much greater capacity for detail, I am finally after 40+ years able to have a healthy relationship, living somewhat close to a normal life is indeed a miracle for me, certainly I could not have accomplished that without the Masters Program. The benefits go far beyond the tangible. In closing all I can say is I rejoice in the karmic merits of all who made the Masters Program of 1998 to 2004 possible. Truly it was an amazing experience that lives within me and is a big part of who I am today.

Peter Spiers (successfully completed 2 subjects) Resolved issues of addiction and dysfunction, and is now living a "normal" life

Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa's
past and present administrators and MP staff
would like to take this opportunity
to thank



Kyabje Zopa Rinpoche,
the FPMT Board of Directors,
FPMT Education Services



(particularly, Thubten Pende, Merry Colony,
and Olga Planken), and
all the sponsors
of FPMT education programs
for their support for the Masters Program.

May all your wishes be fulfilled
and may you quickly achieve the state of...

