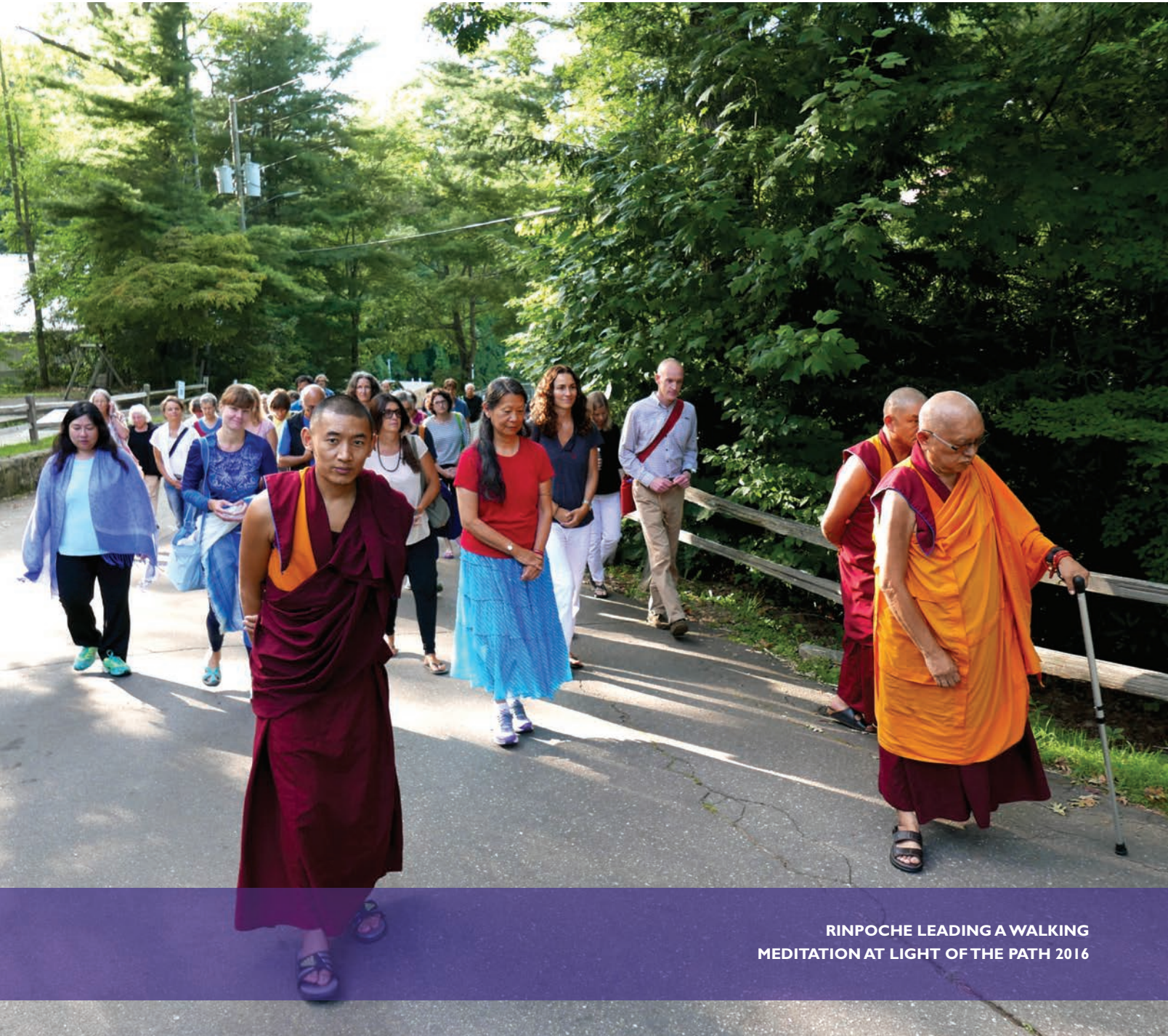


AN EDUCATION PROGRAM TO CAPTURE THE ESSENCE OF FPMT

# LIVING IN THE PATH



RINPOCHE LEADING A WALKING  
MEDITATION AT LIGHT OF THE PATH 2016



In 2008, Merry Colony, who at the time was director of FPMT Education Services, was looking to develop an education program that captured the essence of the work of the department. “FPMT’s mission statement says that our organization is ‘based on the Buddhist tradition of Lama Tsongkhapa of Tibet as taught to us by our founder, Lama Thubten Yeshe and our spiritual director, Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche,’” Merry shared with *Mandala*, “and yet we didn’t have a program that reflected that.”

Creating a new FPMT education program is not simple. “At first we thought we would have to scour the Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive audio files, earmark subjects, and make compilations of audio teachings for each topic,” Merry explained. “The task of creating such a program was daunting.”

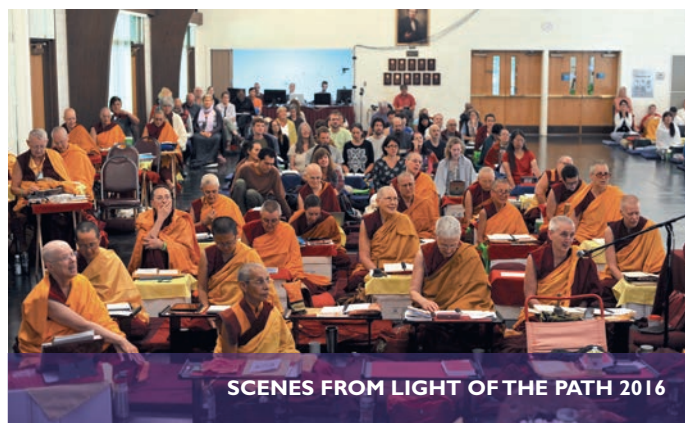
Around the same time, Lama Zopa Rinpoche spoke about a “significant and auspicious dream,” according to Ven. Roger Kunsang, CEO of FPMT, Inc. and Rinpoche’s assistant. The dream indicated that it was very important for Rinpoche to teach Lama Atisha’s seminal lamrim text *Lamp of the Path to Enlightenment* and that Kadampa Center in North Carolina, US, should help make this possible. In the end, it was decided Kadampa Center would host a teaching retreat—the Light of the Path retreat—every year for five years.

“This felt like a very auspicious sign,” Merry said of Rinpoche’s dream, “and the perfect opportunity to capture Rinpoche’s teachings on video over a period of years and create a program, which we would call *Living in the Path*. And Ven. Roger agreed.”

“So we put together the media team and translators in order to capture all of the teachings at the first Light of the Path retreat in high quality video and in multiple languages—English, Chinese, French, German, and Spanish. Next, a team of senior teachers reviewed the transcripts immediately following the retreat, organizing them by topic, noting especially potent short segments of the teachings to extract as short video clips. In this way, we started to construct the *Living in the Path* program modules one by one,” Merry said, explaining how the program and retreat are linked.

Since the first Light of the Path retreat in 2009, the *Living in the Path* program has continued to develop. “It is a constantly evolving program in that new modules are regularly being added based on Rinpoche’s more recent teachings,” said foundational programs coordinator Ven. Joan Nicell.

“The *Living in the Path* modules are divided into three categories: ‘Taking the Essence,’ Rinpoche’s heart advice for making each day of our life the most meaningful possible; ‘Practice Instructions,’ Rinpoche’s inspiring explanations of key daily practices; and ‘Realizing the Lamrim,’ Rinpoche’s experiential advice for reflecting and meditating on the lamrim topics. All the modules are based on lightly edited transcripts of Rinpoche’s oral teachings given mainly at the Light of the Path



retreats, but also drawn from other teaching events and retreats,” Ven. Joan explained.

The modules themselves include numerous video clips, edited teaching transcripts, supplemental readings, discussion forums, and a system for earning certificates of achievement that demonstrate progress through the program.

“In order to encourage students to spend time digesting the readings, meditating on them, and putting them into practice in their daily lives,” Ven. Joan continued, “some modules are supplemented by guidelines for meditation and daily mindfulness practices based on quotes taken from Rinpoche. These modules also include a service practice to enable students to make their study, reflection, and meditation of immediate benefit to others.”

*Living in the Path* is the first FPMT education program designed specifically to be online, which means that FPMT centers, projects, services, study groups, and individual students around the world can access teachings and connect with Lama Zopa Rinpoche on a regular basis. In particular, FPMT centers and study groups are encouraged to host *Living in the Path* with a *Living in the Path* facilitator.

Ven. Paloma Alba, spiritual program coordinator at Centro Nagarjuna Valencia in Spain, facilitated the eight Spanish-language *Living in the Path* (*Vivir el camino*) modules over three years. “It was very well attended by students. Most of the students who attended

the three years were quite new to Dharma, but they came regularly. Rinpoche's teachings on emptiness are difficult, but they followed with patience and interest. Many of them also attended other teachings at the center," she said. "To receive teachings from Rinpoche is something unbelievable and is a big blessing as it is not always easy for students to meet him personally."

In preparation for each Light of the Path retreat, Rinpoche has emphasized that students attending, and even those watching online, should review what he has previously taught so that he can move forward through Atisha's text. The *Living in the Path* modules offer "bite-sized chunks" of materials, making preparation for the retreat easier. Light of Path 2017 is scheduled for August 20–September 17, 2017, in North Carolina. As of publication, students can still register to attend the retreat in person. And Rinpoche's teachings during the retreat will be streamed live online as well as offered as recorded video.

FPMT Education Services staff will continue to integrate the recorded video, audio, and transcripts of Rinpoche's retreat teachings into this essential education program. So whether or not a student has attended the Light of the Path retreats, they can deepen and refine their understanding of Rinpoche's lamrim teachings through ongoing study of *Living in the Path*.

"It is one of the heart-programs of FPMT education, meaning that it is uniquely FPMT and reflects Lama Zopa

Rinpoche's emphasis on lamrim," said Tom Truty, current director of FPMT Education Services. "And because it is entirely digital, it can be used in a center, at home, or on retreat using a computer, tablet, or even smartphone." ■

## LIVING IN THE PATH RESOURCES

*Living in the Path* is available in English and Spanish through the FPMT Online Learning Center and many modules are offered freely to interested students: [onlinelearning.fpmt.org](http://onlinelearning.fpmt.org)

For news and updates on *Living in the Path* visit the FPMT Education News page: [fpmt.org/blog/edu-news](http://fpmt.org/blog/edu-news)

Registration and details for the Light of the Path 2017 can be found at: [kadampa-center.org/light-path-retreat-2017](http://kadampa-center.org/light-path-retreat-2017)

Recorded video, audio, and transcripts of Rinpoche's teachings from the Light of the Path retreats, as well as other teaching events, are made available on the Rinpoche Available Now page: [fpmt.org/rinpochenow](http://fpmt.org/rinpochenow)

**Mahamudra Centre  
New Zealand**

**Upcoming Retreats**

**24 Sept - 15 Oct Vajrayogini**

**5-25 Nov Yamantaka Solitary Hero**

**5-20 Jan Lam Rim**

**Led by  
Venerable Lozang Yönten**



**PLUS: Ongoing special courses and retreats  
Individual retreat cabins and support**



**[www.mahamudra.org.nz](http://www.mahamudra.org.nz)**



**Himalayan Designs**  
**Authentic Tibetan Art & Sound**

Mandalas ♦ Thangkas ♦ Prayer Wheels  
Bodhisattva Rupas ♦ Singing Bowls ♦ Tibetan Rugs

[HimalayanDesigns.com](http://HimalayanDesigns.com)