

MANI RETREAT

with Lama Zopa Rinpoche

5 May to 6 June, 2009

Dear friends, brothers and sisters, cousins and friends in the Dharma, **Vajra Yogini Institute** is one of the French residencies of the [FPMT](#). So **Lama Zopa Rinpoche** will be hosting you at his 'home'. Be assured that we will do everything possible to organize this big family get-together in Europe, centered around our precious Lama, as best we can. During the retreat we will try to answer all your temporary and ultimate needs. But please help us by getting organized well in advance with our proposals in the following pages. The heart of the retreat will be held in a large tent on the grassed area opposite the stupa. The last time this kind of organisation happened was in 2003 for Lama Zopa Rinpoche's visit during the **Four Kadampa Diety** retreat and in 1993, for the teachings on the ninth chapter of the *Bodhicharyavatara* by **His Holiness the Dalai Lama**. Two events that will be long remembered in the hearts of those who took part, even though they were of short duration. So, Lama Zopa Rinpoche's presence, for nearly six weeks, in this already blessed place will surely ripen a lot of karma, open hearts and minds, and stir our consciences. Let's be ready to receive all these blessings with calmness and gratitude. The presence of this incredible and extraordinary being is well worth the trouble, so for a short while let's be ready to sacrifice those comfortable conditions that we're so used to in the West, ready to travel hundreds or thousands of kilometers to this corner of France that will, for the occasion, become international.

It's not easy for everybody to find a slot of four, maybe six weeks in their timetable but it's a unique occasion for us to meet, once again, our brothers and sisters from the four corners of the planet, together with our spiritual guide, so...

You'll find various pages on this site designed to introduce you to the place, the retreat content, general information and specific points. If we've missed certain points, please feel free to let us know, we can adapt at any moment if needs be. There will surely be very many people attending so it will be necessary to take into account the needs of everyone but please, before sending us your reservation form, take the time to read *all* of these pages so that we can avoid unnecessary letters and telephone calls. The Institute's timetable is very loaded throughout the year: we have activities before and after this precious month of May and the Mani retreat will be preceded by an important international meeting of FPMT center staff members, so it's important that everybody be clear about arrival and departure dates in order to maintain harmony throughout the Spring season. We'll now let you discover or re-discover Vajra Yogini Institute in the following pages; we hope that you won't be too bored reading it and that it'll give you the occasion to meet with us at tulip and daffodil time together with our precious Lama for a huge Dharma celebration. With all our devotion and with the joy of welcoming you, we pray that no obstacle will prevent anyone from taking part in this event.

Hoping to see you very soon,
The Vajra Yogini Institute team

GENERAL INFORMATION

[Vajra Yogini Institute](#) is situated on the summit of a hill, surrounded by a six hectare park and is one of five French [Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition](#) (FPMT) centers (three in France and two in over-seas territories). Founded thirty years ago, it now has over 1,000 active members. Teachings and retreats are organised throughout the year, guided by Tibetan lamas and visiting western teachers from around the world. The Institute has hosted two important visits, in 1982 and 1993, **His Holiness the Dalai Lama**. The presence of **Geshe Lobsang Tengye** for over 25 years, of **Geshe Tenzin Dorje** for four years and of **Geshe Tenzin Loden** for nearly a year, has strengthened the powerful connection the Institute has with **Sera Je Monastery** in southern India.

Each summer we welcome **Yangsi Rinpoche** for our summer university. We have great joy in regularly receiving lamas such as Chöden Rinpoche, Kensur Lobsang Tenzin Rinpoche, Dagri Rinpoche and Kensur Geshe Tegchok Rinpoche. In the near past, the Institute has also welcomed His Holiness Sakya Trizin, Lati Rinpoche, Kirti Tsenchab Rinpoche... Young lamas such as Ling Rinpoche ou Gomo Toulkou Rinpoche have given us the pleasure of visiting despite not having finished their studies, giving the opportunity for Institute students to make or re-establish a contact with these incarnations.

We have also received senior western students who have since become qualified teachers such as Steve Carlier or Thierry Racca, Anilas Rita et Sangye Khadro. For four years we've had the joy in organising a week's teaching with Anila Robina Courtin and a yearly vipassana retreat guided by the Venerable Antonio Satta.

For twenty years we have proposed a Vajra Yogini retreat and for two years, over the same period, a four week Lam Rim retreat.

This is the second long retreat guided by Lama Zopa Rinpoche at Vajra Yogini Institute.

Weather

Difficult to predict the weather in May and June... Years go by and none are the same.

Nevertheless, spring in the south-west of France is generally very temperate, neither too hot nor too cold but perhaps a little rain from time to time. It's better to bring light clothing with a number of warmer layers for the evenings and the morning sessions, as well as a wind-breaker, an umbrella and water proof shoes in case of rain.

Translation

The translation will be transmitted by FM radio in English and French, following needs, as well as other languages; more likely Italian and Spanish according to the demand. For those who don't bring their own radios, small FM radios will be on sale during the retreat.

All the prayers and practices used in the retreat will be given to all participants in French, English and Spanish.

Telephone and internet

During the retreat it is of course advisable for everyone to limit, as much as is possible, communication with the exterior (telephone, email, etc). However...

- A telephone box that works with tele-cards (on sale at the reception) is at your disposition.
- The château is equiped with wi-fi therefore, for those who are obliged to keep a contact with the exterior, it will be possible to connect to internet with your lap-top computer.

Don't forget to leave the Institute's address and phone/email with those close to you in case of emergency.

Telephone : 05 63 58 17 22 or 05 63 58 29 61

Email : institut.vajra.yogini@wanadoo.fr

What to bring ?

The complet retreatants kit could be composed of :

- a wind-breaker, an umbrella and water proof shoes in case of rain.
- comfortable and light clothing, shoes that are easy to take on and off.
- An FM radio with enough adaptables batteries (also necessary for English-speakers because certain retreat sessions will be guided in French).
- An alarm clock.
- A pocket lamp or torch
- A small meditation cushion
- A shawl or blanket for sessions in the tent.

We've anticipated having a large number of mattresses and meditation cushions for your comfort during the sessions but on certain days like the initiation we will be very large in number, so please, if you come by car and if you have the place, bring your own cushion, mat...

The boutique

The Institute's boutique will be open every day during the retreat. You'll find handicrafts, books, CDs, meditation cushions and mats, embroideries, ritual objects, clothing, post cards...

Meditation places

The retreat will be held in a large tent or chapiteau erected for the occasion and which can house up to five hundred people. Also available are the small gompa on the second floor and the large gompa on the ground floor.

The stupa

The Institute's kadampa stupa is one of the largest in Europe. It was built in 1992 in memory of de Lama Yeshe, the institute's founder. It will be possible to make daily water bowl and light offerings, with the help of Venerable Charles.

Karma yoga

During the vipassana retreat that we organise each year, we have established a list of useful daily tasks that help towards the upkeep of the Institute. During these retreats we ask each retreatant to experience " meditation in action " for 20 or 30 minutes a day. Apart from the personal benefits and the accumulation of merits gained from this practice, the work done by each person enables the Institute's voluntary workers to participate in the retreats.

We've therefore decided that, during the Mani retreat, we will give you this list of small tasks to do each day and to so participate together in the harmony of the place. A half-hour each day or two, during a week or a month, we can work out this out either on the spot or in advance, if you wish.

Animals

Unfortunately, it will not be possible for us to welcome your pets (dog, cat, rabbit, snake or other...). A number of cats who have found refuge at the Institute, some stray dogs, our two peacocks Leon and Leon, are all going to see their life-styles rocked a little, thank you in advance for not letting your children get too close to them in order to avoid accidents.

Children

For those of you who are coming with young children, we think it will be best to put you in contact with each other (through us, it'll be easy, you just have to ask). In fact, we will be renting comfortable guest houses (gîtes) near the Institute (five minutes by car, or a twenty minutes walk) at very reasonable tariffs that will ensure a secure atmosphere for your kids. It will most likely be possible to find French baby-sitters but you could also come with somebody you know who speaks whatever language the child(ren) speaks.

In order to preserve the atmosphere of the retreat, we think it best that young children do not reside on the site. It's a long period, with a lot of people and we're more likely to be more attentive to the kids when they visit regularly rather than living each day. This is an open-ended proposition and we count on you, parents, to help us find the best solution all round.

Illness or handicap

If you suffer from a chronic illness that may arise without warning, if you have an complicated medical treatment, if you have a certain heavy handicap, please let us know beforehand in order to better handle the situation if it arises.

Water

For those accomodated in the Institute, the priority will be vigilance concerning daily water consummation. We are rarely more than a hundred spending the day on site, so if we multiply this number by two or three, trois, we need to adapt. Showers should be short, be reasonable with WC water usage, and daily habits like washing teeth or hands should be done with this in mind.