

The Drepung Losel Ling Meditation and Science Center



Our Vision

Drepung Losel Ling Meditation and Science Center is dedicated to the realization of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's far-reaching vision for the flourishing of humanity by fostering the convergence of Modern Science and Buddhist Inner Science.



Drepung Loseling Meditation and Science Center



THE DALAI LAMA

A MESSAGE FROM HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA

One of my main commitments is the promotion of basic human values such as kindness, compassion, forgiveness and generosity. These values are not luxuries; they are absolutely necessary for the flourishing of human society. We all share a wish to be happy and free from suffering. We also have a responsibility to contribute to the future of humanity. The great benefit of science is that it can contribute tremendously to the alleviation of suffering on a physical level, but it is only through the cultivation of warm-heartedness and tackling our disturbing emotions that we can begin to address and overcome our mental suffering. I believe that modern science and the inner science of, for example, ancient Indian wisdom tradition, with its understanding of the workings of the mind can learn from each other and — through dialogue and collaboration — serve the best interests of humanity.

I am deeply appreciative of Drepung Loseling Monastery's taking part in this endeavour by creating a Meditation and Science Centre, a place where modern science can productively interact with inner science and philosophy in order to advance a more holistic understanding of the human condition. Drepung Loseling has fostered this kind of collaborative effort for many years, beginning in 1998 with the establishment of an historic affiliation with Emory University—a partnership that I was very happy to inaugurate.

This collaboration has led to several initiatives including The Emory-Tibet Science Initiative, which has produced a comprehensive modern science curriculum specifically for Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns, and more recently, Emory's work in social, emotional and ethical learning (which I often refer to as secular ethics in education) to be employed in classes from kindergarten to university level.

This new Meditation and Science Center is situated at Drepung, Karnataka State in South India, which is regarded in the Tibetan world like a second Nalanda institution. It has the potential to provide authentic opportunities for people from around the world to engage in Nalanda's rich legacy of intellectual rigour and spiritual practice. At the same time it will also foster the ongoing dialogue between modern science and Indo-Tibetan wisdom. I sincerely hope that the Drepung Loseling Meditation and Science Center becomes a vibrant platform for an exploration of the workings of our minds, as well as our positive and negative emotions, in ways that will contribute effectively to individual and collective well being.

November 24, 2017



His Holiness the Dalai Lama inaugurates the Drepung Loseling Meditation and Science Center on December 14, 2017



Geshe Lobsang Samten
Drepung Loseling Monastery
Karnataka, India

Message from the Abbot

On December 14, 2017, Drepung Losel Ling Monastery had the great honor and pleasure of His Holiness the Dalai Lama inaugurating the Drepung Losel Ling Meditation and Science Center. A long-term endeavor, guided by His Holiness the Dalai Lama's far-reaching vision, this center is a place where modern science can productively interact with the Nalanda tradition of philosophy and science—sustained for centuries by the scholarly institutions of Tibetan Buddhism.

Since its establishment in the early 15th century, Drepung Losel Ling, the largest college of the illustrious Drepung Monastery—renowned throughout the Tibetan Buddhist world as the second Nalanda—has served as a vital center of Buddhist learning. Often referred to as Khemang Losel Jewai Ling Dratsang, the “Monastic College of Ten Million Brilliant Scholars,” Drepung Losel Ling has, for centuries, maintained a reputation for academic excellence and spiritual practice, attracting serious scholars from throughout central Asia. This tradition of inquiry has provided fertile ground for His Holiness' vision for how new generations of scholars from two major traditions can investigate the inner and outer worlds together.

His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama's lifelong engagement with global leaders from science, medicine, and education—as well as with diverse spiritual thinkers—has been instrumental in cultivating greater collaboration between these various disciplines. His Holiness's commitment to this expanding dialogue inspired an academic partnership between Drepung Losel Ling and Emory University that His Holiness inaugurated in 1998.

For more than two decades, Drepung Losel Ling and Emory have worked together to advance His Holiness's vision through a number of innovative education programs, facilitated by the monastery's North American seat, Drepung Loseling Monastery, Inc. in Atlanta. The creation of this Center is emblematic of Drepung Losel Ling's deep commitment to making a contribution toward the realization of His Holiness's aspirations for the betterment of humanity.

It is our hope that people from around the world who are interested in the convergence of science and spirituality, or in deepening their own personal understanding of Buddhist teachings and practice, will see the Drepung Losel Ling Meditation and Science Center as a welcoming place where they can explore both new ideas and ancient wisdom. We hope you will join us in the heart of our flourishing monastic community.

“In the 21st century,
science and spirituality
have the potential to
be closer than ever,
and to embark upon a
collaborative endeavor
that has far-reaching
potential to help
humanity meet the
challenges before us.”

h.h. the dalai lama



Drepung Losel Ling Meditation and Science Center

The Drepung Losel Ling Meditation and Science Center is a response to both His Holiness the Dalai Lama's vision for continued collaboration around the intersection of science and Buddhism, and to Drepung Losel Ling Monastery's mission to promote well-being by training individuals in ancient wisdom practices.

While modern science is adept at investigating the outer world through quantitative methods and third-person perspectives, Buddhism understands the importance of first-person observation as a means to understanding the world. And as the emerging field of contemplative science increasingly provides research-based evidence about the benefits of meditation, interest in the practice of meditation is steadily growing across the world. Working together, there is tremendous potential for these two intellectual traditions to advance the understanding of human emotions, consciousness, ethics, and spirituality.

The Drepung Losel Ling Meditation and Science Center will be a nexus for these two worlds, a place where ideas and friendship can flourish. Providing generous facilities where scientists and monastic scholars can deliberate concepts and engage in research face to face, the center will also offer people from around the world a place to engage in study and practice at the heart of a thriving Tibetan Buddhist center of learning.



creating
understanding



His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Vision for Humanity

For more than thirty years, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has engaged in an on-going exchange with scientists to explore how the interface between modern scientific knowledge and the time-honored science of mind embodied in the Tibetan tradition can work together to address the problems faced by humanity—not only on a material level, but also on a psychological and emotional level. He has encouraged and facilitated scholars from both traditions as they work to bridge these two complementary systems of knowledge for mutual enrichment and the benefit of many.



This endeavor has resulted in an unprecedented change in Tibetan Buddhist monastic education. A six-year comprehensive science curriculum — comprised of neuroscience, biology, physics, and the philosophy of science — was developed and implemented at the request of His Holiness the Dalai Lama by Emory University. Known as the Emory-Tibet Science Initiative, this program has helped to integrate science into the core curriculum at the major Tibetan monastic universities including Drepung Losel Ling Monastery.

His Holiness has also worked tirelessly to share his vision for the education of heart and mind, that is, the promotion of common human values as an integral part of kindergarten through university level education. He refers to this as “secular ethics,” that is, an ethics that does not rely on any particular belief system, but one that can be embraced and practiced by both those following a particular faith traditions and those who do not. Relying on common sense, common experience and scientific evidence, secular ethics is another major topic which can be explored at the center.



Lastly, His Holiness has also dedicated himself to reviving the ancient wisdom tradition of India, perhaps best exemplified by the teachings and contemplative practices of the ancient Nalanda University, one of the world's first major centers of learning.



The Nalanda Tradition

One of the world's oldest centers of systematic and rational academic inquiry, Nalanda University attracted students from as far away as Persia, Korea, Indonesia, Turkey, and China. Located in the northeast of India in what is now the state of Bihar, Nalanda was valued deeply by the India emperor Ashoka the Great, who supported it as a center of learning in the 3rd century bce.

Various systems of philosophy were taught in detail at Nalanda in addition to the fine arts, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, politics, logic, grammar, literature, and metaphysics. Famed almost as much for its methods of inquiry as it was for the topics investigated, Nalanda's scholars were relentless in their pursuit of understanding through the tools of critical analysis.

For more than 1,000 years, Nalanda University produced many of the greatest masters of both Indian Buddhism and secular knowledge, laying the foundation of a historic intellectual tradition spanning Buddhist philosophy, logic, ethics and contemplative practice. These included the two "Supreme Ones," Nagarjuna (2nd century ce), one of the most influential Buddhist philosophers and the founder of the Madhyamaka school, and Asanga (4th century ce), who also established a great philosophical lineage, as well as the master commentator and debater Dignaga (6th century ce); Shantideva (7th century ce), the author of the beloved text "Guide to the Bodhisattva's Path"; and the great epistemologist, Dharmakirti (7th century ce).

The cross-cultural, interreligious, and interdisciplinary approach of Nalanda University was diligently preserved in Tibet after Nalanda's destruction by invaders around 1200 ce.



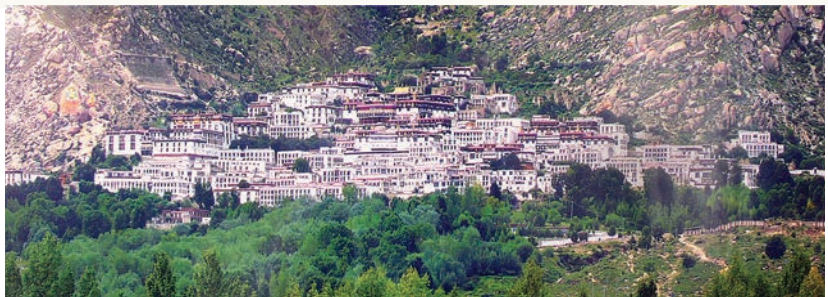
Drepung Losel Ling Monastery

Drepung Monastery was founded on a hillside outside of Lhasa, Tibet, in 1416 by Jamyang Choeje, one of the four principal disciples of the great Je Tsongkhapa. Eventually growing into a grand monastic university, Drepung housed, at its zenith, more than 10,000 monks and was comprised of seven colleges — much like early European universities such as Oxford and Cambridge. Known as Khemang Losel Jewai Ling Dratsang, the “Monastic College of Ten Million Brilliant Scholars,” Drepung Loseling became the largest of Drepung’s colleges and the one most renowned for its academic excellence, a place where the legacy of Nalanda and of Je Tsongkhapa has been kept alive.

Embodying Nalanda’s great gifts to Tibetan Buddhism and the aspiration and ability to keep those gifts alive and continually relevant, Je Tsongkhapa was a supreme scholar and adept who established a great monastic educational system in Tibet modeled after Nalanda. He was a prolific author whose life’s work encompassed astute insights into the theory of sutra and tantra, profound meditative experiences; and the creation of important texts about ethics.

Surviving great hardship after the invasion of Tibet by Chinese Communist forces in 1959, teachers and monastic students have preserved his dedication to intellectual and spiritual life while in exile in India. Only about three hundred Drepung Losel Ling monks were able to follow His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama into exile in India after the decimation of the monastery in Tibet. In time, though, Drepung Losel Ling was reestablished in south India in 1969 on land generously provided by the government of Karnataka State.

Drepung Monastery
in Tibet c. 1950.



Teachers and monastic students have preserved Je Tsongkhapa's dedication to intellectual and spiritual life while in exile in India.



To this day, Drepung Losel Ling combines philosophical and logical investigation of the mind with contemplative practice and ethical behavior to prepare Tibetan monastics to engage deeply with humanity's most pressing questions. It is now a thriving community of more than 3,000 monks, upholding the legacies of Je Tsongkhapa and Nalanda University.

living legacy

An Historic Partnership: Drepung Losel Ling and Emory University

"I believe that this is a very historic moment, to see the forging of a relationship between two eminent institutions, which represent the best of both the Tibetan Tradition, and the western academic tradition."

h.h. the dalai lama at the inauguration of the partnership between drepung losel ling monastery and emory university

below left Drepung Losel Ling Abbot Geshe Konchok Paksam, and Emory president Dr. William Chace signing agreement in 1998.

below right His Holiness the Dalai Lama launching the ETSI program in 2008 at Drepung Losel Ling.

In 1998, Drepung Losel Ling Monastery entered into an historic partnership with Emory University—the first time a Tibetan monastic institution and a western university agreed to mutually facilitate cross-cultural exchange and inquiry. In the presence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the abbot of Drepung Losel Ling, Khen Rinpoche Geshe Konchok Pasam, and Emory president Dr. William Chace, signed a document forming the "Emory-Tibet Partnership."

For more than two decades, Drepung Losel Ling has worked closely with Emory to facilitate opportunities that can enrich both traditions. One of the most important of these is the Emory-Tibet Science Initiative (ETSI), a program to create and implement a comprehensive and sustainable modern science curriculum specifically for Tibetan monastics. While western science has focused primarily on an exploration of the outer world, the great monastic universities of the Nalanda tradition—like Drepung Losel Ling—have devoted themselves to the rigorous investigation of the inner world. Now, through the burgeoning field of contemplative science and collaborative programs like ETSI, these two traditions of inquiry can work together to generate new insights and methods for solving some of humanity's most intractable problems.

The Drepung Losel Ling Meditation and Science Center is delighted to offer facilities designed specifically for this kind of collaborative exploration, as well as a variety of programs grounded in these two intellectual traditions.



collaborative

Meditation and Science Center Programs

"For a number of years, it [the Emory-Tibet Science Initiative] was just a dream, a wish. Then slowly, over the years, that hope started to materialize and now it is turning into an institutional effort with a stable foundation (due to) the affiliations between the prestigious Emory University and the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives along with Drepung Losel Ling Monastic College."

h.h. the dalai lama

A wide variety of programs are available through the Drepung Losel Ling Meditation and Science Center. Integrative courses, workshops and retreats centered around Buddhist philosophy, psychology, ethics, contemplative science and/or meditation can be tailored to meet the needs and interests of specific groups such as university study abroad programs, dharma center groups wishing to have an immersive experience, educators wanting to know more about secular ethics, or groups interested in the intersection of Buddhism and science. Additionally, there are opportunities for extended courses of study in residence, and for individual meditation retreats. All courses are taught by well-qualified monastic and western teachers.

Current Programs

Annual Winter Retreat and Pilgrimage

The annual winter retreat and pilgrimage provides an opportunity to deepen one's understanding of Buddhist philosophy and practice with the support of well-qualified monastic teachers. Topics may vary, but typically involve courses centered around lo jong (mind training) or lamrim (stages of the path to enlightenment) teachings and practice. Winter retreats typically last one week, and students have the option to add on a pilgrimage opportunity to ancient Buddhist sites such as Ajanta and Ellora, or Bodhghaya and Varanassi.

Emory-Tibet Science Initiative (ETSI)

The Emory-Tibet Science Initiative is a landmark undertaking promoting the convergence of science and spirituality. An educational program specifically designed to teach modern science to Tibetan monastics, etsi began when His Holiness the Dalai Lama invited Emory University to collaborate with the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives. The ultimate goal of the Emory-Tibet Science Initiative is to build a bridge between two complementary systems of knowledge by educating future scientific collaborators who can contribute to new discoveries in the science of mind and body. etsi is designed to give Tibetan monastics new tools for understanding the world, while also providing them with fresh perspectives on how to employ and adapt time-tested, Buddhist, contemplative methodologies for the relief of suffering in the contemporary world. Additionally, scientists and science educators are encouraged to learn more about the Buddhist science of mind and what it can contribute to the understanding of human emotions, the nature of consciousness, and integrative approaches to health and well-being.

The Drepung Losel Ling Meditation and Science Center is pleased to host international science educators from dozens of universities for an annual five-week long summer science intensive for monks. Over the course of a six-year long curriculum covering philosophy of science, physics, neuroscience, and biology, monk science students have the opportunity to study science with experts in the various disciplines and to engage in laboratory and field work. etsi also facilitates year-round science education at the Center through distance learning materials, particularly the creation and translation of bilingual textbooks and on-line resources. To learn more about etsi programming, please visit Tibet.emory.edu.





Emory-Tibet Science Initiative for Nuns

A new endeavor established in 2017, the Emory-Tibet Science Initiative for Nuns provides female monastics with the same opportunity as their male counterparts to engage in intensive summer science education with an international faculty. Providing fully functional laboratory and classroom space in a convenient central location for nuns coming from around India, the Drepung Losel Ling Meditation and Science Center is pleased to host this program in partnership with the Department of Religion and Culture (Central Tibetan Administration) and the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives. Like the monks studying in the etsi program, the nuns in the etsi for Nuns program are on track to receive the highest academic degree in Buddhist philosophy that now requires basic competency in modern science. etsi for Nuns provides an important support for these women scholars coming from five small academic nunneries.

Emory Mind-Body Sciences Study-Abroad

The Emory Tibetan Mind/Body Sciences Summer Abroad Program is five-week immersion experience that offers undergraduate students the opportunity to interact with leading members of the Tibetan exile community—including Emory Distinguished Presidential Professor His Holiness the Dalai Lama—while participating in the growing dialogue between modern science and the Tibetan Buddhist contemplative tradition.



An important part of this experience is an experiential learning opportunity at the Drepung Losel Ling Meditation and Science Center. Integrating cultural study, meditation practice and interaction with the monks and nuns studying science through etsi, students can fully experience the resources offered by a thriving monastic community. With unparalleled access to experts in Buddhist philosophy, meditation and Tibetan medicine, students also have the opportunity to attend daily meditation practices with sacred chanting led by monks and to teach English at Drepung Losel Ling Monastery's elementary school. To learn more about the Emory-Mind Body Sciences Study Abroad program, please visit Tibet.emory.edu.

New Programs

Contemplative Immersion



A visit to Drepung Losel Ling Meditation and Science Center offers a rare opportunity to investigate contemplative practice in an authentic setting. Contemplative practitioners of all levels—from novices to advanced meditators—can participate in the regularly offered retreats at Drepung Losel Ling Meditation and Science Center. Retreats last one to two weeks and may cover Buddhist philosophy, psychology, and ethics, as well as instruction in meditation. Daily schedules alternate between teachings and contemplative practice. Contemplative immersion is a chance to establish or deepen your meditation practice with expert guidance in an environment conducive to spiritual practice.

Specialized Courses and Group Retreats

For groups with a specific interests or agendas, Drepung Losel Ling Meditation and Science Center can create courses and workshops that provide an opportunity to delve deeply into a topic area. Customized programs and schedules can be arranged that combine meditation instruction and practice, an introduction to Tibetan Buddhist philosophy, psychology, and/or ethics, and/or the organizations' own programming.

Examples of specialized courses include classes on particular Buddhist texts or practices, educator workshops on incorporating secular ethics in education, or corporate retreats examining ethical decision making. Conference rooms and meeting spaces are available.

Study Abroad Programs

With the success of Emory University's Tibetan Mind/Body Sciences Summer Study Abroad Program, one of the most popular study abroad programs in Emory's history, the Drepung Losel Ling Meditation and Science Center is pleased to offer resources for other universities to create their own study abroad programs. The Drepung Losel Ling Meditation and Science Center is equipped to house up to forty students in comfortable dormitory-style rooms. Options exist for both summer and semester-long programming at Drepung Losel Ling Meditation and Science Center, as well as shorter stays that may be incorporated into existing study abroad programs in India.

Classroom space is available for instruction by university faculty members, and students will also have the opportunity to learn Tibetan Buddhist philosophy, psychology, ethics, and meditation from Tibetan Buddhist monastic teachers. Programs housed at the Drepung Losel Ling Meditation and Science Center can take advantage of all the monastery's available resources—from daily meditation to participating in prayer ceremonies in the spectacular prayer hall to witnessing monks in their daily academic debates. Students will find their monastic hosts warm and friendly, and the opportunity to interact with Tibetan monastics will be a meaningful highlight of their study abroad experience.

A Place to Rejuvenate

The Drepung Losel Ling Meditation and Science Center is also available to host independent scholars and practitioners interested in longer-term residencies at the monastery. The center can help to facilitate individualized programs for those seeking to seriously engage in study and/or practice in an inviting environment designed to help one reconnect with self and others.



Meditation and Science Facilities Center



Set on eleven acres and with a magnificent view of the monastery's Main Prayer Hall, the center offers a community lounge, a digital media center, five classrooms for up to 125 students, four science labs, thirteen guest suites with bedroom, sitting room and attached bath, fifty guest rooms with attached bath, and a spacious dining hall with a modern institutional kitchen. All guest rooms are equipped with air conditioning, hot water heaters and a locking wardrobe, and classrooms are air-conditioned. During many months of the year, the center's well-designed cross-ventilation makes air conditioning unnecessary.



Filtered and bottled water is made easily available to guests, and kitchen and cleaning staff are trained to maintain appropriate hygienic standards. A modern medical clinic with a resident doctor is located about 100 meters from the Meditation and Science Center and there is a western-style hospital a short drive away. Additionally, Men-Tsee Khang Tibetan medical clinic has a branch nearby.

To maintain a reflective and comfortable environment for all guests and in respect of monastery rules, smoking and the consumption of alcohol are prohibited within the walls of the center and within the grounds of other monastery facilities.



The construction and funding of this center was initiated by the administration of the Drepung Losel Ling Monastery serving from 2013–2016 and completed by the administration serving from 2016–2019. ₹20 million were contributed by Taiwanese patrons through Geshe Tenzin Lamsang, the director of the Losel Ling Altruistic Medical Association Clinic.



Drepung Loseling leadership and philosophy teachers with lo jong retreat participants from North America.



Western students studying philosophy in the Meditation and Science Center prayer hall.

Frequently Asked Questions

Where can I find more information about specific offerings and registering for programs?

For more information and to register for programs, please visit: meditationandscience.org or write to dlm.meditation.science@gmail.com

What is the language of instruction?

Courses are taught primarily in English. Group retreats and classes, however, can be organized by request in a number of languages including Hindi, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean.

Do I need to be a Buddhist?

All programming is open to those of any or no faith tradition, as well as to guests of any race, gender, or sexual orientation. While our programs are based in Tibetan Buddhist philosophy and science of mind, course content is complementary to modern scientific understandings and compatible with the practices and beliefs of many other religious traditions. You do not need to be Buddhist, or interested in becoming Buddhist, to attend any of our programs.

Do I need to have meditation experience?

Most programs are suitable for contemplative practitioners of all levels, including complete novices. Courses not suitable for beginners are clearly indicated as such.

Are there opportunities to study advanced Tibetan Buddhist philosophy and meditation practices?

Advanced courses in Tibetan Buddhism and contemplative practice will be offered as part of the Meditation and Science Center's programming. Any recommended prerequisites will be noted at registration.

How do I get to the Drepung Losel Ling Meditation and Science Center?

The Drepung Losel Ling Meditation and Science Center is located in southern India near the town of Mundgod, in the state of Karnataka. The nearest international airports from which you can make a domestic air connection are Mumbai (bom) and Bangalore (blr). Course participants should arrange travel to either the Belgaum (lbg) or Hubli (hbx) airports, or if traveling by train, to the Hubli train station. The Drepung Losel Ling Meditation and Science Center will assist with arranging transfers from Belgaum or Hubli to the Meditation and Science Center, but all expenses are the responsibility of the guest and paid directly to the taxi service. Participants may also fly to Goa (goi) and arrange their own transportation to the monastery from the Goa airport.

Do I need a special visa?

In addition to the Indian visa required by many international visitors, all foreign visitors to the Drepung Losel Ling Meditation and Science Center will need to obtain a "Protected Area Permit" (also known as a pap) from the Home Ministry of India. Participants are provided full instruction for obtaining the Protected Area Permit at time of registration.

How far in advance do I need to register for Drepung Losel Ling Meditation and Science Center programs?

In order to allow sufficient time to receive the pap and to arrange travel, all foreign visitors—except those from Bhutan and Nepal—must register no less than 3 months in advance of the course they wish to attend.

What if I have to cancel my trip due to extenuating circumstances?

We recommend purchasing trip insurance from a reputable company. Many airlines offer this service through their website. Please see the Drepung Losel Ling Meditation and Science Center website for specific fees and refund policies.

What amenities are available at the Drepung Losel Ling Meditation and Science Center?

Accommodations include simple, but comfortable, double and single rooms furnished with a bed, desk and chair, and a locking wardrobe. All rooms are equipped with electricity, air conditioning, hot water, western-style toilets, window screens, and wireless internet. Filtered water is used for food preparation in our dining hall and the kitchen and housekeeping staff is trained in modern hygienic standards.

Filtered and bottled water is readily available for guests. A laundry with automatic washing machines is also available.

The center has a small shop with snacks and toiletries. The monastery has a larger store with sundries and a café where you may purchase ice cream, cold drinks, or tea, a short walk away.

Can I smoke or drink alcohol?

The Drepung Losel Ling Meditation and Science Center is a completely alcohol and smoke-free zone, as is the entire monastery.

FAQ



SEE Learning educator preparation workshop held at the Drepung Losel ing Meditation and Science Center, January 7-10, 2019.



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