

Mindfulness Training at Merigar West

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Photos by Marco Almici

Over the weekend of September 30 – October 1, Santi Maha Sangha instructor and Tibetan translator Elio Guarisco led a course on mindfulness in the Gönpa at [Merigar West](#) in Tuscany, Italy. Over 60 people attended the course, more than half of whom were newcomers to the Gar.

There were two sessions each day with Elio's explanations interspersed with periods of concentration on the breathing. On the first day, guided by Elio, participants focussed on their breathing, the movement of the abdomen and then concentration on a point at the base of the nose. During the afternoon session, time was spent under the warm autumn sun walking slowly and mindfully in a *kora* around the Gönpa.



During the Sunday sessions Elio explained the importance of not fantasizing about what has happened in the past or what will happen in the future, and becoming an observer of one's own thoughts rather than being caught up by them. There were also guided sessions on paying attention to the sensations in different parts of the body and then being present in the sound of a bell ringing.

On Saturday evening, September 30, at the Arcidosso Town Hall, Elio gave a public talk on presence related to diet according to Oriental medical systems. In particular he described the three typologies of persons according to Ayurveda and Tibetan medicine and how the qualities of different types of food are better adapted to each type.

The two day course, although brief, was valuable for both older students and new with Elio sharing his vast knowledge and experience from many years of study and practice in different traditions. His down to earth sense of humour was not lacking as well as anecdotes from different life experiences. We thank him for sharing his knowledge and experiences with us and hope he will come back to Merigar soon!

Liz Granger