



Tashi Choling Dharma Foundation Inc. Newsletter Autumn 2005

ZASEP TULKU RINPOCHE

Tashi Choling Dharma Foundation has a long-standing relationship with the Venerable Zasep Tulku Rinpoche, a meditation master of the Gelugpa Tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. Rinpoche received his training under some of the most competent Buddhist masters in Tibet prior to the Chinese invasion of that country. Later on in India he graduated from Varanasi Sanskrit University with an Acharya degree and spent 18 months in Thailand at the request of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. He first came to Australia in 1977 and taught for three years before leaving for Canada. He has established Buddhist centres and taught throughout North America. Rinpoche has also been the Spiritual Director of Dorje Ling Retreat Centre (formerly Illusion Farm) in Tasmania for many years. He is recognised as the 13th incarnation of the great Kagyu teacher Lama Chabdak who lived in the Kham region of Eastern Tibet and founded Zuru Gompa 600 years ago. Rinpoche is known for his gentle compassion and good humoured wisdom.

LETTER FROM RINPOCHE

(Extracts from a letter to Guy from Rinpoche, who has just returned from pilgrimage in India – see the report by Pat Waddington on Page 4 of this newsletter).

Rinpoche writes: "We had great pilgrimage in India. Everyone was blessed by the power of Lord Buddha." He reports that India is changing for the better in many ways – in Delhi "you see blue sky and stars in the night" for the first time in a long time. This is because "they made new rule in Delhi only compressed natural gas is allowed" in most cars, and so there is less pollution.

Rinpoche did not become ill during the duration of the pilgrimage, but he says, "my computer got bad virus, they know Lamas are perfect casualties of the Computer mara virus. It was not bad to have virus for your computer, you get chance to rest!"

He also reports that he is thinking of coming to Australia in January-February 2006, and requests that we look into completing the plumbing and heater installation in his retreat house at Dorje Ling before that time. He says of Dorje Ling - "How is Dorje Ling and our beautiful Gompa land. I love that place so much!" He is hoping to come down every winter to do a retreat there if possible.

He finishes his letter with: "I send my love and prayers to you all
Zasep Tulku Jamseng"

TASHI CHOLING TUESDAY MEDITATION AND STUDY.

Tuesdays, 7.30 – 9.00 PM

Above 71 Liverpool Street. Laneway east of Gould's Pharmacy. Weekly meditation practice, and fortnightly an additional study topic is presented, with time allowed for discussion. Tara sadhana practice and mantra recitation will be the focus for the first Tuesday every month. Open to all interested people.

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The end of last year and the beginning of this one have been very active for us in the Tashi Choling Sangha. We hosted a visit from Tarchin Hearn and an extended and very lively visit from Cecile Kwiat. Both very well received and smoothly run. A great big thank you to those who put in valuable time and energy to facilitate these activities.

The Tarchin retreat at Tara Nivas was wonderful but as I did not attend Cecile's retreat I will leave those stories for others to tell. However, I can report that we just had an amazing Easter retreat at Dorje Ling, and I would like to share with you some of the highlights in a small offering elsewhere in this newsletter.

One major challenge for us since the purchase of Dorje Ling has been how to maintain a caring and creative presence on the property in between visits by Teachers, the sangha and committee members. We have a caretaking 'overseer' in the person of Anna Crotty, and Anna's energy and commitment has been exemplary. It is in the day to day duties and activities that we have also needed volunteers. To this end we have been very fortunate to have had the presence of Michael and lately John Beck. I would like you all to know that this threesome have brought Dorje Ling back to a beautiful state and put us on the right track for future development. Michael has left us, but it is hoped that John will stay for some time and continue his fine work. Anna has made a very strong commitment to remain as 'overseer' and we welcome her vision and energy in this role.

The activities of the Hobart Sangha still centre around our regular Tuesday evening meditation meetings at our Liverpool Street address. Everyone is welcome to come along and further develop their practice and share their energy with old and new students alike. It is possible that the centre will be moving to 326 Elizabeth Street North Hobart, the scene of some recent evening meditation gatherings and the site of the very successful Art & Curiosities Auction last year. We will keep you informed as developments arise.

Speaking of fund raisers, it is proposed that we will be having our next Annual major fundraiser around the Winter solstice...more as news comes to hand. This year the emphasis will be on light and sound...so bring out your instruments and ears and prepare for a wonderful evening of music at a venue to be announced.

Thank you all for your continued support with the purchase of Dorje Ling. Zasep Tulku Rinpoche has said that he would like to come every year in future, so let us keep creating the causes for this to happen. Thank you again...

Guy Turnbull

LIGHTEN UP

Polish up your act for a Show time evening for this year's
2005 Annual Dorje Ling Fund Raiser

WINTER SOLSTICE -

Saturday June 25th

taking bookings now for short sharp acts - Caberet style

Post ph/email TCDF for reservations & tickets

Be involved

GET YOUR ACT TOGETHER

see attached flyer for details

TCDF MEDITATION CENTRE - CHANGE OF LOCATION?

We are requesting feedback regarding the possible move of TCDF centre from above Gould's Pharmacy to Weerona House and Yoga Studio in North Hobart. We have been meeting above Gould's for many, many years thanks to Roger McLennan's generosity, but the steepness of the stairs and the room's location on the second floor have proved to be an obstacle for some of our regular members.

Please let a member of the committee know if you have any comments regarding this issue.

A THOROUGH COMPREHENSION OF BUDDHISM.

ONE DAY HUNG-JEN, the fifth patriarch of the Dhyana sect in China, made an announcement to his disciples, saying that whoever was capable of giving a satisfactory proof of his thorough comprehension of Buddhism would succeed him in religious authority. The result was the following two stanzas, the first by one of his most learned disciples and the second by his humble rice-pounder, who, however, was awarded the prize.

*The body is the holy Bodhi tree,
The mind is like a mirror shining
bright;
Exert yourself to keep them always
clean,
And never let the dust accumu-
late.*

*No holy tree exists as Bodhi
known,
No mirror shining bright is standing
here;
Since there is nothing from the
very first,
Where can the dust itself accumu-
late?*

(Excerpt from Tricycle: The
Buddhist Review, Spring 2005)

CECILIE KWIAT RETREAT - KOONYA

by Mukula Grace

moment by moment, breath in breath out,...how fortunate I am to have time to reflect on this moment, to watch the mind, and to realise there is truly, only one to which all arise from and fall into. Sinking into the peaceful surroundings of home, I take this opportunity to reflect on my experience of Cecilie Kwiat.

Sitting with other meditators, listening and witnessing her teachings, thoughts quietened and calmness arose and amongst this process a strong statement presented itself on the screen of the mind..." here is someone who speaks the truth of who she is" and I am so privileged to be here in front of her, drinking of the wisdom and joyousness of this moment. In that moment, my experience was one of instant recognition of self.

Cecilie has a commanding, compelling presence which sliced through my defences, which altered my perceptions, which opened my eyes to ever increasing present moments, which showed me a way of



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being, which invited me to completely drop all answer-finding and SIMPLY BE with what is...full acceptance of each moment of awareness and each moment of unawareness.

Since the week-end spent with Cecilie, I have come to a complete stop within myself regarding - what is my purpose?, where is my place? Much evaluation and investigation has and still is occurring and together with Cecilie's instructions on allowing the questions to go unanswered, there is plenty of "sitting", plenty of insight and much seeing of non dualism.

From time spent with Cecilie in retreat, the unfolding of who I am continues, and I suspect will continue to unfold as I navigate this life with awareness.

Realising who I am is not an end, it is only the beginning.

Grab the opportunity to sit with this awakening being the next time she graces us with her presence.

DULL BLUE FLOWER RETREAT (CECILIE KWIAT RETREAT) – KOONYA 2005-03-18

- *Vigorously coloured tulips.
- *Small is beautiful, 11 or so were there.
- *Not in the future, therefore aware.
- *Not in the past, therefore unobstructed.
- *In the present, therefore clear.

- Andreas Hack



Photo: Andreas Hack

A PILGRIM'S PROGRESS -

an account of a pilgrimage to India in February 2005 with the Venerable Zasep Tulku Rinpoche.

Twenty of Rinpoche's students ranging in ages from 20-67 arrived in New Delhi on the first day of February to follow, for 21 days, in the footsteps of the Buddha. The majority of students were from Rinpoche's Canadian centres in Vancouver, Nelson, Toronto and Thunder Bay, one student from America and four Australians, including myself and my sister Janet. We have been students of Rinpoche for more than 15 years.

After two days in New Delhi sightseeing and visiting the Tibetan colony to do some dharma shopping we travelled by overnight train to Varanasi. This ancient city sits on the banks of the Ganges river, or Ganga as it is referred to in India and its waters are revered as both goddess and mother. We were blessed to be able to experience the sun rising on the Ganga from boats rowed along the Ghats and we made offering cups of candles, flowers and incense which floated down the river in the misty morning light.

From Varanasi we commuted daily by auto rickshaw to Sarnath about 7 miles distant spending most of our six days in Sarnath hearing teachings from Rinpoche and meditating in one of the many beautiful temples - Tibetan, Japanese, Chinese, Burmese, Jain and Hindu. We did a puja offering facing the inspiring Dhamak Stupa built around the 6th century which is situated in the Deer Park at Sarnath amongst vast ruins dating from 3rd century BC and believed to be the place where the Buddha preached his first sermon 2,500 years ago after becoming enlightened. Close to the park is a museum which houses many of the relics unearthed from the park. The statue of the preaching Buddha in the museum resonates with its beauty and serenity. We celebrated Tibetan New Year in Sarnath and had a wonderful feast with Rinpoche at a local restaurant.

We left Varanasi by train for Gaya and then by bus to Bodhgaya, the most holy place on earth for Buddhists and the site of the Mahabodhi Temple, a magnificent heritage listed monument built possibly as early as 2nd century. The temple site is breathtaking and at night it is illuminated with blue, red, green and white fairy lights. The temple marks the place where Buddha became enlightened sitting under the bodhi tree. The bodhi tree on the site is a descendent of the original tree under which Buddha sat when he attained enlightenment.

We spent 10 days in Bodhgaya meditating, making puja offerings and receiving teachings on Buddha's life from Rinpoche. From Bodhgaya we visited Sujata Grove, Mahakala Cave where Rinpoche did a Chod practice, Rajgir and Vulture's Peak a small mountain just outside Rajgir. It

is here the Buddha gave his discourse on the Heart Sutra.

I feel immensely blessed to have had the opportunity of participating in the pilgrimage and to have met so many dedicated dharma students. Although India is challenging on many levels, it is a wonderful, exciting and spiritual place and Rinpoche guided us with such care every step of the way.

Pat Waddington

MEMBERSHIP.

Become a member of Tashi Choling Dharma Foundation. Membership costs \$30/\$15 p.a. Memberships fall due 1 December annually. Send to Tashi Choling Dharma Foundation Inc., PO Box 593, North Hobart. TAS, 7002. Cheques payable to: Tashi Choling Dharma Foundation Inc.



TAPESTRY DONATION.

The tapestry pictured above has been kindly donated to Tashi Choling Dharma Foundation by Henry Patterson.

(Do you know anything about this style of tapestry? Please share your knowledge with us. We would love to hear from you.)

EASTER RETREAT AT DORJE LING

...by Guy Turnbull

Anna Crotty was inspired to invite the Ven. Lobsang Tendar after meeting him in Launceston last year. He was the Chant Master for the Gyuto Monks during their 2000 European tour and their 2001 Australian tour. Tendar now lives in Melbourne in an inter-faith community house with a Catholic Father and a yoga Swami.

He was granted permanent residency and will soon take Australian citizenship. He is a wonderful monk and gave lots of wonderful energy and led chanting during the retreat. He also gave some teachings on the Four Noble Truths, but his English was not adequate for in-depth teaching and was a bit difficult for some people to understand...however, it did not matter as he had such good energy and this was communicated without words and with his deep growling chanting.



Ven. Lobsang Tendar

Anna also invited some wise women to come and share their arts with us. White Owl (who teaches and practices in



Delmae Barton

the American Indian shamanic ways) came and Delma Barton, who is an Australian aboriginal elder from the western Queensland

area and who 'wails' the spirits of the land and sky and trees and people she meets...she told us she wails for the bringing together of all beings...it was quite amazing really...

Also we had a didgeridoo player visit and Virag joined us to lead some wonderful singing (until someone was heard to start singing the Rawhide song and helpless laughter then ensued...)

All these threads were woven into a tapestry of experience with chanting, meditation, circle dancing and spirit journeys, and (as reported) some crazy wisdom laughter from yours truly...

The retreat was called at late notice and still managed to draw about 20 people. As it turned out it was a really special experience for all who participated and we all felt like it was more of a meeting of elders than the usual retreat where one teacher is up the front and all the little students are like little birds in the nest...this felt like a group of mostly fully feathered eagles who acknowledged each other in their power and role as healers, guides and students..we all learned from and taught each other...

The other special aspect of the time was that about 80% of the people had not been to Dorje Ling before and they absolutely loved the place.



New sign painted by Annie Willock

When I arrived I found the place looking and feeling better than I have ever seen it...The Gompa paddock looked like a golf course, the huts and Gompa were so clean and there were flags flying, signs made telling visitors that this was Dorje Ling and that the Spritual Director is The Ven. Zasep Tulku Rinpoche...all giving a wonderful feeling to the space...and also they had found an old windsock I had organised years ago and it was flying in the wind...all this, and I had not had any input into organising it...it made me feel glad at heart and more confident for the future.

One last detail...during the time there I weeded and raked the Zen garden and one night in the Easter full moon I was looking from the gompa deck and the beauty of the scene was breathtaking...I then fully realized that Dorje Ling really is a pure land... I invite you all to consider doing individual and group retreats there in the future.



Group at Easter Retreat