



# Tashi Choling Dharma Foundation Inc. Newsletter Spring 2007

## 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.

### IN THIS ISSUE:

President's Report	Page 2
Retreat News with Rinpoche	Page 3
Tarchin Hearn	Page 4
Working Bee Report	Page 5
Tents4Peace Update	Page 5
His Holiness Visit to Melbourne	Page 6
Rock Collecting In Tibet (Visit to Mt Kailash)	Page 7
Money and the Dharma	Page 8



## TASHI CHOLING DHARMA FOUNDATION

PO Box 593, North Hobart, TAS 7002. Room 1, 2nd Floor, 71 Liverpool St, Hobart.

Contacts: Maria Grist - <maria@tashicholing.net> (03) 62349404 or Guy Turnbull - <guy@tashicholing.net>

Web site < www.tashicholing.net >

Our regular meditation meetings are held at 7.30 - 9.00 pm every Tuesday above Gould's Naturopathica in Liverpool St Hobart. All welcome. Those who wish can stay for a cuppa and a chat after our meetings.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT SPRING 2007

Hello friends,

Spring has arrived and the new energy manifests in many ways.

Tashi Choling hosted one of our deeply appreciated visiting teachers.

Tarchin Hearn recently led a series of urban based and environmentally grounded retreats during September.

We were, in October, to host The Venerable Zasep Tulku Rinpoche for a brief visit to Hobart and a long weekend Mindfulness retreat, followed by a Green Tara initiation at Dorje Ling. This has been postponed until early February 2008.

We hope that you will be able to take advantage of this opportunity and remember to book early to give the retreat coordinators plenty of time to organise the best possible outcomes for all.

Spring is usually a time when the grass starts to bolt and the swallows return. One of our regular pairs here at Bream Creek returned to find their old water tank home had been replaced with a new, and quite uninhabitable poly-tank. I saw them flying around scouting out new possibilities.

There are new possibilities emerging for Dorje Ling right now as well.

We have welcomed a new caretaker, Maryanne.

Maryanne has taken over from our retiring caretaker John Beck. John was at Dorje Ling for over two years and during that time established himself firmly in the hearts of many of our regular visitors and also within the local Lorinna community. I wish you well with your ongoing journey John. Please feel free to visit and join in during our times at Dorje Ling.

A wholehearted thanks to those willing working beavers who gathered recently with tools, sweat and enthusiasm for a wonderful weekend of Dharma in action. During the working bee Annie and Bart, our wonderful local Lorinna contacts and supporters, met with us and initiated the idea of applying for funding for the renovation of our tired old 'amentities block'. We submitted the application with hours to spare!! Please send out wishes that this may come to fruition because the vision is splendid, the need is obvious and the results would be sparkling!!

New building has been on my mind quite a lot lately...my own work which has been very productive, but also the need for new infrastructure at Dorje Ling. A new kitchen is really quite a pressing issue and plans are being crystallised to produce this in the not too distant future. Zasep Rinpoche has also expressed the wish for a new Gompa. So, to further these aims and to assist his students in many other ways, Rinpoche has offered, as a specific fund raiser, to lead a group of students on a pilgrimage to some sacred Buddhist sites in India. I am lucky to be included in this group this year and will be away for about 4 months. I am going to extend my pilgrimage by going back to Portugal, the country in which I spent nearly 5 years growing up between the ages of 5 and 10. I wonder how the old home village will look to these older eyes? Perhaps I will find the eyes of a 10 year old somewhere on the way.

I hope you have not lost your childlike eyes and if you have I pray you find them again soon.

All the best

- Guy Turnbull.



### DVDS AVAILABLE FOR SALE

DVDs are available of all of Zasep Tulku Rinpoche's teachings from the retreats and public talks in April 2006.

Public Talks: Why Meditate? and Healing The Mind (1 each)  
Three Principals of the Path (set of 5 DVDs)  
Mahamudra (set of 13 DVDs)  
Chod (set of 6 DVDs)

DVDs are available for \$10 each. If you are buying a large number, discounts may apply, please ask for details - maria@tashicholing.net.

Send your order, along with your cheque for payment, to:  
Tashi Choling Dharma Foundation,  
PO Box 593, North Hobart, TAS 7000.



## TASHI CHOLING MONTHLY PROGRAM

### 1st Tuesday of every month

Practice of Green Tara – Green Tara is the embodiment of that aspect of awakened mind which manifests as compassionate activity. This energy of compassionate activity is available to each and every one of us and the practice of this sadhana helps us to bring that forth within our own mindstream. Green Tara is said to be the most accessible of all the “deities”, a protective energy and presence that is available to anyone who calls upon it. Born from a teardrop shed by Avalokiteshvara, or Chenrezig, she is the active, compassionate and skilful response to the depth of suffering in the world. Sadhana practice is led by senior sangha members.

### 2nd, 3rd and 4th Tuesday of every month

We will be presenting a varied program, sometimes a teaching, sometimes a discussion, and sometimes a recording of a teacher, along with a time for meditation practice.

## ZASEP TULKU RINPOCHE

Coming to Tasmania around 7 - 20th February 2007 (dates TBC).



Public Talk Program  
In Hobart, TBA.

Retreat at Dorje Ling, Lorinna

Possible topics:  
Healing Trauma and generating  
Spiritual Awakening through  
Mindfulness Meditation

Green Tara Initiation

Cost:  
TBA.

Contact:  
Maria on (03) 62349404.  
Email bookings to [maria@tashicholing.net](mailto:maria@tashicholing.net).

(If you have previously booked and paid for the cancelled October retreat and would like a refund, contact Maria. Alternatively you might like to leave your payment intact ready for February.)

(Oct 23/06 leaving Yellowknife)

## SINGING ICE (BY TARCHIN HEARN)

(with thanks to Woody for suggesting we go, once more, down to the lake)

Early morning

Still dark

Feet scrunching bits of snow, dried twigs and leaves  
Padding over glacier-scraped rock  
down to the lake to hear the ice singing.

Strange, wonderful, haunting, never suspected.

Standing

Our bodies becoming ears, hearing  
with fingers and toes and hearts,  
The whole world attending to this indescribable, transient  
delicate, choral crying,  
A seasonal symphony in frozen, horizontal, pianissimo.

Imagine thousands of crystal crickets, each individual ,  
yet pulsing collectively.  
Blend this with tiny spring frogs peeping madly singing their  
worlds into being.  
Add a percussion section of tinkling, punctuated groans and  
snaps,  
and muted thunder rolls  
accented with light swishings and draggings  
Each voice clothed by space and stillness.

binkeling and bunkeling  
slithering and spronging  
clicking and plicking  
roaring and groaning ...

Above us a great curtain of blue-green shimmer  
A luminous river flowing continuously,  
curving,  
rippling,  
arcing the sky from horizon to horizon.  
Pulsation from the north,  
a bursting slow motion explosion of purplish green tinged with  
red at the edges rushes as if to catch up to the dancing radiance,  
A hint of heaven,  
moving in perfect union with the singing of lake and ice,  
the muffled drum chant of approaching winter.  
And around and through  
this undulating curtain of fire,  
thousands and thousands of stars are singing  
a silent background chorus of inconceivable vastness;  
wrapped around us,  
and through us,  
our frosting breaths tumbling to the earth.



TARCHIN HEARN

TARCHIN HEARN — Tarchin has just left Tasmania after a wonderful set of urban retreat sessions, meditations, and public talks. Thanks to the organisers and attendees. Thanks also to Tarchin for his excellent teachings which are always relevant, clear, and conducive to awakening.

We are all grinning madly in the dark.  
Rattling wildly in this chorus of autumn freeze,  
alternations of disbelief, exuberant upwellings, and wide open wonderment,  
graced by yet another never imagined petal of beauty,  
– this living world. Ahh!  
Could we delay the plane for an hour?

A few moments more,  
A glorious blessing to receive,  
goodbyes to Kate and Dawson to Pontoon Lake and northern lights to jays and crows and unseen bears and chattering squirrels to rock, water, sky and silent cranberried woods.  
Bundling into the stuffy noise of truck cab  
and racing to the airport  
– to another world,  
too busy to listen.

## WORKING BEE AT DORJE LING WITH MAURICE OLIVER

We had a wonderful and very productive time at Dorje Ling at the recent working bee. It was fantastic to have a newcomer to Tashi Choling, Peter, with us. Tanja Schramm — who many of you will have met on Tuesday nights or at the Easter retreat with Khandro-la — also came to help, just before she heads back to Germany.

We sat with Maurice ... mmm ... wonderful!

We also welcomed Maryanne, our new caretaker who couldn't stop saying how beautiful the place was! Everyone was delighted with Pamela's jokes and Irish antics. Guy sent us off to a really scary movie in the valley! Chani strengthened the possum-proof fence and Anna carried out possum-proof fence testing. Neil and Peter pulled down a huge tree while Guy put up the tank stand and I had the delightful opportunity of a few hours to chat with Anna Crotty! Now you have got to be grateful for that drive when you get those kinds of treats!



Peter with chainsaw



Anna and Kirsten

Love you all and love that place!

I think I am finally hooked! Thanks to all who were there for making it such a wonderful weekend.

- Kirsten Mayer



Neil and Maurice

*N.B. Next working bee will be during the Hobart Show Long Weekend, 25-28 October. Please contact Kirsten on 0413 535 950 if you would like to go.*

## TENTS FOR PEACE UPDATE

Tents4Peace International Inc. has now completed the orphanage in Kabul Afghanistan, and already we have the children housed and happy. As well as providing a home for the children, we have set up a work place for the widows to start a business in dressmaking and beauty therapy. It is hoped that over time, this will go some way towards the orphanage becoming self sufficient. There is hope, and the orphanage will give the traumatized children some peace, after their long ordeal. This is why we have called the two buildings HOPE HOUSE and PEACE HOUSE.

We are hoping that we can raise more resources to continue our work in Afghanistan - one of the most war torn, poverty stricken countries in the world. Afghanistan's children and women have suffered, and continued to suffer the most appalling atrocities, and the world continues to turn a blind eye to their conditions.

The women and children we have helped to date are those refugees living in Pakistan who lost their homes in the 2005 earthquake. After the earthquake most of these people went to make shift camps and the living conditions have been beyond description. They were so substandard that the Pakistan government bulldozed the camps late last year, and consequently these resilient people were left without homes for a third time. Their only hope is to return to their homeland, and there have been thousands crossing the border of the North West Province since late last year, and in most cases the only thing they carry is the hope in their hearts.

Nothing awaits these people who are returning other than more horror. There is no land, shelter or basic facilities and most will roam the streets of Kabul. Aid money is just not getting through to these children and women in particular, who remain the most vulnerable in the world. The winter has just begun again and we are trying to sustain as many of these children as possible with heating (coal) and basic shelter. If you wish to support the continuing work in Afghanistan please go to our website for information and to make a donation: [www.tents4peaceinternational.com](http://www.tents4peaceinternational.com)

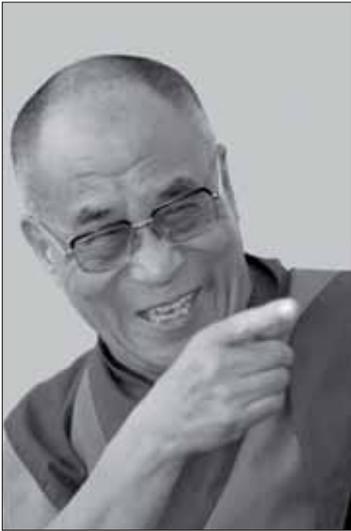


Special THANK YOU to Khalil Gustad - Afghanistan's Gold Medal musician and Master of Sitar - for the St. David's Cathedral Concert which was a sellout BIG HUGS to our Beth Chamberlain and Chani Grieve for their wonderful effort in organising the Mid-Winter Cabaret at Sirens. Also to all our friends at Tashi Choling for the much-appreciated and continuing support.

- Anna Crotty

# PILGRIMAGE TO SIT WITH H.H. THE FOURTEENTH DALAI LAMA OF TIBET IN MELBOURNE

In June 2007 a small section of the sangha were fortunate to travel to Melbourne to take teachings with H.H. Dalai Lama.

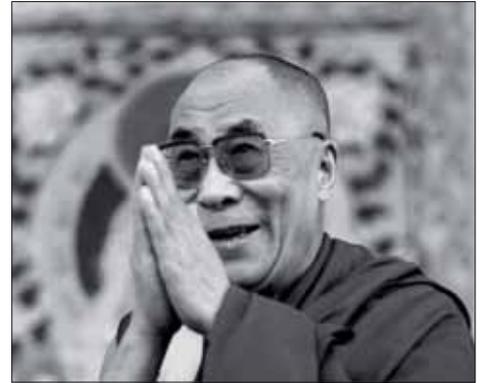


The morning atmosphere was mind altering as we walked in purposeful enthusiasm towards the Rod Laver stadium with so many other ordinary folk smiling and nodding in recognition of being on a similar path, going in a similar direction all seeking wisdom from an elder. A highly esteemed world leader and peace laureate.

I felt elated walking along the banks of the Yarra to bell ringing sculptures with hundreds, thousands of other human beings wishing to be inspired to practise peace and awaken our hearts.

On the banks of the river we reunited with interstate sangha and their offspring (some now opting to learn more for themselves about Buddha dharma) attending talks by choice, not just because their parents were spending holiday time on retreats!

For four days we met with anticipation to hear teachings and 'A Commentary on the Awakening Mind' by Arya Nagarjuna. The Orange Manjushri empowerment concluded the teachings. As the stadium hummed with 10,000 voices chanting OM AH RA PA TZA NA DHI DHI DHI DHI DHI DHI ..... many were moved to tears at the power of this vocalized collective intent for world and personal peace.



Later in the week we gathered at the Carlton Football oval for a free public talk. Once again the crowd of thousands was hushed and attending to every word as H. H. the 14th Dalai Lama stood up to speak so he could see us all. His words were strong and direct as he reminded us of our personal responsibility to make actual communication with those of different faiths and to find out about the lives and politics of those who are different from us. Don't just think the bridges, actually make the effort to reach out and discover common ground. Publicly he spoke of an invitation to the Chinese officials to come to the table to meet in world eyes to reveal their intentions for Tibetan culture.

His brave and compassionate words reminded us of how closely we live in relation to each other on the planet in this age and to be aware that each action, thought and word spoken affects each other directly much more than in the past.

His humour and open hearted words will continue to inspire me as he tirelessly offers encouragement in words accessible to all ages and walks of life, always sprinkled with humour, a chuckle and stories.

His wish to return to Australia and to all meet in one place so the organizers don't have so much to do, was applauded by the crowd.

*Roslyn Alexander*



*Green Tara*

## VAJRAYOGINI TSOG DATES

Calculated from day 10 and day 25, the new moon being day 1.

Sat Oct 20  
Sun Nov 4th  
Mon Nov 19  
Tues Dec 4th  
Wed Dec 19th  
Thurs Jan 3rd 2008

***Initiates who wish to practice together, please contact Rosie 043 999 5655***

## ROCK COLLECTING IN TIBET

Tibet must be the birthplace of all rocks! From the spectacular mountains, the sparse and desolate hills to the shattered moraines, Tibet is, really, nothing but rock. I have never seen so many rocks, ever. In my mind's eye, I can see them spilling out from some subterranean forge atop this high plateau, this roof of the world, and moving inexorably, if imperceptibly, and sometimes with human help, across the earth to take up residence and multiply in all the far-flung places..... but to trace the lineage of every rock, the path must surely lead back to Tibet.

So it will come as no surprise that rock collecting became a focus, almost an obsession, for many of us on this journey, somehow unconsciously fulfilling the deep purpose of the land we so briefly inhabited, as well as some deep purpose within our own psyches. As we left Nepal and scattered across the world again, rocks from Tibet accompanied us, lying silent in the bottom of suitcases, and in the depths of pockets, causing the scales to tip and eyebrows to rise at airport weighing machines everywhere.

During my short stay in this land, which in times past provided fertile ground in which to implant the Buddha's teaching, which gave birth to the awesome profundity of Tibetan Buddhist practice, and which still resonates, at least in my mind, with the deepest and best available in the human mind, I have to say, rocks, large and small, were a great teacher. Though it would be a mistake to somehow extract the rocks and their particular lessons for me, out of the awesome vastness in which they lay, and to see their teaching as something intrinsic to them alone, rather than emanating out of the entire context of which they were actually, just a small part. The rocks and the environment in which I found them, were never separate. Aaaahhh.....interconnectedness, sunyata. There you go. First lesson!

First and foremost, there was, of course, Mt Kailash, the magnet that drew each one of us into this journey in the first place, an awesome monolith of black granite rising solitary out of the surrounding, and very different, hills, silent witness to the prayers and struggles of thousands, indeed millions, of devoted pilgrims who have made their way around its base, day in, day out, since the beginning of time. In the few weeks before we went to Tibet, as I stressed over the petty concerns of my daily routine, from time to time a vision of Mt Kailash would flash into my consciousness, just sitting there, on top of the world, radiating a deep stillness. When this occurred, my experience of things would settle and centre. The kora was an arduous experience, as any true pilgrimage must be, though the radiant smiles, endlessly warm greetings, and occasional lilting song of the many Tibetans undertaking it at the same time, carried all of us up and over the Dolma La, the highest pass at 18,600 feet. Mt Kailash is still there, stillpoint in the world, and a kind of inner compass for me, pointing out very clearly the state of my own mind.

But other rocks were every bit as influential. In every place we camped, or even stopped just for lunch, our attention was drawn to the rocks, ranging from the tiniest pebble to the largest boulders, rock formations and cliff faces. It could be said that this was because there was, actually, nothing but rock around for the most part, or that from time to time, for me, it provided distraction and relief from the very real challenges of the journey,..... both of

which are true, but neither of which detract from the entrancement and joy and learning which the act of collecting rocks provided.

And rocks express the devotion of the Tibetan people and their relationship with their world and their life. Everywhere you go, Tibet is filled with mani walls, walls of stone, each of which is carved with mantra or Buddha image; small piles of rocks adorned the sides of highways, or marked paths so that the passing pilgrim would not lose his way; rock chortens celebrated making it to the top of high mountain passes; rocks everywhere were painted or carved with mantra; intricate dry stone walls formed the walls of meditation caves, and shepherds threw rocks to guide the grazing yaks. The fundamental being and character of the Tibetan people is totally enmeshed and intertwined with rocks.

And every rock is different from every other. Every rock is a story millions, indeed billions, of years old. Every rock is the story of the formation of the planet, and yet each has had its own particular trajectory through time and experience as well. This is obvious. One rock I have brought back with me is a study in sparkling pink rose quartz crystal, angular, somehow regular. Another rock has the texture of sand, a flat red-brown talisman with granite grey edges and a distinctive white inlay of markings, a secret indecipherable language, which somehow speaks to the heart. Yet another is a huge cake slice of sparkling pure whiteness with a rind of bright red and yellow. And then there's the one shaped like a baby's foot, some kind of plain brown conglomerate with a white quartz inlay, and there's the "liver" rock, smooth and dark, with large navy, red and orange spots, a gift to me from one of the Tibetan drivers. There's the plain brown one splattered with bright spots of luminescent turquoise, real turquoise, and the smooth crystalline black one shaped like four-sided Mt Kailash. And the one that most resonates with me,

a large red and white striped rounded stone with what looks like the figure of a multicoloured deity emerging, like some mind treasure, not yet seen clearly.



## Rock Collecting in Tibet (continued)

And so it goes. My bedroom floor is still littered with them, waiting for their next move.

The rocks of Tibet provided an awesome contemplation on the sheer unknowableness of the forces which bring anything into being, of the impossibility of really knowing the rhyme or reason behind anything and the devotion and its expression which arises in the face of this mystery. It was a contemplation on the infinite variety available in the world and a fascinating and often revealing exploration of selectivity, of judgement, of the processes of like and dislike, acceptance and rejection, and of the seeming randomness and superficiality of all that. And more, so much more...

Tibetan Buddhism, at least in Western Tibet, has been decimated, the artwork and statues destroyed, and the gompas, or what is left of them, left rudderless, allowed few monks, and with no teachers. The vision of Tibet as a place with every cave inhabited by committed yogis, the air resonating mantra, the monasteries awesome places of learning, is something which now only really exists in the imagination. What we saw was remnants of something which no longer exists. And the Tibetan people labour under the weight of Chinese bureaucracy bearing down upon them all of the time, though their devotion remains pure and strong, and their joy in that seems unstoppable.

But everything in Tibet is lived out against the backdrop of a truly awesome environment. The lives of yak herders and nomad children, the lone wild yaks and herds of wild ass, village people struggling amidst the burgeoning piles of rubbish, and all the pilgrims who make it from across the planet, are lived out there against a panorama of vast empty valleys, wide skies, barren eroded hillsides cut with rushing glacier-melt streams, lakes, snow-capped mountains, the extraordinary colours of the landscape, and the rocks.

This journey was one of full immersion and involvement in the totality of the experience, the ups and downs, the smooth and the difficult. On the way back, I sat on the plane struggling to remember what I had been preoccupied with prior to going - this seemed especially important as far as my work went - yet I couldn't bring a single thing to mind. Not one. Everything else, it seemed, had simply "dropped out", there being no room in my consciousness for anything besides the very full experience of being for a while in Tibet.

And now, it is the experience of that environment which seems to live on in me and continues to inform my mind and heart, not anything we might more traditionally associate with the dharma, its outward trappings and show. I suspect this has always been the case, there, and probably everywhere. That ultimately the understanding and vision that has been handed down to us through the lineages of beings committed to realizing truth, was grown and came to fruition founded on an ongoing communion with the natural environment, with the sky and the weather and the rocks. Tibet is actually available to each of us, all the time, wherever we are.

*Sue Willey*

DORJE  
LING  
RETREAT  
CENTRE  
(at right)



Dorje Ling in the magnificent Lorinna valley, is a sanctuary for all beings. Money is the key to holding this Jewel.

I am humbled by our capacity to give; and it is ordinary people like yourselves that make it possible. Seeing beyond self and into the view, such a monetary weight becomes manageable. Each person who donates \$40 per month makes the unsurmountable seem a triumph.

By donating small amounts you are not overstretching your personal finances, but at the same time you know you are contributing to the flourishing of the Diamond Land.

We welcome amounts small and large and the easiest way is by periodic debit through your financial institution.

You will find you will not even miss small amounts, but when you visit Dorje Ling you will know that you are a facet of this manifestation.

Greatful and heartfelt thanks to all contributors in the past, present and future! As they say, "there is no time like the present, many hands make light work, so many sponsors make light money..."

Please make this resolve to contribute regularly, and experience the potential of Dorje Ling.

Our account number is: 10162638  
BSB: 067002 (Commonwealth)

Tell us about your gift to the sangha - put your name on the transaction! You are now a benefactor.

Next issue, I will divulge an analysis of the Dharma prospectus, the energy of renewal and an index of happiness. Stay tuned...

I am at your service, please contact me for anything.

*Keith OHara (AKA Anand) Treasurer,  
Tashi Choling Dharma Foundation.  
keith@tashicholing.net  
Mobile: 0429 190367*