



# Tashi Choling Dharma Foundation Inc. Newsletter Autumn 2011

## 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 recognized 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.

## PRESIDENTS REPORT

Ahhh.... "season of mists and mellow fruitfulness"..... April finds us all resting just a bit after a hectic summer and autumn filled with activity, with a steady and richly nourishing stream of visiting teachers and retreats, especially at Dorje Ling. If you haven't been there for a while, you will be surprised at what greets you when you visit next time. If the new winding and well-constructed entrance road into the centre isn't enough, then the new dam complete with its own island, bridge and "meditator's mount" will surely delight. All artfully constructed by our master of earth moving Ross. The lower paddock has now been completely opened up and turned it into an area used frequently by folk going for a quiet stroll or sitting by the water in contemplation. Reaching the top of the drive, the bowling green of the gompa paddock takes on a new look, which may puzzle, until you realise that ALL the rubbish and old wood shed under the trees are no longer there, creating an openness that is magical. But there's more ... look around and something else will seem different – oh, my goodness, the barn has gone (well, almost!). At the summer retreat, after a number of stories emerged of many different people's experiences of contacting the Aboriginal presence seemingly vibrating in and spilling out of the very earth on the hill on which the barn stood, experiences extending back over the many years the centre has been going, Rinpoche led a small ceremony with fire and chanting to acknowledge those presences and to invite them in, to join with us now and into the future. The decision was made then and there to take down the barn, get rid of all the "stuff" in it, and to create a sacred sitting and ceremonial space. And of course, after retreats with Bonni Ross, Zasep Tulku Rinpoche, Leander

### IN THIS ISSUE:

President's report	1
Monthly program	2
Tarchin & Leander reports	3
Bonni Ross report	4
Solo retreat report	5
Tarchin retreat report	6
Caretaker	8
Dalai Lama, Library	9
Raffle, Adult Ed	10
Treas. Report, New Road	11
Loving Kindness meditation	12



## TASHI CHOLING DHARMA FOUNDATION

PO Box 593, North Hobart, TAS 7002.

Contacts: Maria Grist – (03) 62 349404 or Kate MacNicol – 0432 630796

Web site < [www.tashicholing.net](http://www.tashicholing.net) > Email: <[info@tashicholing.net](mailto:info@tashicholing.net)>

Floor 2, 71 Liverpool St, Hobart. All welcome. See inside for further details.



QR  
CODE  
for  
mobile  
devices

### President's Report – Continued

Kane and Tarchin Hearn, all since November, as well as individuals undertaking their own retreats, the centre also sparkles with the energy generated through meditation and exploration, all with heartfelt bodhicitta intent. Dorje Ling is so alive, there is so much life there, and it all participates and supports what happens there and “makes” our experience there, changes us – the kookaburras, black cockatoos, jack jumpers, tiger snakes, wedgetail eagles spotted high in the sky, the trees, wind and cloud, all of it. I always feel at home there, and this last retreat, I had a powerful sense that as much as I know the centre so well after all these years, so the centre (and all the beings that make up the centre) also knows me very well. It's a mutual thing.

We shortly say goodbye to our current caretaker, Todd, who arrived just in time to dive in to the busyness of working bees and Rinpoche's retreat, and did so with a grace and ease which astonished us all. Thank you Todd for all that you have contributed to this place and the support you have given, and we look forward to seeing you back sometime in the future.

On the Hobart front, our program remains full. We have again held an Adult Ed course, again a full class. Tuesdays and Wednesdays also continue. We are in the process of revising the Tuesday night program to make it possible to have

greater continuity of subject matter, in the hope that it might provide a more satisfying experience for those who attend. Watch this space on that.

As always thanks are due to anyone and everyone who participates in or supports in any way, what we do. We are a small group really, but with big heart and big aspiration. We look forward to your continued support as we travel the dharma path together. Sangha is so important. May Autumn/Winter bring you days of warmth and joy as we all snuggle down into the shortening days and the opportunities for greater reflection which they usually bring.

Yours in the dharma

Sue Willey

## TASHI CHOLING MONTHLY PROGRAM

### Tuesday evenings, 7.30-8.45 pm

**MAY: Charles Chadwick: 4 preliminary practices.** May 10: Appreciating our human life. May 17: Death awareness and impermanence. May 24: Dissatisfaction and how to deal with it. May 31: Karma and how to work with it.

**JUNE: Sue Willey: 4 Foundations of Mindfulness.**

**JULY: Roger MacLennan** For 4 weeks from Tues. July 5th we will be considering the Tibetan Text: “**The 37 practices of Bodhisattvas**” written in verse by the Tibetan master Gyelsay Togmay Sango who lived from 1295 to 1365. These 37 verses deal with two kinds of altruistic intention: the conventional altruistic intention which is concerned with others' wellbeing; and the ultimate altruistic intention which knows reality as it is. The consideration of the text will draw from the book of the same name by Geshe Sonam Rinchen, translated and published by his student Ruth Sonam, as well as a wider discussion of what it means in our current situation to develop a more altruistic mind.

### Wednesday evenings, 6:30-7:45 pm : Introduction to Meditation

An opportunity to investigate and practice simple meditation led by experienced practitioners. Learn a way of finding some peace and centredness in an often painful and busy life. Join us for a regular weekly practice to develop awareness and stability in your daily life. This class is open to anyone at any time. You do not need previous experience in meditation to attend, just curiosity and an open mind.

**Introduction to Meditation** – These regular courses extend over several weeks, and are intended to provide participants with an introduction to the Buddhist view, with the main emphasis on being able to try out a range of meditations, and having the opportunity to engage in lively discussion. Four or five of us participate as leaders, with each person taking it in turns to lead one evening, but with all of us participating in the discussion and questioning that follows. More details on times and bookings are through **Adult Education**. The funds raised from this course will be put towards the ongoing improvements at Dorje Ling.

**Buddhism for Mothers** – An opportunity to take some respite from the challenging path of motherhood. Includes Buddhist meditation practices and teachings to enable us to remain peaceful and kind to ourselves and others. Allowing us to cope with the day to day challenges of motherhood with a good heart. These courses are run from time to time through **Adult Education**. Please contact them for bookings. The funds raised from this course will be put towards the ongoing improvements at Dorje Ling. For more details contact Madhu on 0407369012 or [madhulilley@gmail.com](mailto:madhulilley@gmail.com)

**Location** – All sessions (except Adult Education sessions) are held at the Tashi Choling rooms, Floor 2, 71 Liverpool St, Hobart. Go down the laneway to the right of the building, then look for the door between the two bamboo pots. Continue upstairs to the second floor. Gold coin donation appreciated. All welcome.

**Tsog** – Tsog practice with Roslyn Alexander. Roslyn writes: “Tsog gives me an intent to do sadhana practice twice a month when I know thousands of other students world wide are doing the same. Since the dates are set by the new moon, I feel the potency of the practice is amplified by synchronising it with others who use a deity practice to inspire them. Having had the golden opportunity to sit long retreats with other students of Zasep Rinpoche, I delight in remembering the sangha practising together and imagine them sitting with me.”

Upcoming dates based on dark moon being day 1, Australian calendar: May 12 & 27, Jun 10 & 25, Jul 10 & 25 .

## RETREAT REPORTS: TARCHIN HEARN AND LEANDER KANE

### Leander Kane retreat at Dorje Ling – The Wonderful Mystery called Body ; 15-24 March

Nourished and inspired by Leander's gentle and generous teachings, by the sublimely supportive environment and the many delicious moments of contact, with the ground, the grass, the rain. We were encouraged to skip, to take long walks, to full bodily roll on the ground. There were new learnings, new possibilities of moving, sitting, standing, lying and appreciating. I was no longer simply walking but perambulating and generally felt ever so slightly and very delightfully discombobulated, by this newness, this openness, this sense of possibility, of flow, centeredness, calm, strength and confidence. We all experienced many moments of such deliciousness.

Thanks to Cynthia and the magnificent Buzz and Mary Steed for the delicious meals prepared with love. Thanks to Catriona for organising the retreat and huge wishes of love and support for your continued healing and recovery. Thanks to Andy for looking after so many people in so many ways. Thanks to all of us retreatants for generating an abundance of caring and loving energy, for ourselves, for each other and for our world. Thanks Leander. ITS ALL GOOD.

*Suze van der Beek*

### Wilderness, Interbeing and Emptiness – a potent combination Retreat with Tarchin Hearn, April 2011

In order to fit a retreat with Tarchin into my busy schedule this year, I elected to come over from Auckland to attend the "Ecology, Meditation and Living Dharma" retreat in Dorje Ling at the end of March. Oh fortunate decision! What better environment to practice the enlivening of the senses and sensitivity to this living planet. The wonderful untamed forest with its blue gums towering 30 or 40 foot into the sky; wallabies and pademelons; possums and tiger snakes; insects galore; a symphony of birds. Over the two weeks, gently and with quiet presence we entered more and more deeply into communion with all the living beings at the centre. We allowed ourselves to see and hear, and to be seen and heard, to touch on the deepest meaning of ecology, the "symbiotic communing of all living beings and processes".

The acacia forest near the Rinpoche's house afforded the perfect setting for celebrating Green Tara of the Acacia Forest. She is the matrix of all life, and we laid back into her warm and smiling embrace. She is also the mystery of community-in-action and we contemplated deeply how our Earth needs us to be compassionately engaged in living in a way that honours and supports all of the life on the planet. What better goal in fact, than to increase our own humanity. There were no specific objects of focus, no rituals, no set meditations. Instead we were encouraged to learn how to rest in tranquil presence while at the same time illuminating the field of contemplation with curiosity and question. To do nothing with the mind but rest; to contemplate the all-cognisant boundless emptiness of the mind. Understanding that all aspects of our life and ourselves are included – how could there be anything that is excluded from totality? All props taken away. Bare bones practice. Mahamudra.

Thank-you to all our Tasmanian friends for their ongoing support of this beautiful centre and their generous welcome to visitors. Thanks again to the people who did service for the retreat – the wonderful cooks – Mary and Cynthia, Todd the caretaker and Andy the retreat manager. And deep bows to all the beings who live in the forest.

Fortunate indeed to have the opportunity to study in a place of so much life with such a mature Teacher!

*Janet Eades*

## A MOVING STORY

Outside an office block on the path in Main Rd Moonah, briefcase still in hand, a man in a pin-stripe suit was swinging his body in what looked from a distance like a drunken dance. As we approached in the bus, his movement caught our eye and we wondered; what the hell is this bloke doing moving his body in such a full and fluid motion? Was he drunk or deranged? Then as we got closer it became clear – he was practising his golf swing. As we drove past him he finished practising and just stopped, and continued his waiting. He was waiting for a taxi and just passing the time, but the absurdity of his actions before we knew what he was doing, and even after, left an impression.

The next night I went to see Tarshin Hearn in North Hobart. Tarshin had us up off the floor and just moving about freeing ourselves from our self-imposed inertia and consequent rigidity, both in body and mind. We talked about how the body likes to move, even finds a form of joy in movement. He said how good it is for us to move in such a way, how amusing but useful it would be if we could all do this several times a day just to remind ourselves of the spontaneous beauty of life in and around us, and how funny it would be if all the 'suits' would do the same, especially if they did it up on their executive desks!

Then I recalled yesterday's vision of the man practising his golf swing on the path on the Main Rd. Somehow these two events are linked; the man on the path somehow provided a preview of what Tarshin was going to say; and Tarshin consequently gave deeper meaning to what the man, most probably in total witlessness, was really doing. The events sort of underlined what Tarshin was talking about and provided a beautiful little example of life's marvellous ever-present and astonishing intelligence.

*Rob Duczynski*



# RETREAT REPORT: BONNI ROSS

## *A 3-month retreat in Canada*

### UBUNTU

"I am what I am because of who we all are"

So read the introduction by Archbishop Desmond Tutu in a book about the life of Mahatma Gandhi, a gift from Andy for my long journey to Canada for a 3 month deep retreat with Bonni Ross. This phrase captured for me the essence of interdependence – everything is as it is because of everything else, and moment to moment it couldn't be any other way. Reflecting on my retreat now, I feel such a heightened appreciation of this truth.

For every person who goes on retreat there are so many more who contribute to and support the process – a sweet, precious exchange of service and gratitude. Every day I was deeply moved by the volunteer people of the local sangha who came and cooked delicious food for us, offered with love. They gave me nourishing support, and my being there gave them the opportunity to contribute in whatever way they could in the midst of their busy lives. There was the young man who was there throughout to do service for Bonni, but who, with his whole being, was in total service to all the retreatants. Other retreatants came and went while I stayed, most of whom I never actually met or spoke to, each having their own unique experience, but whose presence and commitment to their practice was a constant source of support and inspiration for me – how we danced around each other in our "meditator land" downstairs, and in many, many silent and beautiful ways showed such kindness to each other. There was Mila, the dog, who despite his age and deteriorating health never failed to get excited about going for his daily walk, and who never failed to make me smile as I listened to his sudden burst of joy and energy outside my room. There were the other inhabitants of the Sunshine Coast Retreat House land, the plants and animals (I've never seen so many different types of earthworms in one handful!), and the eagles who always seemed to appear at precisely the right moment when I was feeling

particularly miserable or doubtful that I was on the right path – watching them gracefully soar, imagining their expansive view of the world, I was filled with a sense of potential and possibility, and the courage to keep going.

I could go on and on! – my family and friends and all the support and love and encouragement; all the experiences and shapings of my life; the teachings I have received and the teachers I have met as manifestations of truth who have inspired me to live as well I can; the living earth and its endless abundance and nurture; water, air and mineral cycles; a universe expanding and evolving; infinite space being.....spacious ☺ This isn't really news to anyone, and I kind of feel like I'm repeating a message that has already been spoken innumerable times by so many wise beings, but the feeling of this, the deep knowing of this, the dawning realisation of this is profound and leaves me feeling incredibly tender, open-hearted, soft and vulnerable – Alive! (And perhaps for every human heart that has this experience, a universe is born.)

This is why we go on retreat – to allow the space, the silence and the stillness that lets the truth of what life is to germinate, sprout and grow its new shoots, to find its expression through the unique medium that is "us", this being/body in space and time.

The time spent so intimately with Bonni was beyond-words-precious. To have the opportunity to live with a teacher for that length of time, to have a full dunking into that powerful presence and hopefully soak up some of it, to sit in front of the lama mirror every day and glimpse the truth beyond my stories, honestly it's indescribable, but without a doubt the most strengthening and affirming experience of my life. No question, it was bloody hard work! I was stretched beyond anything I could have anticipated, and every day the line of what I thought I could handle and let go into got moved a little bit more.... and a little bit more..... and a little bit more. Every day I met with my resistances, and layer upon layer of armour and defence crumbled. Many, many tears were cried – aaaaaahhhhh letting go. Sometimes I felt utterly trapped. Sometimes I seriously doubted that I had the strength. But life is more powerful than I am, and something in me told me to just keep going. There is no going back. I'm no longer a caterpillar, and not yet a butterfly, some squishy mess in between with a process underway that I can't define or control, and all I have is TRUST. I just have to keep putting myself in the fire, and let the alchemy take place.

Sometimes I felt pure joy and excitement. As Leander Kane said to me once "It's the whole universe waking up, you know!" No wonder there's excitement! More valuable perhaps was the grit of every day, watching the arc of day and night as they seamlessly flow into one another. Coming to realise that it's not about holding this or that state, but about the willingness to feel, the willingness to meet all that is with an attitude of loving embrace, the willingness to stay with the process and not give up, the willingness to give myself a chance at this hugely demanding, but for me essential, adventure.

Sometimes it's delightful. Sometimes it's painful. Sometimes it's quiet and peaceful. Sometimes it's just a hard slog. Good, bad, like it, don't like it, it doesn't really matter because life will roll on regardless! Can I be interested in it? Can I take care of it? Can I take care of myself, and in so doing take care of the world? So I'm learning to dance, to move and be moved, to yield and bend, to give and give, and give again. What else is there to do?

Thankyou to everyone, our precious sangha, for the support of simply being here together, walking the path.

And deepest gratitude to Bonni for being there to light my way, no matter what.

May all beings be well and happy  
May all beings be free

*Chani Grieve*

# A SUMMER SOLO RETREAT AT DORJE LING

In January and February this year I was lucky enough to have the time and opportunity to do a 2-month retreat in the teacher's/long term retreat house at Dorje Ling.



It was a golden experience of deepening my practice, looking deeply into the momentary arising of 'me' and to immerse further into the extraordinary complexity of life that co-inhabits Dorje Ling, an experience I would recommend to all keen meditators with a degree of experience.

Rosie asked me to write about the practicalities I went through to organise my retreat to help anyone who may be considering doing their own.

To enable my retreat to be possible there were a few practical things to work out. First, the most important consideration was the ability and willingness of the caretaker at the time to be sensitive to my needs of a private supportive environment and to bring food when needed. I was very lucky to have Todd to look after me and can't thank him enough for his care and willingness to be in this supportive role. Great job Todd, cheers! As soon as I asked him if he would be up for being the attendant for me during my retreat he said 'I am here to give service as you need it' and he sure did carry that attitude right through the retreat.

Todd was living in the purple house during my retreat so I was able to have use of the fridge at the caretakers house for my food deliveries, but usually deliveries could be made to the purple house fridge. We left practical notes for each other as needed on the fridge door.

Before my retreat I worked how much supply of dry goods I would need and brought it all up to Dorje Ling with me (I bought most of it at the Source co-op at the university in Hobart which worked out to be by far the cheapest). I organised Ricci, who lives in the Lorinna valley, to deliver a box of fresh vegetables and eggs once a week. They were incredibly fresh and cheap and changed slightly as the season changed. Ricci is a lovely guy and only too happy to sell and deliver his produce. Twice a week Todd would pick up a bag of salad greens, fresh milk and home made cheese as I needed it from Geraldine & Paul who also live in the valley. Every 8 to 10 days Todd would do a trip to Sheffield or Devonport and get fruit and other veg, i.e. tomatoes and avocados, and anything else I needed. The Lorinna organic co-op is also open on Tuesday and Saturday where he picked up a few dry goods I ran out of towards the end of my retreat. (You can also buy fresh regular and gluten free bread from Helena and goats milk from Bart who both live in the valley.)

I did my retreat during summer and I would recommend doing one between spring and autumn, as winter is pretty cold. This summer was the wettest on record in the North West and was also a bit cold but I didn't use the fire at all. If you are planning a retreat though I would have a good fire wood supply under the deck of the retreat house and plenty of dry kindling on hand, just in case.

It is also good to check how much gas is in the cylinder at the house before your retreat and make sure to ask the caretaker to order more if there are not back up cylinders at the house. I went through one and a quarter cylinders during my retreat.

The water at the retreat house comes from Damien's dam so I drank the water from the drums provided filled from the tank off the old kitchen. I left the empty ones at the caretaker's house and Todd would fill them for me. You could boil the water at the retreat house, which would be fine, or fill the drums yourself using the green trolley.

I ate incredibly well and spent \$100 a week on food (I like to eat well). The weekly rate for long term retreatants at Dorje Ling is \$80 (if you are a member of Tashi Choling) so \$180 a week was cheaper than living at home!

Once everything was set up for my retreat I just relaxed and the practicalities were easy.

Taking the time to do a long solo retreat, especially at Dorje Ling, is to me one of the greatest gifts I can offer myself and the world. There comes a time in all our dharma exploration and practice, I think, when we need to go deeper into our beingness, using all the skills and strength we have learned from our teachers, and our own lived experience to explore more deeply through discovering the teaching of our own inner guide. There are ups and downs, incredible days and miserable days, but through it all we can begin to discover a deeper acceptance of what is, a greater amazement of all facets of our life and begin to find the path of the bodhisattva.

It can seem difficult to make the time in our busy modern lives to do a long retreat but I find it to be the most refreshing holiday I could ever have. If you are thinking about it go for it!

If you would like to do a retreat at Dorje Ling you can contact the current caretakers on ph. 63635178 or email our president Sue Willey on [sue@tashicholing.net](mailto:sue@tashicholing.net)

Also if any one would like to talk to me more about how I organised my retreat you can contact me on [andymcintosh@hotmail.com](mailto:andymcintosh@hotmail.com)

Sarva Mangalam  
All is blessing

Andy McIntosh

## THE BUDDHA AS DEEP ECOLOGIST

*One participant's experience of Tarchin Hearn's "Ecology, Meditation and Living Dharma" Retreat.*

An aboriginal friend of mine once recounted a story that went something like this:- Two aboriginal men were standing on the cliff tops near Sydney, watching the first boatloads of colonists arrive. As they insensitively and destructively built their settlements, one of the men, quite concerned, said "What are we going to do about these white fellas?" The other man easefully said, "Don't worry, this land will make black fellas out of them".

A few hundred years later at Kutalayna, (Brighton) near Hobart, 2011, final roadworks are destroying an aboriginal site with archaeological evidence of 45,000 years of continuous human habitation. On April 18th 2011 I attended a deeply moving ceremony at the site led by aboriginal elders. Despite the peaceful nature of the ceremony, 6 more arrests were made, including respected aboriginal elder Jimmy Everett.

Logging of Tasmania's old growth forests continues at a rapacious rate – no moratorium has begun as promised, and destruction of the global environment continues. But before you sink into despair, please read on!

In saying that "the land will make black fellas out of us", (ie. that the land will teach us how to live in harmony with this particular landscape), the aboriginal man witnessing white settlement made one important and yet incorrect assumption – that we settlers would spend time sensitively with and amongst the land, and learn to know it, which would in turn inform our relationship with all the beings who are co-inhabitants of this place. He could not have foreseen that the average person today spends over 90% of their time inside.

In this context of local and global events on a sunny afternoon in late March 2011, we had the wonderful opportunity to be on retreat with Tarchin Hearn – for his "Ecology, Meditation and Living

Dharma" teachings at Dorje Ling. Deep Ecology and Buddhism have been two of my great passions and have woven themselves throughout my life. In 1992 I attended a 1 month live-in course on Deep Ecology, taught by scholar and activist Joanna Macy and Arne Naess, Norwegian father of Deep Ecology (a mischievous soul who loved the Earth and always wore hand spun mismatching socks!). Through experiential work and theoretical study we explored the deep inner shift from anthropocentric/human chauvinistic beliefs and behaviours into an eco-centric way of being that acknowledges the intrinsic value of all living beings. Deep ecology teaches the profound interconnectedness of all life on the planet, as does Buddhism.

Over the last 20 years I've also attended many Buddhist retreats and have been guided by meditation practice and Buddhism's love of forests and pledge of service to all sentient beings. These two fields overlap and interlink in a multitude of ways. However, I was unprepared for the depth of joy and integration it brought me to have Tarchin teaching both fields in the same retreat!

The retreat schedule was spacious, with an emphasis on spending the maximum amount of time outside. Morning teaching sessions were in the Gompa and afternoon sessions were outside, rain or shine. After a few days Tarchin suggested we may leave the structured early morning puja session to find our own way of becoming into the morning, whether that be silently witnessing dawn, meditating, or walking quietly. I rediscovered the joy of meditating outside on the lovely flat mossy rock near the gompa, listening and feeling my way into the dawn as our part of the Earth turns once again to face the sun. One evening during a late night



sit, a possum circled me on this same rock and gently yet assertively nudged me off to reclaim it as his own!

Tarchin taught us Living Dharma, an embodied dharma beyond conceptual understanding. He taught that real meditation begins when we have "an unbroken sense of wholeness with the natural environment". "Eco" means "home" and deepening into ecology is "deepening into home". True refuge is weaving ourselves back into eco/home.

One of the exercises Tarchin gave us during the retreat was to choose a special tree and spend time meditating from all four sides of the tree, and to imagine contemplating it from above and below. On the following day we were invited to draw or paint a representation of our tree in mandala form with the four elements of earth, water, fire and air, and to include ourselves in the representation. We gently shared our insights and brought our questions to group teaching sessions. We were encouraged to take our magnifying glass with us throughout the day and contemplate leaves, rocks, insects, ferns, water....

I enjoyed experiencing fellow retreatants tree gazing, looking intently and joyfully through their magnifying glasses, napping on the grass and generally embedding themselves into the place and the land.

As the retreat continued I pondered the disrespect and destruction we modern day humans show to the earth and to each other. I wondered if it was because the Buddha and the sangha lived contentedly among vast and abundant forests, that there was no impetus to teach explicit environmental protection. And yet care for all beings, kindness and living gently with all life is implicit in Buddhist teachings and practice. The depth and real experience of these teachings leads directly to what is today known as "environmental protection", with us being embedded and part of that environment. Because of this and in combination with Buddhism's rise in popularity in western countries, these practices can play an important part in reshaping the ways of our culture to become more respectful and in harmony with our surroundings.

Tarchin spoke of the Buddha reaching down to touch the Earth at the time of his enlightenment as meaning “I am embedded here; I belong here, embedded in this aliveness”. He said “the practice of meditation facilitates our engagement in this aliveness”. Tarchin taught that the original meaning of “sentient” being meant sensing being, and as rocks, plants and animals sense, he understands them as sentient beings who are all to be served under our bodhisattva vows. He said that he felt sure the Buddha would have been a deep ecologist!

The retreat unfolded as the seasons changed quite dramatically from autumn into winter. Delicious warm sunny days passed and more layers of clothing began to be required!

Although I am a tree hugger from a long way back and feel trees as living beings and neighbours in my experience of life, it wasn't until day six of the retreat that I fully experienced “tree” as never before:—resplendent and shimmering with life in every leaf and particle, I was humbled and still at her feet for quite some time, as if in the presence of a great guru.



Tarchin's teaching was gentle in its simplicity yet grounded in the strength and continuity of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. A particular highlight was the “Sadhana of Jetsun Dolma Ariya Tara of the Acacia Forest”, which Tarchin held outside under the acacia trees at Dorje Ling. The rain held off just long enough for us to relocate the Green Tara puja table to the forest to hold the moving ceremony.

I think of myself as an outdoors sort of person, but when I reflect on my day to day life at present, much of it is spent inside or in the car. Since the retreat I am increasing my outside time, even if it means eating a meal outside, meditating outside or star gazing after putting my son to bed. I see outside time as a crucial practice, rather than one possibility amongst a selection of leisure activities. We are extremely blessed in Tasmania to still have access to beautiful, clean, inspiring outdoor landscapes.

An ongoing inquiry for me is questioning beliefs and practices that could become more eco-centric, and continuing to ask myself whether I can do more at this critical time in history to enable greater respect and protection of all living beings on our planet home.... This has been strengthened by the Green Tara empowerment we received under the acacia trees.

Towards the end of Tarchin's evening teachings in Hobart, he said “we are actually part of the land but we forget it, we don't notice it” and “we must do the work to become Indigenous to where we are”. Maybe, if we deeply embed our meditation practice into an experience of interconnectedness with the place and beings we live amongst, then finally “this land can make black fellas out of us”.

*Nitya Ellemor-Rolfe*

## GOODBYE TO OUTGOING CARETAKER

We are sorry to say goodbye to Todd Wilson who has been caretaking at Dorje Ling over the past few months.

Todd has done an excellent job and we know we are going to miss him. We have enjoyed meeting and spending time with him over the last few retreats and we wish him happiness and success in his future.

“We hope that you will not be a stranger to Dorje Ling. Todd, and that we will meet again with you in the not too distant future.”

The committee has received a couple of applications for the position of Caretaker and we hope to be in a position to announce a replacement soon.



*Todd Wilson and Sue Willey*

Dorje Ling has been in excellent hands and we are looking forward to seeing what the future will bring for the property and for the Dharma community.

## INTERVIEW WITH OUTGOING CARETAKER, TODD WILSON

*How did you find out about Dorje Ling Caretaker position?*

Lorinna, where Dorje Ling's located, is a tightly knit community, to which I have had connections for some 6 years now. So even though I live in the UK I am wired into a lot of emails that do the rounds of the valley. The previous caretakers, Rob & Catriona, sent out a message about the caretaker vacancy and I jumped at the opportunity. The caretaker role was perfect for me, as it gave me the chance to do some spiritual practice and dhana, interact with the wider community, and spend some time on my property too!

*What had your involvement been with the Lorinna community before you took it on?*

I am very fortunate to be the owner of a beautiful piece of land on the north side of the valley. I get the chance to visit Lorinna every couple of years to carry out some land care maintenance and slowly enhance parts of the property. There is no house on the land, so previously I have house-sat for others in Lorinna in order to be able to spend time on my block.

*What were your expectations?*

None really. Previously I had done a couple of short solo retreats at Dorje Ling, so I knew the property and its layout. Also, I have done quite a bit of self development work in the UK, so I'm used to retreat centres and the way they are run.

*Can you describe your responsibilities?*

The role is broad ranging. I was involved in everything from welcoming participants and ensuring that all the centre's facilities worked smoothly right through to land-care management, doing airport runs, getting additional supplies, and responding to specific needs of the Teachers.

*How different was the experience actually?*

It was busier than I had anticipated. The length and number of retreats meant that there were always things to attend to. Running a retreat centre is a bit like watching a swan glide across a lake. Everything may look beautiful and graceful on the surface but underneath the feet are frantically paddling away.

*Can you describe the highlights?*

Doing the Feldenkrais retreat with Leander. Also, being close to nature and meeting lots of amazing people.

*Being quite honest, what were the low lights or main challenges with the position?*

I can't think of any low light, but one of the main challenges is the remoteness of the centre. You can't just pop down to the shop to get spare parts when you need them. Also, being on one's own makes you aware of the challenge of having an accident and not being able to quickly get help.

*What would you say you have learned from the experience?*

I've learned that I'm more capable than I sometimes give myself credit for. I can think laterally and solve problems when on my own, something I was previously unsure of.

*What would your advice be for the committee regarding how we can best assist the Caretaker in future?*

Be aware that it takes a lot more time and energy to do things than is probably appreciated. The centre covers a large area and many of the tools and machines are small-scale. A vehicle for the centre would minimise the wear and tear on one's own car.

*What suggestions for future caretakers of Dorje Ling would you have for personal and practical qualities needed?*

Personal qualities: be flexible because you'll be dealing with a wide range of personalities, and situations that arise on the land can be unexpected – a sudden burst pipe or power failure, for example.

Practical qualities: enjoy both working with your hands and using your head to solve issues as they arise.



*Andy McIntosh and Todd Wilson*

## DALAI LAMA IN MELBOURNE



**Saturday 11th to Monday 13th June  
Melbourne, Australia**

Over the course of the weekend, His Holiness the Dalai Lama will explore six perfections that provide the basis for a way of life – generosity, ethics, patience, enthusiasm, concentration and wisdom.

The Teachings will afford those attending to be in the presence of His Holiness and receive these invaluable teachings directly from him.

The teachings are based on the text by Shantideva 'A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life'. His Holiness the Dalai Lama considers these teachings a seminal influence in his life and work and repeatedly stresses the benefits of its study but one does not have to be a Buddhist to benefit from the teachings.

His Holiness says "You and I may hold different beliefs – about the universe, about reality, about religion. And even within a belief, within a faith tradition, for instance, there are all sorts of differences between people. But such differences in belief, just like differences in experience, are minor compared to our common humanity."

This is a rare opportunity globally for His Holiness to be offering these Teachings over 2½ days.

Held in Melbourne over the June long weekend within an intimate environment created at the Melbourne Convention Centre the Teachings are accessible to all.

[www.dalailamainaustralia.org](http://www.dalailamainaustralia.org)

## LIBRARY. --- BOOKS AND AUDIO TEACHINGS

Our library continues to be a source of learning for our TCDF members.

Some popular recently-borrowed books are: *Cave in the Snow* by Vicki Mackenzie (1443), *The Places that Scare You* by Pema Chodron (1482), and *Peace is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life* by Thich Nhat Hanh (1099).



The book catalogue, completed by John Grist, who has also strengthened and refurbished some of the more worn books, is available on the computer in the Library and you can search by title, keyword, author etc. for your favourite book.

You can also find our book catalogue on our web site. Go to [www.tashicholing.net](http://www.tashicholing.net) and click on Library for a full catalogue.

Also on our Library computer is a large range of audio teachings on mp3, which you can copy onto your stick drive, mp3 player or smart phone. These have been transferred onto the computer from our old cassette library. A few of the cassettes have poor sound quality, and occasionally there are some missing cassettes in a series, but the majority are reasonable quality. A catalogue of these audio teachings is available at [www.tashicholing.net/mp3.htm](http://www.tashicholing.net/mp3.htm). Cost is \$2 per file, so a set of (for instance) five files would be \$10. To access these, please simply plug your device into the Library computer's USB port and click on the "audio teachings" icon on the desktop, then navigate to the file you want. Please ask Maria if you need help with this process.

## BOOK REVIEW

*Luminous Bliss – self-realisation through meditation.*

Traleq Rinpoche

Traleq Rinpoche is a Tibetan reincarnate lama of the Kaygu tradition who has lived and taught in Melbourne for 30 years since he came here as a young man. He has undergone extensive study and experience in the Buddhist trainings as well as having studied western contemporary mind sciences.

*Luminous Bliss* is a comprehensive hand book on the Mahamudra tradition.

After an introduction to Mahamudra, the first part of the book is dedicated to the preliminaries necessary for successful practice of Mahamudra; Correct View, [the first noble truth,] the Spiritual Path, Enlightened Mind/Deluded Mind, the 4 Preliminaries, [precious human body, impermanence and death, dissatisfactory nature of samsara and karma,] and the 4 Immeasurables, [equanimity, love, compassion and joy].

The second part of the book gives a detailed account of Mahamudra, Ground, Path and Fruition.

Ground Mahamudra is described in terms of a discussion of Buddha Nature.

Path Mahamudra is a very clear account and instruction for Tranquillity, [Shamatha,] and Insight, [Vipashyana,] meditations.

Fruition Mahamudra describes the results of successful Mahamudra practice in terms of the four yogas of one-pointedness, non-conceptuality, one flavour and non-meditation.

There are very clear instructions for meditation practices relevant to the text throughout the book, and these are particularly detailed on the Tranquillity and Insight meditations of Path Mahamudra.

For those interested in Mahamudra this is a book to carefully read and reread.

Charles Chadwick

## FLIGHT OVER ANTARCTICA

*Report from winners of our 2010 fundraising raffle for Dorje Ling. Thanks to all who contributed prizes!*

How many times do we buy raffle tickets and consider them a donation? "We never win raffles", do we hear you say? So you can imagine the surprise we received when Kate MacNicol called us late one evening in January to advise us that our ticket had won and that we were actually going to fly over Antarctica! This is the kind of trip that most people would love to do but are never able to achieve. It is one we had spoken about but had dismissed as too extravagant amongst the other priorities for the family budget. However, as we waited in the Melbourne terminal on the morning of February 6th, our wish had come true.



The flight uses a Boeing 747 "Jumbo" and is approximately 12 hours long. The route, chosen on the morning of the flight from nineteen different routes, is dependent on the weather in Antarctica. Our flight took us down over the west coast of Tasmania and we approached the Antarctic continent near the French base of Dumont d'Urville. It was at this point that we crossed the South Magnetic Pole and the small compasses that we had been advised to bring, went a little haywire! The expectation had been building up for more than three hours so you can imagine the excitement when the clouds parted to expose a group of small icebergs. The plane then descended to 3000 metres and it is amazing how much you can see in the clear air of Antarctica.

As the mountainous areas of Antarctica were under cloud on that day, we turned east along the coast. The views were absolutely amazing even from that height and through aircraft windows! We were very surprised at the quality of photographs we were able to take as we had not previously been very successful taking photos from an aircraft. We were lucky enough to see and photograph:

- expanses of broken sea-ice with icebergs floating amongst it;
- huge individual icebergs with their beautiful aqua coloured bases in the deep blue ocean;
- large glaciers, inching their way forward, to drop more icebergs into the Antarctic Ocean;
- great expanses of the continent itself, disappearing into the distance, flat and featureless apart from the ice dunes and the aqua melt pool on the surface; and,
- the very remote Australian base, Casey Station, with its coloured buildings, airstrip and very picturesque location on a rocky, icy foreshore.



The seats that we won were in Premium Economy and we were extremely grateful for that. The hospitality was first class, seating roomy and the views excellent. There is a rotation system on the flights so that everyone has the opportunity to be close to

windows. Throughout the flight we were given a running commentary by two previous expeditioners who were just so knowledgeable about Antarctica and life on the continent.

Altogether, it was a wonderful experience that we would never have had if it were not for the raffle ticket that we had chanced to buy!

*Imelda and Arnold McShane*

## ADULT EDUCATION COURSE

I attended the Adult Education Course on Buddhism and Meditation run by the Tashi Choling Dharma Foundation. I would like to thank the four members from the group for their generosity in the time they spent with the participants in this course.

Guy, Charles, Roger and Madhu were informative, gently guiding us through the fundamentals of Buddhist philosophy and the basics of meditation technics. Their approach and their manner of imparting information, the struggles experienced by themselves in establishing meditation technics, and the influences these experiences have made on their individual lives were shared freely and openly with the total strangers who sat in the circle around them.

Their emphasis on Buddhism as a philosophy, a way of living and dealing with our lives in hectic time-poor western lifestyle were both illuminating and calming. They allowed us the knowledge that change and expansion of our mind were achievable by all – we just have to want to.

Once again thank you all very much for the experience and thank you for the generosity of spirit that culminated in spending 8 precious hours of personal time imparting knowledge and hope to others.

*Anne Cooper*

*(Adult Education courses are run from time to time by Tashi Choling Dharma Foundation. We have two courses: Introduction to Meditation, and Buddhism for Mothers. All proceeds from the courses go to Dorje Ling Retreat Centre. Please see the Adult Education course guide for more details.)*



## THE NEW ROAD AND DAM AT DORJE LING

As mentioned in the President's Report, Dorje Ling now has a new entrance road. This winding road into the centre now travels past the new dam, created in the lower paddock to take advantage of the year-round springs which run there. The road is perfectly cambered. When I arrived at Dorje Ling after its construction, Ross, who constructed it for us, took me on a walk to inspect it, showing me the delicious blues and purples of the gravel, the zen rock marking a corner so that no one went off the road there, and the culverts and drains which take the water away from the road and towards the new dam. It's a masterpiece.



The kidney-shaped dam, made possible because of a very generous donation from one of our members, has its very own island with seat and a bridge across. There is such a water flow in that spot that it was full a week after its creation.

The area looks wonderful and invites people to wander and sit there, whereas previously it was a thistle paddock where no one went. Some further work, to fence and landscape it, will make it safe and further enhance it as a delightful spot to sit and take in the surrounding beauty.



*Sue Willey*

### TREASURER NEEDED.

After 4 years as Treasurer for Tashi Choling I am about to hang up my hat. The position of Treasurer has grown somewhat and it is obvious to the Committee that we need someone with spreadsheet skills and of course a love of numbers. We are presently refining the system in order that it be as simple as it can be. I will be on hand for as long as it's needed in a supportive role for the new Treasurer, as will be the Committee. Please feel free to crowd me with your enthusiasm. Cheers Kate 0432630796

## TREASURERS REPORT

So much has happened since last newsletter. Four Retreats at Dorje Ling, the continuation of the Tashi Choling Mediation nights, the Adult Ed courses and of course the Amazing working bees.

We are so blessed to have our Teachers come to us in Tassie and they all love the opportunity to Retreat at Dorje Ling. The 3 week Retreat with Rimpoche at Xmas provided us with the impetus to complete building projects, see the Yurt up and running, build a new driveway entrance and dam and deal with a myriad of tasks in preparation for many people staying for a longer period of time. Needless to say that all costs. Thus it was great to have Retreat fees in early enabling us to achieve so much. As a result we enter into the quieter winter months with a lean Bank Account, fund raising ideas and a collective pause to regroup. Once again it amazes me to see what's possible with people so dedicated volunteering in so many ways big and small. Many many thanks.

At this point in time we have \$10,900 set aside as Grant monies from the Community Grants in order to upgrade the power system at Dorje Ling. Our Working Account has \$8,678, which services all activities and expenses to do with TashiCholing and DorjeLing and our Mortgage Account which is solely to receive your contributions to pay our monthly fee of \$1005. The Loan was initially for \$160,000 in 2003. Currently we have \$110,587 remainder to pay with the interest being \$414.71 and principle being \$549.59. Once again a fantastic effort on behalf of a small but committed bunch of people who pledge what they can when they can.

Presently we are below the amount needed for that monthly figure. It would be fantastic if our Sangha could support those already pledging. Many people making small amounts really does make the difference. Should you wish to make a donation or set up a regular contribution please do so at the Commonwealth Bank; Dharma Foundation of Tas: BSB067002 Account number 10162638. Please note your name with deposit.

*Kate MacNicol.*

# LOVING KINDNESS AT DORJE LING

*composed by Tarchin Hearn*

Here is a meditation practice based on a broad love of nature. It could be adapted to any location. Include the categories of creatures that live in your environment. A helpful addition to this meditation is to carry a small notebook in your pocket and to note the different creatures and organisms that you encounter during the day. When you do the meditation you can refer to your growing list to make the experience more personal.

Slowly read through the following text letting the words merge with a relaxed appreciation of your breathing. For example, as you savor the movements of your body breathing in and breathing out, simultaneously think; “may I be well and happy”. Then breathing in and out again; “may all my cells and organs function in joyous harmony”. Breathe mindfully and caringly with each section for as long as you wish.

## Loving Kindness at Dorje Ling

May I be well and happy,  
may all my cells and organs function in joyous harmony.

May I be a radiant manifestation of kindness, compassion, joy and equanimity  
and provide support for the unfolding of all life forms.

May this land called Dorje Ling be experienced as a living matrix of radiant  
intelligence,  
a supportive realm for the unfolding of beings.

All atoms and molecules (uncountable numbers),  
may each and every one of you be happy and function well in harmony.

All single celled creatures, (list all the ones you have seen),  
may each and every one of you be well and happy and move in the ways of  
awakening.

All tiny multi-celled creatures (list all the ones you have seen),  
may each and every one of you be well and happy and move in the ways  
of awakening.

All mosses (list all the ones you have seen),  
may each and every one of you be well and happy and move in the ways  
of awakening.

All shelled creatures such as snails and molluscs (list all the ones you  
have seen),  
may each and every one of you be well and happy and move in the ways  
of awakening.

All arthropods such as insects, spiders, and crustaceans, millipedes and  
so on (list all the ones you have seen), may each and every one of you be  
well and happy and move in the ways of awakening.

All shrubs and bushes (list all the ones you have seen),  
may each and every one of you be well and happy and move in the ways  
of awakening.

All flowers, grasses, and lichen (list all the ones you have seen),  
may each and every one of you be well and happy and move in the ways  
of awakening.

All trees, (list all the ones you have  
seen),  
may each and every one of you be well  
and happy and move in the ways of  
awakening.

All amphibians (list all the ones you  
have seen),  
may each and every one of you be well  
and happy and move in the ways of  
awakening.

All fish (list all the ones you have  
seen),  
may each and every one of you be well  
and happy and move in the ways of  
awakening.

All birds, (list all the ones you have  
seen),  
may each and every one of you be well  
and happy and move in the ways of  
awakening.

All mammals, including humans (list  
all the ones you have seen),  
may each and every one of you be well  
and happy and move in the ways of  
awakening.

May the entire community that is Dorje  
Ling and the surrounding valley,  
realise the great peace of Nirvana.

(This meditation was adapted from  
“Loving Kindness at Wangapeka”  
found on <[www.greendharmatresury.org](http://www.greendharmatresury.org)>  
under ‘Writings => Practices’)

