



Tashi Choling Dharma Foundation Inc. Newsletter Summer 2009

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.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Well again, from a somewhat rocky beginning for me personally, with issues of caretakers and caretaker support dominating, 2008 has gone on to be another incredibly full and busy year. The TCDF committee is one very amazing expression of our extraordinary individual and collective bodhisattva spirit and intent and we must make sure we always regularly celebrate that and each other.

The highlight of the year, and perhaps the defining event, was of course another wonderful visit from Rinpoche. With his usual astute directness, he stimulated a clear and close look at the relationship between our whole organisation and himself, and inspired us to invite and accept him to be not only spiritual director of Dorje Ling, but also of the Tashi Choling Dharma Foundation and Tashi Choling itself. A lengthy but very clarifying meeting with the TCDF committee and friends allowed us all to talk through questions of communication and relationship, and this has provided sound basis for everything we have embarked on since, and a subsequent general meeting has seen his spiritual directorship cemented (if that's possible) into our constitution.

Rinpoche gave full and well-attended teaching in Hobart before leading a simply magical retreat at Dorje Ling, the best ever, if one can really make such comparisons, swimming meditation and perfect pureland weather combining with a serenity and harmony that everyone felt and commented on. E ma ho! Sublime nectar for all.

IN THIS ISSUE:

| | |
|--|---|
| Meditation Program | 3 |
| A Yurt for Dorje Ling | 4 |
| A Workshop with Maurice Oliver – Report | 4 |
| Unsung Hero | 4 |
| Treasurer's Report | 5 |
| Tarchin Hearn Program | 5 |
| Khandro-la Program | 6 |
| Working Bee report | 6 |

Continued page 2



TASHI CHOLING DHARMA FOUNDATION

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Our regular meditation meetings are held at 7.30 – 9.00 pm every Tuesday above Gould's Naturopathica. Floor 2, 71 Liverpool St, Hobart. All welcome. See Page 3 for further details.

Following Rinpoche's visit, we reviewed and reinvigorated the program at Tashi Choling, with now a regular, planned and well-attended program happening every week. Thanks go to all those people who have sustained that program, Roger, Madhu and Charles, and of course everyone who comes along each Tuesday evening.

We also put huge effort over many weeks into a total cleanout and revamp of the adjoining Tashi Choling rooms, getting rid of "stuff," scraping wallpaper, filling cracks and painting in a huge and sustained effort. Thanks particularly to Roger for supporting the idea, helping to resource it, and then pottering away painstakingly in the weekdays to ensure our weekend efforts brought the results we wished for. The results of that marathon speak for themselves, and graced by our recatalogued library thanks to the efforts of Maria and John, we now have a wonderful meeting space.

The Gyuto monks visit in the middle of the year was its usual huge success with the Hobart community. A coordinated effort to provide chai and bikkies for those attending raised much-needed funds for the TCDF. Thanks to those involved with that event – Pamela, Chani, Catriona, Stuart, and those who took care of the chai stall, Kate, Kirsten, Maria and all of the wider network who volunteered time.

More recently we have had some really successful working bees at Dorje Ling, most of you would have read about it and seen the pictures in the last newsletter. Thanks go to Guy for leading this huge effort, and to Andy, Mark and Maurice, and everyone else who attended and worked their hearts out from dawn to dusk to bring the new shower block and kitchen into being.

We have had our recent weekend on bodhicitta, the awakened heart, with Maurice – a weekend of really stimulating and thought-provoking discussion and questioning. And of course there was our Adult Ed course, over 4 weeks, Introduction to Buddhism and Meditation, with around thirteen or fourteen participants, again really stimulating and thought-provoking discussion and a wonderful experience of being part of a panel of "teachers", thank you to Guy and Chani and Kate and Stuart for helping to make that very wonderful course happen. And we have another opportunity to do it again in 2009. We should none of us underestimate what we have to offer others. Tarchin at his School for Living Dharma said often that each of us has so much to offer others, even if we think we are new to all of this, we have something to give the person who is hungry for dharma, and that we should not hold back from opportunities to give it, and we should help and encourage each other to do so.

On the retreat front, a few of us spent time in solitary retreat at Dorje Ling, that place seems made for solitary retreat, the very trees and grass and birds and paddy melons etc etc seem to support the doing of retreat and meditation there. And it is fulfilling the purpose of all our hard work up there to have it used for retreat. I guess I just have one plea for the incoming committee, and that is to help create a conducive living space to attract the right caretaker, one who will support the place and retreatants who go there. As much as it is a great place to meditate, it can be tough to do it without help or support, especially if you are unfamiliar with the intricate details of water systems and cows and gas ... and we all need food. Without a caretaker, one can only really be there for as long as the food lasts, unless you can be like Tsongkhapa and live on one seed a day. That's a good measure of one's dedication to awakening. I thought about that, but realised quite quickly that I'm not at that place yet. I need food and some support to maintain supplies.

And then there's all the other things we have done. Kate who has maintained the accounts, Stuart and Chani who have both undertaken minute taking and agenda creation, Stuart and Maria who do the newsletter, Maria who maintains our website and email list, Kirsten, Guy, Andy who sweated over building plans



and lists of materials and getting them to Lorinna. The list goes on. I am sure I have missed people and things done, and for that I apologise. As I said at the beginning, it has been a very full year.

I need to also mention here our friends Annie and Bart who have been working tirelessly and seemingly against all odds on the Lorinna Road saga, to help maintain Lorinna as the place of pristine beauty and peace which supports our retreat centre and all who go there. Heartfelt thanks to them.

And all the "things" done are cast into shadow by the wonderful support and friendship and camaraderie and generosity of spirit of each and every committee member. More than once have things I have worried over melted away in the light of the sangha aura.

What we do makes a difference. My deepest thanks to you all.

Sue Willey



TASHI CHOLING MONTHLY PROGRAM

1st Tuesday of every month – **Light on Tantra** (led by Tony Dix)

Meditation encourages us to come into reality! Tantra is a method of enabling us to loosen the bonds of the conditioned “ordinary” self and realise the true nature of our being. This Tuesday evening will explore the meaning of Tantra in its Tibetan Buddhist context with some readings from introductory texts on Tantra, some discussion and gentle, light practice!

2nd Tuesday of every month – **Lojong, Mind Training** (led by Charles Chadwick)

Lojong means “to tame.” It is also known as Thought Transformation. With Lojong training we can achieve Bodhisattva mind.

3rd Tuesday of every month – **Mahamudra** (led by Roger McLennan)

Mahamudra – “great gesture”. Mahamudra meditation unifies calm abiding and insight to bring us to an experience of “ordinary mind,” that state of natural awakens and luminosity which lies at the heart of all experience, beyond suffering and duality.

4th Tuesday of every month – **Lam Rim** (led by Sue Willey)

Lam Rim – the words actually mean “stages of the path.” The Lam Rim condenses all of the teachings of Buddhaharma into a series of graded and logical steps which, if followed, lead one directly to the experience of awakening or Buddhahood. Beginning with a consideration of what it means to be human with the particular gifts and opportunities that this affords us, through issues such as death and impermanence, the nature and cause of suffering, through to a thorough investigation of the interdependence of all phenomena and the resulting awakening of compassion, a good heart, the Lam Rim is a ready guide on the enlightenment path.

Chöd Practice Group – Chöd means “cutting through.” This group meets monthly, for initiates who wish to practice together. Phone 0413 527 954.

VAJRAYOGINI TSOG

Tsog practice 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.

Please find the tsog dates listed below as calculated by the Australian Moon calendar. Please forgive any errors.

February 25
March 6 & 21
April 5 & 20
May 4 & 19

Roslyn Alexander

INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM AND MEDITATION

Tashi Choling is again offering an Introductory Course on Buddhism and Meditation in the Adult Education program this Autumn, beginning on 18 March. The course will run over four weeks, one evening per week, at the Adult Ed centre in North Hobart.

The course will cover some basic foundations of the Buddhist approach, including ethics, impermanence, the causes of our dissatisfaction and the path to happiness, the interconnectedness and interdependence of all phenomena, lovingkindness and compassion (sounds like a course for a lifetime doesn't it?). A variety of simple meditation techniques will be offered including meditation on the breath and walking meditation. There will also be opportunity for discussion and question.

The program is led by a group of four or five of us, each one taking it in turns to lead a session, but with all of us there to help answer questions and assist the discussion. This format worked really well last time, and we had fantastic feedback from those who participated. The Adult Ed program has not long come out, so if you are interested, or know someone who might be, register with Adult Ed now. It has a maximum of 16 participants and we were almost full last time.



Sue Willey

A YURT FOR DORJE LING



During his last visit Zasep Tulku Rinpoche detailed his vision for a yurt at Dorje Ling. He explained where he thought it should be situated and the benefits this extra 'room' would provide. It would become feasible, for example, to run two retreats concurrently, thereby meeting the differing needs of different practitioners. At that time someone

stepped forward and very generously offered to help fund this acquisition. Half of the total amount was in the form of a gift, the remainder being lent on a non-commercial basis. The latter amount will need to be repaid through fundraising or other donations but in the meantime this practical support has enabled the committee to proceed and turn Rinpoche's vision into reality.



Rinpoche showing a group of us a location where the yurt could be sited.

Andy McIntosh has obtained a quote for an eight-metre diameter yurt at a cost of \$9,850. There will be some further costs associated with shipping from Melbourne or Sydney, preparation of the site and a storage facility. The yurt is being procured from Green Habitat Solutions who in turn import the custom-made yurts directly from Mongolia (where yurts are known as ger). In addition they provide a heavy-duty, treated canvas cover more suitable to local climactic conditions than the traditional Mongolian felt. The yurt would have an area of approximately 60m², have two windows by the door and auspicious symbols painted on the interior woodwork. It has been decided that, with some work, the old milking shed would make the most suitable storage facility.

To help repay the kindness of our generous benefactor, and also fulfil the wishes of Zasep Rinpoche, donations toward the acquisition and installation of the yurt would be warmly welcomed.

For further information about yurts see the Green Habitat Solutions website www.greenhs.com.au



WORKSHOP WITH MAURICE OLIVER

In November last year Maurice Oliver visited Hobart to present a weekend workshop entitled 'Enlightening Attitude' concerning the subject of understanding and developing bodhicitta, which is also known as the enlightened mind.

Maurice has a unique style in presenting the teachings. He discussed the subject of bodhicitta in great depth over the two days and participants were grateful for his insight and ability to encourage discussion.

Maurice presented a traditional approach to the subject and discussion was useful in enabling us to find relevance to our selves and daily life. This was followed by the opportunity to practice meditation techniques to assist with integration of the subject. Maurice talked about methods of developing bodhicitta using lojong techniques including developing equanimity to all sentient beings, training in relative bodhicitta, the importance of recognising self grasping and self cherishing, transforming through taking responsibility for one's situation and the effects of karma and developing love and compassion, as well as much more of course.

Thank you Maurice for coming to Tasmania and sharing your wisdom with us and assisting develop a deeper understanding into the life long practice of realising these positive aspects of being.

Madhu Lilley

ANNA CROTTY – UN Sung HERO!

Our own Anna Crotty has been awarded a place in the Unsung Hero category of ABC's "My Favourite Australian" awards, for her work with Tents4Peace.

Her portrait has gone up in the National Gallery in Canberra. Read about the award here: www.abc.net.au/tv/myfavouriteaustralian.

You can read more about Anna's work at www.tents4peace.com.



TREASURER'S REPORT

After valuable feedback from members and some ensuing discussion, the committee decided as an organisation, we needed to be more specific in providing information about our financial status to you as members. Many people over the years have generously donated in support of Tashi Choling and our Retreat Centre Dorje Ling in full trust that their money is being spent wisely. As a non for profit organization that is reliant on raising funds by hosting teachings, weekly mediation, retreats and most recently introductory courses in Buddhism with Adult Ed, Tashi Choling could not have grown Zasep Rinpoche's vision for us, as a viable, active and sustainable Centre without the support of its members, and for that we truly do thank you.

Whilst there are costs in hosting many of our events, the bulk of funds raised come from retreats. Tashi Choling operates two accounts: the working account which oversees the day-to-day business as well as maintenance and upkeep of Dorje Ling; and the building account which processes the mortgage repayments of Dorje Ling. In recent months a specific donation was made towards the building of a shower block and renovation of the kitchen, all of those activities being processed thru the Building Acc. As of the 31st December there was a total of \$11,725 in the working account and \$3,404 in the building account. The former amount continues to be drawn down to meet costs associated with the ongoing renovations.

Monthly payments of \$1,200 are made in Mortgage repayments and at present there is a short fall in covering this cost. Tashi Choling paid out \$14,463.60 on the loan principle and interest for the year 07/08. Overall, the initial loan taken out in 1993 for \$160,000, as of Jan 09 there remains \$126,274.03. A sum total of \$73,600 comprising both principle and interest, has been paid over five and a third years. It has been communicated to the Committee that the interest rate on the loan will be reduced as of March

As previous treasurers have iterated, it only takes a small pledge by many, on a regular basis, to cover the mortgage. I appreciate many of you may be feeling financial constraints but perhaps I could appeal to those who might like to consider committing to a small regular amount as a way of supporting our sangha and this wonderful dharma place. If anyone should need a reminder concerning our long-term commitment to providing teachings and support for our teachers, retreat to Dorje Ling! Personally I can't wait for my next visit.

We wish to be forthcoming with information and welcome any inquiry or comment.

Kate MacNicol, Treasurer

SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL FOR THE WORLD

Tasmanian Retreats with Tarchin Hearn

"We are living in a time that is bursting with potential for life-supporting transformation. Let's come together and support each other in actually manifesting a culture of healing; a true bodhisattva world."
– Tarchin Hearn

We are very pleased to be hosting Tarchin Hearn once again in Tasmania. He will be offering an evening retreat series at Weeroona House in North Hobart, and a 9-day residential retreat at Dorje Ling, Lorinna.

Each of the evenings in Hobart will involve discussion, teaching, and suggested contemplations to explore and experiment with before the next session. The nine-day retreat at Dorje Ling will involve contemplative exploration to reveal and nourishes the sense of beauty and wonder underlying all true dharma teaching. It is here we discover the juice that empowers the natural flow of compassion in the midst of whatever situation we find ourselves in.

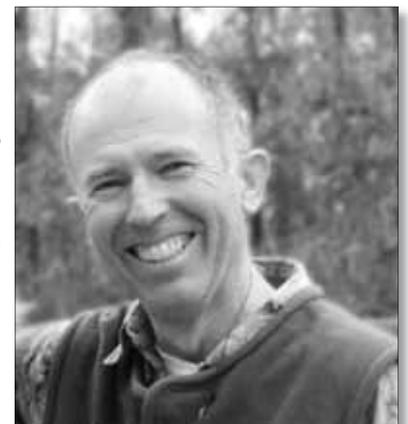
Chani Grieve

PROGRAM SUMMARY:

A Culture of Healing – Healing our Culture; meaningful living for ourselves and our communities.

A bodhisattva retreat in Hobart – Weeroona House, North Hobart

Feb 17, 18, and 19 and March 2, 3 and 4.
7:30pm – 9:30pm all evenings
Cost: \$75/\$60 for each three day block.
Deposit of \$25 for each three day block appreciated.



Profound enquiry, utter presence, and the natural flow of compassion –
A residential meditation retreat at Dorje Ling, Lorinna

Feb 21 – March 1: A residential meditation retreat at Dorje Ling, Lorinna.
Cost: \$400/\$350, deposit \$100.

There are still places available for all retreats, but places are filling fast! Please register your intention by Friday 12th February. Registration forms can be found on our website www.tashicholing.net or by contacting Andy McIntosh on 0439 324 078 andy@tashicholing.net, or Chani Grieve on 0439 453 538 chani@tashicholing.net. For anyone wishing to have individual guidance with Tarchin during this time please phone Andy. A flyer is available at www.tashicholing.net.

KHANDRO THRINLAY CHODON

Tashi Choling is pleased to present Khandro Thrinlay Chodon whilst she is in Hobart as part of her National Tour. Khandro-la will be giving a public talk at Tashi Choling on Tuesday the 10th of March at 7.30pm, the topic will be 'Developing Compassion in Difficult Times.'

Khandro-la has studied and meditated under the highest Tibetan Buddhist Masters — her root lama is Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche — and is also trained in western psychology. She is a Drukpa Kagyu lineage holder of Togden Shakya Shri, a renowned and realised yogi who was also a family man. Khandro-la, the great grand-daughter of Shakya Shri, is well known for her devout spiritual practice. She is also one of the few contemporary Tibetan yogini masters teaching in the West.

For further details visit www.khachodling.org, phone Bodhi Resources on 6224 4397, or download a flyer from www.tashicholing.net.



WORKING BEE REPORT

Busy Bees doing their Ling

And so it has come to be that we have a new shower block, kitchen, dining and lounge room at Dorje Ling!

We have had three working bees since October and the end result is a beautiful new shower block designed by Guy Turnbull. Three showers and two hand basins have been installed and there are secret finishing touches to come, which are sure to delight all those who are lucky enough to bathe there. The new solar heated hot water system with higher-pressure water from the new pipe we buried should be ample for all showers to run at the same time. Lorinna locals Bart and Lenny have very kindly donated their time to install the solar hot water system and do the plumbing for the shower as well as work on the water system for the new kitchen. Many thanks to Guy who, working through busyness and illness, not only came up with a great design but also delivered a lot of the energy to make this project happen. Only the windows and a few bits to go! See www.tashicholing.net for a link to a YouTube video showing the first part of construction of the shower block.

The old purple house has been transformed into the new kitchen with a cooks bedroom, dining, and lounge rooms. Maurice and Mark did a fantastic job setting out the new kitchen in the pokey old lounge and now with a new window it is light and spacious with plenty of storage and stainless steel bench space. The old kitchen/lounge room has been transformed into the dining room and servery with seating for up to 24 people. We took the wall out between the kitchen/lounge and the master bedroom and turned it into a lovely cosy lounge room. It feels really warm and inviting.

Other people have been cutting the grass and weeding so the property is looking like a park-land. The inside of the gumpa has been oiled and totally cleaned and all kitchen equipment has been washed and put in the new kitchen ready for Bunji to cook for Tarchin's retreat, which begins on the 20th of February.



Dorje Ling has a great new sense of life these days with a core group and plenty of other enthusiastic people coming to working bees and giving their all through the heat and rain, with reviving with swims in the lake at the end of the day and hearty feasts to keep us all going.

For myself there is a deep sense satisfaction giving service to Dorje Ling. Received so openly, I feel embraced by the property and the natural environment there. It is even better knowing that so many beings will benefit.

The energy is high so I hope to see you all there next time!

