



# Tashi Choling Dharma Foundation Inc. Newsletter Autumn 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

It's Autumn Newsletter time. A lot has been happening since our last newsletter, as you will see as you read on, and there are new plans and ideas emerging, especially for Dorje Ling, as we look forward to a month long retreat there with Zasep Rinpoche early in 2010.

I often think back to something Rinpoche wrote to us when we were struggling to find a way for the sangha community to buy Dorje Ling back in 2003. He said, and this is probably not a verbatim quote, that if we were able to do it, "the energy would begin to flow like the Mekong River." And so it seems to be, and not just for Dorje Ling but for all of our activities.

Since last time, we have hosted a very successful visit in February by Tarchin Hearn. Our Tashi Choling Centre hosted an evening of teaching with Khandro Thrinlay Chodon in March, again really well attended and enjoyed by all. Our regular Tuesday evening program continues, and our Wednesday evenings of introductory meditation are now also a regular feature of our program. We have also just completed giving a second Adult Education course on Introduction to Buddhism and Meditation, with a full house and great feedback and have been invited to offer it again next term.

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On the building front, the new shower block at Dorje Ling is already functioning and nearly complete, a mandala abode of the five Dhyani Buddhas (you will see what I mean next time you venture up there!). Our second gompa yurt

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## TASHI CHOLING DHARMA FOUNDATION

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

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.

has been ordered. And plans are afoot to build some bedrooms onto the carport of the main house and convert the old kitchen into bedrooms, in preparation for hosting a month long retreat with Rinpoche early next year. Individual retreatants are venturing up there for retreat. And we have Rob Williams and Catriona Scott about to begin an eight-month stint as caretakers there. It's all happening!

One of the wonderful features of all of this is that many new people are participating in the retreats at Dorje Ling, being introduced to the wonderful qualities of that place, and also in the Hobart based programs, and youthful energy and enthusiasm abounds. As an "old" hand, I can for the first time see that personal retirement into the world of less action and more study, contemplation and retreat may actually become possible as new energy steps in! The TCDF Committee works amazingly hard, and many others have come to working bees or participate in the programs. This sangha network is growing. Sometimes it all seems like hard work, but only until the realisation dawns that compassion is an active force and that stretching ourselves beyond our self-perceived limits in the service of dharma is one of the best ways of stepping beyond ego, and realising that we, each of us, are just a part of the larger flow of life (there's that river image again).

We need a variety of supports to bring all these things into being and one of them, especially when we talk about building, is, of course, money. Some of you may remember our Dollar a Day drive, with the money-box template provided by Maria. I emptied and banked mine the other day, and there was a surprising amount in it. I'm on to my second money-box. If you are already doing this, wonderful, please keep it going. If not, perhaps you might like to consider contributing a dollar a day to the TCDF to support all of the activities outlined above. Perhaps some of you may also like to consider making a regular contribution to the Dorje Ling mortgage. Or maybe you might just like to consider renewing or becoming a member of our organisation, \$30 per year. Every bit helps manifest continuing opportunities both for ourselves and others to hear and practice the dharma.

Ah la la hoh! Thanks to all,

*Sue Willey*

## TASHI CHOLING LIBRARY

Many of you would know that our library has had a complete overhaul in the last year, with a wonderful new catalogue system, new bookshelves and many donated new books. It is still a system that operates on trust.

It is clear that at least some people are borrowing books without recording their borrowing either manually on the folder provided, or on the computer. There are missing books for which we have no idea who has borrowed them last. Some of these books are rare and now impossible to get.

Please, if you have borrowed a book, make sure you return it, and when borrowing again, it is essential that you write your name down on the folder there on the shelf. If you don't do this, the library depletes, others cannot take advantage of the books that are there, and eventually we have to stop lending altogether. Please, respect the trust system and do the right thing.

Also please remember that the library is there for TCDF members only. If you wish to borrow and are not a member, that's easily solved. You can go online and download a membership form, or pick one up at Tashi Choling. Fill it in and send back to us together with your \$30 membership. It's that easy.

*Sue Willey*



*Vajrayogini Retreat at Dorje Ling (also Lam Rim Retreat), coming up next year at Dorje Ling, Lorinna. See page 4 for more*

## FUNDRAISER AT SIRENS

23rd May 2009  
7.30pm, \$20

There will be a Tashi Choling fundraiser this month upstairs at Sirens, 6 Victoria Street, Hobart. There will be great entertainment and dancing with music provided by 'Home Band' and Raskull (my son Rime, dj) ... as well as guest acts. Put it in your diary!

*Guy Turnbull*

## 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 awakesness 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. Contact us for more information.

## 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.

May: Sunday 3rd & Monday 18th  
June: Tuesday 2nd & Wednesday 17th  
July Wednesday 1st, Thursday 16th  
Thursday 30th  
August: Friday 14th

*Roslyn Alexander*

## INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM AND MEDITATION ADULT EDUCATION COURSE

We have once again run an Introduction to Buddhism and Meditation course through Adult Education. Our nominated capacity is 16 participants, and this time we had 17: more than a full house!

The course extends over four weeks, two hours per week, and is 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.

This has been such a great way to run a course. There is something very reassuring about having others who can step in if you are really unsure about something or are finding a particular question tricky to answer. And it has been a fantastic learning opportunity, as we learn from each other and the participants in the course.

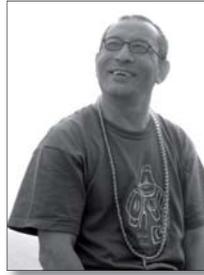
We have had really good feedback, and have been asked to run the course again next term, so if you are interested in participating, look out for the next Adult Education course calendar and book in. It will run from 29 July through to 19 August. The funds we raise from doing this go to the ongoing improvements at Dorje Ling.



*Sue Willey*

## TWO RETREATS AT DORJE LING IN 2010 WITH ZASEP TULKU RINPOCHE

Zasep Rinpoche is scheduled to lead two retreats back-to-back at Dorje Ling in 2010: a Lam Rim retreat from January 15th - 21st followed by a Vajrayogini retreat with Fire Puja between January 22nd - February 11th. These dates are tentative. More information will come later, or keep an eye on [www.tashicholing.net](http://www.tashicholing.net).



### Vajrayogini Retreat Requirement

*The following is from Zasep Tulku Rinpoche concerning the prerequisites required for those who wish to attend the Vajrayogini retreat.*

1. As foundation and preparation for Vajrayogini initiation one has to take Heruka or Yamantaka initiation [Rinpoche will be offering a Heruka empowerment at Dorje Ling to allow those who do not already have the prerequisite empowerments to then participate in the Vajrayogini empowerment and retreat].
2. Person has to take Bodhisattva vow and Tantric vows.
3. Person has to take Zasep Rinpoche as one's own Guru and Vajra master and keep Guru Yoga Samayas rest of his or her life.
4. One can not take this initiation just as a blessing and lightly.
5. There is retreat commitment to do 110,000 Mantra of Vajrayogini ending with fire puja.

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## NEW CARETAKERS FOR DORJE LING

From mid May Rob Williams and Catriona Scott will fill the caretakers role at Dorje Ling.

We are both looking forward to our time as caretakers at Dorje Ling immensely, and appreciate the opportunity to contribute our time, energy and love to a place that has given us both so much. We see our role as caretakers as being an opportunity to both support the retreat centre and also to make it more accessible to visitors and retreatants.

We know from experience that it can be a bit daunting visiting Dorje Ling alone (especially in winter!) and we hope to make it less so by providing a warm welcome as well as taking care of some of the practical details of your visit (e.g ensuring the water is on and working, that there is plenty of firewood and gas for your stay, and picking up supplies from Sheffield for longer retreats). We look forward to supporting private retreatants and visitors in anyway we can, so please contact us and let us know your needs prior to arriving.

We look forward to seeing you and hope many of you will make the most of our presence throughout winter and spring!

*Rob and Catriona*

To contact the caretakers at Dorje Ling from mid-May phone 03 6363 5178 (you'll probably have to leave a message) or email [caretaker@tashicholing.net](mailto:caretaker@tashicholing.net)

## THE BLESSINGS OF DORJE LING

I have had the opportunity this year to spend quite a lot of time at Dorje Ling, first attending Tarchin's retreat in February, and then staying on to undertake my own retreat, followed with another visit in late March to put in a veggie-garden in preparation for moving in as caretaker. Being at Dorje Ling, as always, has been a blessing.

As I walked the property nearing the end of my first solitary retreat I was overwhelmed by a sense of the incredible beauty of this place, by its spaciousness, its clean deep waters and clear air, its aliveness. Walking amongst the eucalypts, looking out over the water on a sunny clear afternoon I was struck by what a gift Dorje Ling is. A feeling of immense gratitude arose to the countless beings who have made Dorje Ling the centre that it is – to the many people who have put in their time, energy, money, skills, resources, vision and love, as well as to the diverse array of non-human others who inhabit the valley – the black cockatoos, wedge tailed eagles and tiger snakes, the red breasted robins and pretty wrens and fan tails, the tall trees, the native hens, the pademelons, wallabies and possums, not to mention all the insects and earthworms, spiders and snails and slugs that wriggle and crawl and fly and hop their way about, each in their own small and unique way contributing to the dynamic aliveness I experience while at Dorje Ling. This is sangha at work.

The outer landscape of Dorje Ling provides for me a nurturing and supportive place to explore my own inner terrain. As I walk the meandering tracks, and swim in the lake and admire the Gingko trees, and gaze quietly at the changing light and moving clouds, and marvel at just how many shades of green there are in the world I am led into a deeper presence with my own being. Exploring the qualities I value in the environs of Dorje Ling I begin to discover the possibility of those qualities within me – spaciousness, intricacy, diversity, presence ... there seems a kind of effortlessness, a grace in this process – surrounded by beauty I am invited to more fully inhabit the beauty that naturally exists within me, within all of us.

Of course there is a need to learn the art of presence regardless of outer circumstances, but for this time and place in my life it feels just right to immerse myself in a place that inspires me so deeply. Planting broad beans in the garden up there a few weeks ago I had the feeling that Dorje Ling and I have a lot to give each other, and I look forward, with gratitude, to all the little unfurlings, inner and outer, that occur during my time there.

*Catriona Scott*

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## TREASURER'S REPORT

In the previous treasurers report, my intention was to give Sangha members and interested others, a clear picture as to the financial picture of Tashi Choling, funds raised and how money is spent. As a result, there has been a wonderful response from many people in the way of donations. This has come at a time most needed, to cover the ongoing costs to improve facilities at Dorje Ling, the building of a new shower block and solar system and revamping of the Purple house with a new kitchen and eating area. To date this has cost approximately \$27,685. Needless to say there are many projects waiting!

Those that are most urgent — improvement of the Caretakers hut, the building of a dormitory in the carport of the Purple House and transforming the old kitchen into sleeping spaces — will need to happen before Rinpoche's extended month long retreat in Jan/Feb. As you will appreciate funds to cover these projects come from donors, teaching fees, retreats and fundraisers. Tarchin Hearn's wonderful visit and teachings raised \$4,361, of which \$1,000 was gifted by Tarchin towards Dorje Ling. Sangha members have donated a further \$5,000 towards the caretakers hut and \$1,380 was raised by the Adult Ed course run by Tashi Choling. Not to mention the donations made by the regular pledges to cover the mortgage and one-off contributions.

The interest rates for the mortgage repayments have decreased from 5.5% to 4.5%, reducing monthly payments by \$200. At the end of April \$124,479 remained to be repaid from the initial loan of \$160,000.

The combined total of our two working accounts is \$21,914. At least \$10,000 (\$6,000 of that being donated specifically) will go toward the purchase of the yurt and freight before the end of the year.

It is extremely gratifying to be able to commit to the development of both Tashi Choling and Dorje Ling. It is a

vision shared by many, nurtured by our teachers and made possible by us all. Should you wish to make a contribution the Commonwealth Bank details are Dharma Foundation of Tasmania account number 10162638 BSB 067002. Please feel free to specify where you'd like your donation to go when depositing, e.g. building, mortgage or yurt.

*Kate MacNicol, Treasurer*

**Cecilie Kwiat** will be returning to Hobart in the first week of June 2009. Teaching dates and venues are yet to be set, but will be worked out within the next two weeks.

If anyone is interested in helping to organise Cecilie's visit, or is available to help in ensuring her needs are met while she is here, please phone Catriona on 0439011449 or email [scott.trina@gmail.com](mailto:scott.trina@gmail.com).

## LIVING YOGA EASTER RETREAT

### Caretakers Report '09 Retreat at Dorje Ling

It was delightful to join in the early morning meditations led by Yogini Roslyn Alexander and some of the asana classes as well ... the roots of Buddhist practise do, after all, originate in the same soil as Yoga.



*Easter Yoga Retreat group 2009  
Front: Guy Turnbull (Caretaker), Lyn Woolly, Pete Jansen, Roslyn Alexander (Teacher), Alexandra Gartrell, Bella the dog, Michaela Guest, Susan Gunter, Kirstie Turnbull (Queen of the Kitchen)  
Behind: Kate Ireland, Bruno David, Chris Gallegher, Pia Gallegher, Deb Swift*

Someone else will have to report from actually inside the retreat, but from an outsider's perspective, all looked like it went beyond most expectations. One remarkable thing about this retreat was that 7 of the 10 people attending the retreat had not been to Dorje Ling before.

It was a new experience for them, and a new experience for Kirstie Turnbull also ... she cooked for all 15 of us for 4 days (a few working bee folk and retreat attendants added to the retreat group). She not only did an awesome job, but also found the new improved

kitchen was great to work in. Thanks to Mark Farrell, Maurice and all who helped realise this wonderful addition to the facilities at Dorje Ling.

Everyone commented on how much the nature of the place, the land, the trees and lovingly maintained buildings enhanced their practise. This is a direct result of all the working bee energy. Karma yoga featured as a daily component of the retreat and many hands made light work of care for the land and facilities.

My role was as a background caretaker — water and gas issues met us about as soon as we arrived — and also working on finishing the shower house ... ship? sculpture? Don't really know what to call it — it looks a bit like it just landed from a distant galaxy — but the verdict was ... great hot showers! Big thank you to Bart and Lenny from Lorinna for their dedicated help in this project.

Once again our stay at Lorinna was totally nourishing and for me 'the old hermit' fantasy grows stronger with each visit ... who knows, one day you may be walking on one of the trails created by John and Maria and hear a strange cackling, near the old ruin, at Dorje Ling.

Hope to see you up there again soon.

*Guy Turnbull*



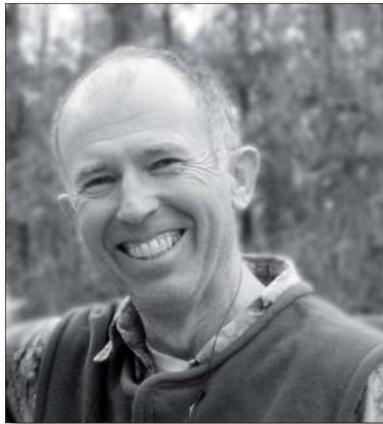
*Kirstie Turnbull*

## FEB 09 RETREAT WITH TARCHIN HEARN

Dorje Ling is humming. Yes, with countless varieties of bugs and critters in summer kamikaze mode, but also with the incredible amounts of energy and love it has received in recent months. The new shower block is a kooky delight and offers reliably delicious hot showers along with rainbow-light dancing all around you from the glass overhead. The new kitchen/dining in the purple house is functional and comfortable with a wonderful sweeping view across the valley. The grounds are looking magnificent and the whole place in general seems happily responsive to all the input given. Everyone who has stepped up, well done!

It was my good fortune to attend Tarchin Hearn's nine-day summer retreat this year. A great bunch of people joined me — ranging broadly in age and retreat experience — and the mutual support and sense of community quickly created was, for me, a wonderfully nurturing experience. There was a spaciousness to the whole retreat that allowed everyone to find their place within that network of care, which meant a lot to the many of those attending who were grappling with Big Stuff!

Tarchin invited us all to dive into a deep and personal exploration of what it means to live sanely and well, encouraging this exploration and contemplation through a sadhana he has developed for Recognising the Natural Way of Abiding Through the Grace of Chenrezi. Weaving together scientific discovery, personal insight and traditional teachings with boundless curiosity, the teachings and exercises he gave us encouraged a fresh view of what it means to practice bodhidharma, in this body, in this world. Through cultivating a continuity of profoundly nourishing ease, suffused with vivid alertness and clear discernment, the evoking of Chenrezi became more than a visualisation practice on the cushion (actually we were more often under a tree than in the gumpa). It became a gentle and consistent immersion of our senses and increasingly curious minds into the Dorje Ling environs ... sensing, questioning, and tapping into the flow of All Things, which, according to Tarchin, ultimately are expressions of Chenrezi. This enabled us to remember in various ways that our world is actually a pretty friendly place, as well as the ultimate arena for practice.



What transformative jewels did I bring away from the retreat? Tarchin's unique approach helped considerably to reconcile my instinctive predilection toward the Earth-friendly pagan/shamanic viewpoint of existence with the bodhidharma. I realised in a workable way that fostering greater intimacy with the body and the natural world can be intrinsic, even essential, in deepening our exploration of the dharma. These explorations are actually one and the same. This can seem obvious in theory, however I have often felt a disconnect between my life in the world and the Buddhist practices I have been exposed to; that the wonder and wisdom embedded in our bodies and the Earth deserve our complete explorative attention, love and honouring, rather than being seen as obstacles to be overcome on the way to an enlightened way of being. The Bodhisattva Vow always hinted at this for me, with its primary aim to come back into the world to continue 'the good work'. But there was still a sense that transcendence was the main game, almost as if I needed to turn my back on this planet, our home. This has never sat comfortably with me, and has been primary in my hesitation of practicing dharma with any real commitment. Tarchin demonstrated to me that while practicing dharma we need not renounce anything. And that dharma could be something to live rather than something to live up to (or add on to my life at convenient times).

Finally, I came away with a revitalised sense of interdependence; how we affect, and are affected by every being, every particle, and every process in this great symbiotic relational dance of the universe. That we are creators and participants

of this dance ... it just ain't possible to be no wallflower. So lets dance! Or at least remember when things feel tight and difficult that this wonder is what is really going on. As we know, this is something all humans need to wake up to, continuously and quickly.

Finally finally, The Curiosity Show with Tarchin Hearn is a TV show we all agreed we would watch ... think Mr Sheen cartoon-type figure with magnifying glass firmly glued to eyeball!

*Kirsty Turnbull*



## PRACTICE IN DAILY LIFE

I felt inspired and reinvigorated after the February retreat. I was keen to maintain as best as I could, this sense of enthusiasm for, and confidence in the practice.

So here are some guidelines for myself to assist this:

1. Get up early and meditate first thing. Including some prayers, tranquillity meditation, mantras and think about the coming day and try to develop some positive motivation for my daily activities and personal relationships.
2. Read a couple of pages of an inspiring book, once or twice a day.
3. Meet with others to meditate and discuss a few times a month.
4. Walk in nature and focus on the sense impressions.
5. In an attempt to simplify life, when choices appear, reflecting on whether to add/subtract this activity to/from my life.
6. Eat, sleep and exercise well.
7. If I fall down in the mud, get up again and keep going!

*Charles Chadwick*