



Tashi Choling Dharma Foundation Inc. Newsletter Winter 2005

ZASEP TULKU RINPOCHE

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

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Warm Greetings from a cold morning.

I dreamt last night that I omitted to let people know that Zasep Rinpoche was arriving at lunchtime, and when he arrived everyone was there anyway...

I suppose this could be my way of getting off the hook as a spokesperson for Dharma, or it could mean that I believe that if you have the karma to meet with excellent teachers then the meeting will happen...no matter what...

We need to build on the accumulated karma / energy we do have to ensure that excellent teachers keep coming back. Many people are waking up to the value of meditation practice and we all benefit greatly when strong practitioners and teachers are in our midst. This benefit is much enhanced when the surroundings are specifically devoted to retreat and the practice of Ahimsa, roughly translated as 'doing no harm'. To be able to spend prolonged periods in either solitary or group retreats in an atmosphere of supportive awareness in a place like Dorje Ling is truly a blessing. Just have to watch the evening news to see how often it is totally missing in so many people's lives.

At the risk of sounding like just another voice in the wilderness, pleading for financial assistance for a favourite cause, I would like to invite you to consider joining our group of regular donors, who together manage to contribute the regular mortgage payments we have in order to keep the Dorje Ling Retreat Centre alive and well. We are not quite keeping up with the outgoings and always welcome additional support. \$20 per month from a number of people really spreads the load and gives the Centre a wonderful sense of connection to many people. This is important.

"...a wonderful sense
of connection ..."

Another very important expression of contribution is to be active at a committee level. We have a small dedicated group who manage the affairs of Tashi Choling and from time to time people come and go. One position that requires particular skills is that of Treasurer. Our current Treasurer, Ian Taylor, has given notice that he will be retiring at the end of this year and has given us a few months to find a replacement. Ian has done a wonderful job and will be leaving the books in a very well set up system for our next volunteer. Please consider this if you feel you have the skills needed. It is a vital position.

In closing, I wish you all well in your lives and practice and hope to see you at any of our regular meditation evenings or retreats.

Thank you ... Guy

TASHI CHOLING DHARMA FOUNDATION PO Box 593, North Hobart, TAS 7002. Room 1, 2nd Floor, 71 Liverpool St, Hobart.
Contacts: Maria Grist <maria@tashicholing.net> (03) 62349404 or Guy Turnbull - <guy@tashicholing.net>
Web site <www.tashicholing.net >

RETURN TO DORJE LING - 1 (Stuart)

At the end of April I had the good fortune to be able to spend eight days at Dorje Ling and complete a Green Tara retreat. I'd only been to Lorinna once before, for the Heart Sutra/Mahamudra retreat the Easter before last, at which time Rinpoche was also kind enough to give a Green Tara initiation.

During some concluding comments toward the end of that retreat Rinpoche encouraged us to make use of the facilities at Dorje Ling, noting — in case there were any doubts — that he thought it was a very special place. He was similarly encouraging regarding undertaking Tara retreats. I'd had an amazing time at Dorje Ling & was full of enthusiasm & plans for a quick return as I drove home.



In the end, it took more than a year, but eventually I found myself behind the wheel wending and winding my way until the bitumen gave out and I began the precipitous descent down into Lorinna. The experience was very different in many ways this time: no Rinpoche, no group sitting. On the other hand I still had my untamed mind and someone else was still cooking my meals (for those who have yet to have the pleasure, John's skills extend well beyond the strings of a ukulele).

I was only doing the minimum number but it seemed like a huge mountain of mantra from time to time. It was only when my mind had wandered off the path that it seemed heavy. It was long enough that the altar mouse was secure enough to switch from covert scurry & snatch missions at night to brazen raids on the rice as I watched (and then remembered what I was supposed to be doing).

It's a great place to practice — in the sun and the rain; under rainbows and shooting stars — and its great that we have that opportunity.

I'd like to thank all those who have contributed to Dorje Ling or Tashi Choling over the years and thereby helped make this wonderful place available for such late-arriving freeloaders such as myself. I'd also like to thank Guy for helping me get to grips with what a Tara retreat entailed; Roslyn for the helpful Tara retreat package; and on-site John for his cooking & other practical ministrations.

Stuart Lord

RETURN TO DORJE LING - 2 (Mary)

I wanted go back to Dorje Ling because I did not have enough time to paint at Easter, so I stayed there in June with Anna, Annie and Christine, and with residents, John and Steve, for the first night.

My retreat included much of the following: visitors, pizza night, food, rest and recovery from chemotherapy, walks outdoors (after which I enthusiastically planned to do the Overland Track), food, thoughtful conversation, peace and quiet, food and drinks, loud drumming (the rhythm police did not appear, 'tho others did hear our meditation round the fire), shared art therapy with Anna Crotty, hot baths, reading, more food and the painting of two large and two small oils based on my walk and garden views and sensations.

I left feeling so inspired and refreshed that I called in to Launceston to view the French Masters on the way home. I exhibited my paintings (with twenty others) in "Sun's Coming Up Exhibition" at Off Centre Gallery in August 3-17th 2005.

Mary Hudson Ewington



Foundations of Awakening

A series of explorations with Tarchin Hearn.

Hobart - December 2005

"Clear seeing compassion-in-action and non-clinging awareness, along with deepening empathy, patience, consistency in practice, flexibility of mind, and a reverence for a vast diversity of life, will surely be the shared values of a community of beings living their dharma practice." – Tarchin

Exploring relationship and community as a vehicle for complete awakening

"All of life is relationship – relationship in action. Atoms are relationships of electrons, protons and neutrons. Molecules are relationships of atoms. Minerals are relationships of molecules. Cells are relationships of all the above both within and outside the cell membrane. Groups of relatively stable relationships are communities. One person could be considered a community. Our body is a continent inhabited by countless micro beings, a vast interaction of relationship on many levels. This seemingly separate body inhabits the relating bodies of others and we call this the biosphere. The world is a sangha, a community of interbeing. It's what we are. Relating is co-operating and in the co-operating, we form a larger whole. In spite of so much human ambivalence about relationships, relating is not an option. It's what we are. It's already happening. Rather than struggling over whether to relate or not, a much more meaningful question is how can we relate in ways that are healthy and support wellbeing in everyone." – from "Sangha Work" by Tarchin

Selfishness, Bigotry, Empathy and Love - The modern world is balanced on a knife edge. Which way will we go?

Thurs 1 Dec - Evening Talk – Hobart

Six Ways of Profound Friendship – A recipe for awakening in the midst of anything.

*Fri 2 Dec - Evening talk/connected to weekend workshop
Sat and Sun 3 and 4 Dec - Weekend workshop – Hobart*

Dharma and the World – Building a Bodhisattva Sangha

Tues 6 Dec - Evening Talk - Hobart

Foundations of Awakening

Tarchin writes about this year's retreat. "I thought it would be wonderful to just meet together and cultivate freedom, clarity, naturalness and a heart/mind overflowing with compassion – and not necessarily call it anything. Together we might explore a natural path of awakening and perhaps glimpse the mystery of Mahamudra. Throughout this, we will dip into a rare text of pith instruction from the Tibetan Mahamudra tradition which centres on the practice of Chenrezi, the Bodhisattva of Compassion and draws together many paths of awakening into one seamless whole.

Fri Dec 9 till Dec 18 - Ten Day Retreat or Five Day Retreat - Fri Dec 9 to Wed Dec 14

Dorje Ling Retreat Centre - Lorinna

More information, or offers of help or assistance please call:
Suze van der Beek (6253 6065)
or John Bermingham (6265 5215 or 6234 7736)

HOBART SHOW WEEKEND WORKING BEE

Come along and help us to finish off the building work in Rinpoche's house - gardeners and cleaners, people with building skills or people willing to do odd jobs or act as builder's labourers equally welcome.

From Thursday 20th October through to Sunday 23rd October (or come for just a couple of days if you prefer). We will join in meals with the people who are doing the Yoga and Arts Therapy Workshop (see page 2 in this newsletter).

BUSHWALK

Sunday 25 September 2005.



*Invitation to the Hobart
Dharma Community and
Friends*

Meet at the junction of Huon Road and Chimney Pot Hill Road at 10 am. Bring lunch, drink, camera, strong shoes and raincoat (even if it's not raining!)

We will do a ramble around the Ridgeway-Waterworks area. Some off-track walking will be included. You will see some interesting historic sites, as well as a sandstone cave, plus lots of native plants hopefully in flower. The walk will be paced to suit the slowest walker in the group.

Leaders: John and Maria Grist
(ph 62349404) *Page 4*

THE MIDWINTER NIGHT'S SCENE.

Our Dorje Ling Fun Raiser was just that with acts beyond your wildest imagination.

We witnessed a full moon rising over the Derwent River on a truly crisp Tasmanian night; the reflected lights from the city and Tasman Bridge were backdrops for the endless knot banners and the heartfelt songs from the choirs and musicians.

The evening's entertainment alternated between an indoor stage and grandstand stages.

Since the play list got lost in the electronic waves Ian Laing did a marvellous job compering while Jaspa Wood with her extended family helped manage the event and provided gluhwein.

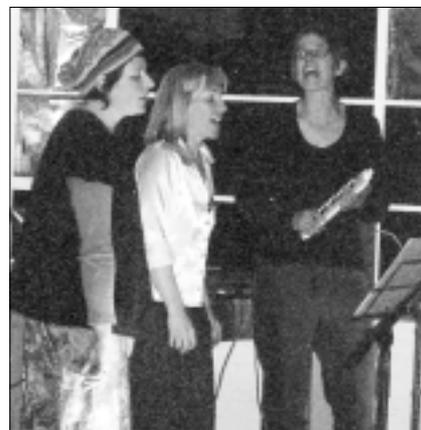
Wilma and Mathew and Eva supplied the lighting and Michael Vuister and Youth Arc the sound systems. John Grist put his expertise to the electronic equipment and there wasn't a hitch.

In addition Ross Coward and Guy, Maria and John Grist and I set up and others arrived the next day to pull it all down and clean up. Margaret Steadman welcomed people at the door. Taj Alexander and Jill Wright were consistently behind the counter serving drinks and a selection of 10 different soups - generously donated by the Tashi Choling Dharma Community ... and bread kindly donated by the Zum Cafe.

And so the event began.....

Rime and Seymour Turnbull Biggs kicked off the night with some DJ original turntable. (It's so exciting when the younger sangha have time to share their world with us.) Tony Dix and some of his fellow *cappella* choir gave a world class performance from the upstairs stage to be followed by the Taiko Drummers sending their deep resonance sounds out over the River. The combined melodic tones of Viraj on harmonium and Nari Drumming and Michael Vuister displaying his original pieces was just icing on the cake.

Little Bird told me, pictured above, included Kate, Sally Land and Sandy harmonizing in such sweet multilingual tones. Julius Swing improvised on electric guitar finding notes beyond the ordinary mind. Mary Hudson Ewington shared intimate poetry and songs with friends accompanying her. Then the mystery guests delighting us with jazz/blues and to close the night John Beck (AKA one of the caretakers from Dorje Ling) played on Ukulele and sang old favourites and original dharma folk songs. Those of the 60-plus that remained danced out the night and sang together.



Little Bird Told Me - Trio



Taiko Drum

Thanks to the Hobart City Council for the perfect venue for our vision of celebrating this Winter Wonderland we love and live in.

There are so many people to thank for pulling together for the evening's success. Please forgive me if I overlook mentioning you personally.

For Dorje Ling the \$1500 raised will help go towards the insurance of our precious Retreat Centre and ongoing running costs. See you there soon to enjoy YOUR place.

Roslyn Alexander

UPCOMING WORKSHOP

Living and loving: Expressive Arts, Yoga and Meditation Retreat.

Treasure the magic of Dorje Ling, with like minded people.

Thursday 20th October (2 pm) to Sunday 23rd October (2pm).

Art sessions:

Join us to explore "Loving The Self and the Place" creatively, through the peaceful dynamic visual arts, using the inspiration of Dorje Ling.

You need no specialist experience in visual art to gain great benefit, however, if you are an artist, why not extend yourself to deeper understanding of your process and psychology? We will use crayons, paint, paper, plasticine (3D), indoor and outdoor inspiration with lots of time to savour sensations, respond and delve into "The Self". Could be very rich.

Yoga sessions:

Intewoven with the Art sessions Roslyn Alexander will teach Hatha Yoga to help develop physical strength, flexibility and balance and Buddhist Meditations to deepen awareness and inspire inner wisdom and insight. During the 3 day retreat, participants will have personal private time to enjoy the precious qualities of this sacred land.

Mary Hudson Ewington:

I use Art Therapy each week for my own elucidation and work with other Art Therapists, have taught Uni and TAFE students, ran an Art Therapy group in 2004, and presently teach one-to-one in 2005. I have trained in Initiatic Art Therapy over two years (2004), and am qualified in Graphic design (1971), Re-evaluation Counselling (1988), Master of Education (2003), and am an experienced teacher of the arts and writing/publishing. Look at my website for my story:
<http://www.marysartandwriting.com>



Roslyn Alexander:

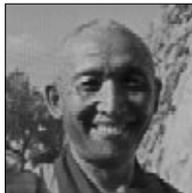
Roslyn Alexander has had 30 years of teaching. These include Expressive Arts in schools, 10 years of Yoga teaching, currently teaching Yoga and Meditation to Adults and Yoga Dance to children children in Hobart. She also works as an Artist in Residence in schools and studies Arts Therapy MIECAT and Process Oriented Psychology.

Over the past 16 years formal studies in Mahayana Buddhist Practices have enhanced her work and life. She initially took teachings with H. H. Dalai Lama and Geshe Sonam Rinchen and currently studies with Zasep Tulku Rinpoche who is the Spiritual Director of Dorje Ling.

For Retreat enquiries and bookings phone:
Mary on 62 235531 or
Roslyn on 043 999 5655



COPY OF EMAILS: RE: VENERABLE GESHE SONAM RINCHEN and RUTH SONAM



Dear students and friends of Venerable Geshe Sonam Rinchen and Ruth Sonam, Hope all is well with you. Right now in N.Z. the "SONAM FOUNDATION" sonamfoundation@igrin.co.nz is trying to gather together enough committed sponsors to display a promise of long term financial support for Venerable Geshe Sonam Rinchen, Ruth Sonam and Geshe's attendant Nyima Gyaltzen. There has been 17 months of sorting details out in NZ and now "JAM TSE DHARGYEE LING" dharma@igrin.co.nz are applying for the visas for GesheLa, Ruth and Nyima.

How blessed and fortunate are we to have GesheLa and Ruth preparing for the big move down under! The prospect of attending teachings of GesheLas caliber combined with Ruths' skillful and riveting translation close by is an opportunity beyond our wildest dreams. For us who are getting older, (as GesheLA and Ruth are). To be closer will make attending teaching an appealing option as opposed to the long haul to India.

GesheLa and Ruth have agreed that it is a good idea that any sponsors who commit to more than \$500 per year can attend teachings for free. This could help inspire us to go that extra mile to attend teaching in N.Z or in different parts of Australia to where we live. Also we can become a "Sangha" and that could be a lot of fun as well as in the more traditional sense.

Right now we are beginning to set up a "Charitable Trust" here in Australia that Ven. Geshe Sonam Rinchen and Ruth Sonam can head. This will give Australia a consistent invitation body that can act as an umbrella for GesheLa, Ruth and Nyima to come and go from N.Z. This will hopefully make visa applications and longer stays in Australia possible for them if they choose.

Please pass this information onto anyone you may know who could be interested in supporting GesheLa and Ruth. Please respond quickly as this matter is urgent. You can respond by accessing, sonamfoundation@igrin.co.nz Let's all help make this happen! We can do it!

Love, Chai (PH. 02 66871638 MB. 040181949 paddemelon@hotmail.com)

Dear students and friends of Ven. Geshe Sonam Rinchen and Ruth Sonam, Yesterday I sent an email regarding the imminent and exciting proposed arrival of GesheLa, Ruth and Nyima. Today I am sending the words of GesheLa that we will include in a pamphlet. Also a letter from Harold in NZ to bring you up to date.
Love Chai

Ven. Geshe Sonam Rinchen's Letter.

In 1986 Ruth and I spent five months teaching in different parts of Australia. Since then we have maintained a warm connection with Australian students. The numbers have gradually grown because many Australians have spent some time attending our classes at the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives in Dharamsala. Right from the beginning I felt that their interest in the teachings was down-to-earth and very sincere. A lot of the people we have met are in professions which involve taking care of others, and they have turned to the teachings to help them do this work better and to sustain their own dedication and enthusiasm. I feel a close and loving connection to my students in Australia and New Zealand and hope to be able to nurture this by spending time with them in both places.

We met Chai (Anne Hicks) in Tasmania during our first visit in 1986. Since then she has come to Dharamsala almost every year and attended our classes at the Tibetan Library. She urged us many times to visit Australia again which we finally did in 2001 and 2003. During these visits she hosted teachings in her home that were a source of joy and benefit to many people. She did this with a generosity and enthusiasm that touched my heart. Over the years we have formed a close and trusting relationship.

(Sent to me via email from Ruth. Also in case you are not familiar with the people in N.Z. who have invited GesheLa, Ruth and Nyima, here is a letter from Harold explaining how things will work.)

HAROLD'S LETTER (9th June 2005)

Dear Friends,

Since our last communication to you all, Jam Tse Dhargyee Ling has sent a formal letter - re-affirming our invitation to Ven. Geshe Sonam Rinchen, Ruth Sonam and Nyima Gyaltzen to reside in New Zealand. It is clear from Ven. Geshe Sonam Rinchen that a sustainable budget and financial pledges of support, coupled with a clear immigration path are necessary before they are able to fulfil their and our wish to come.

We are hoping to apply for their work permits by the end of June so that we can receive these permits and give Gen. Rinpoche confidence in the process, and our ability to support all of them over the years to come. Although Ven. Geshe Sonam Rinchen and Ruth Sonam have been to New Zealand three times, the maximum length of their visa was for three

months. This time, we will be applying for two year visas for each of them. To do this, amongst other things, we need to prove to the New Zealand Immigration Service that,

- There is a need for their services.
- That we are able to sustain them financially.
- That we are able to accommodate and care for their needs whilst they are in our care.

To make this all possible, we need your assistance, both in the preparation for Gen Rinpoche, Ruth and Nyimas arrival, and sustaining them indefinitely. Preparation wise, the Sonam Foundation requires two things: Sufficient funds in the account for 1. security 2. immigration purposes. Preparation of Gen Rinpoche and Nyima's accommodation (a separate budget for this is being worked on, and available on request). In addition to this, sponsors for immigration, moving, airfares, vehicle and household items are needed

If you are interested in supporting Ven. Geshe Sonam Rinchen, Ruth Sonam and Nyima Gyaltzen's move to New Zealand - and are able to help in any way, it would be good to make this known now. We hope to have sufficient funds in the account by the end of June, or at least before we apply to New Zealand Immigration Service for the work permits

If you are able to assist financially, your pledge or commitment can either be to cover a specific expense or part thereof or on a more general monthly/weekly commitment. Anything, and any amount is sincerely appreciated.

Ben has kindly developed a website: www.sonamfoundation.org. We will post monthly financial reports of the Sonam Foundation to this website. If possible we would like to avoid handling any cash so that the transparency and integrity of the account is guaranteed.

Finally, I would like to introduce myself. My name is Harald von Ahsen and I have agreed to take on the role of acting chairperson within the Sonam Foundation until proper elections are held and a truly elected chairperson has been appointed. My work history includes being a social worker, teacher, psychotherapist, Jeweler, Toilet & Street cleaner and working for a German Development project in Nepal. For the last 15 years I managed and owned various tourism ventures.

I feel honoured to be involved with this most auspicious 'project,' and would also like to offer to provide a rental car free of charge through Wendekreisen Rentals, for at least 10 days throughout New Zealand between April and October, (Other periods are subject to availability,) with any commitment /sponsorship of \$ 15/per week or more to the Sonam Foundation. Each extra 1\$ committed per week will buy you one extra day of hire. This will get you to your favourite teachings....

Thank you all very much. Please, call me, I would really like to talk with everyone about this - 09 810 9328 if you would like to discuss anything.

Harald Von Ahsen
Chairman
Interim Working Group
Sonam Foundation