

Hobart Buddhist Meditation Centre

NEWSLETTER

Including Dorje Ling Retreat Centre
Tasmania

TCDF Newsletter

Winter 2017 edition



2017 retreat audio files now available

The sound files from the 2017 Mahamudra retreat with Zasep Tulku Rinpoche are now available. These files contain the full teachings on Mahamudra which were given at the retreat, as well as meditations led by senior students.

If you attended the retreat, you can obtain a copy for free, or a suggested donation of \$10. If you were not at the retreat, the cost will be \$40.

Please [contact Maria](#) to order your copy and she will send you the download link for the mp3 files, which you can play on your phone or mp3 player.

Our Spiritual Director

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. Born in eastern Tibet in 1948, Acharya Zasep Tulku Rinpoche was recognized at an early age as a reincarnation of Lama Karma Kunchog Tenzin. Since arriving in the west in 1976, Zasep Rinpoche has taught Buddhism in Australia, Canada, the USA, and Mongolia. He is the spiritual director of Gaden for the West, headquartered in Nelson, B.C., as well as of other centres including Dorje Ling Retreat Centre and Hobart Buddhist Meditation Centre. Zasep Rinpoche believes that the precious teachings of Tibetan Buddhism can be made accessible to and meaningful for Westerners in a way that respects the integrity of the teachings. Rinpoche is known for his gentle compassion and good humoured wisdom.

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Above: Lobsang Chokyi Gyaltsen, who wrote the commentary on Mahamudra which was used in these teachings.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The year is certainly in retreat now. At time of writing the temperature outside is a balmy 12 degrees in the warmest part of the day...

Which brings to mind the fact that the 'retreat season' at Dorje Ling has ended for now and our hard-working caretaker can take a well-earned break. We thank him for all the care he has taken to ensure the best possible retreat experiences for all our visitors.

There are some fine testimonials in this newsletter I believe.

This is also the time of year when it gets harder to leave a warm fire or home to go down to our Hobart city centre. The trend in recent months has been for quite good turn-outs every Tuesday evening. I would encourage you to keep dropping in because the effect of sitting with a group is always energising and fruitful.

The longer 'dark' periods are an opportunity for deeper reflection and a less outwardly focussed life. This precious journey should never be taken for granted. It is a brief flash of lightening in the vastness of this universe of space and time. Rather than becoming depressed about the inevitable ending of all our lives we can rejoice in the amazing suchness we all share. Is this all there is? Is the beginningless and endless aspect of mind our natural home? Contemplation and meditation leads to realisation. Continue the practice.

Guy

Program

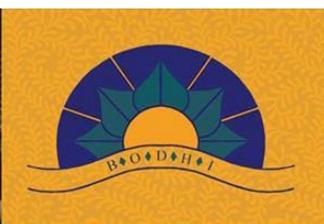
Our meditation and discussion sessions are held every Tuesday between 7.30 and 9.00 pm. Location – Tashi Choling rooms, Floor 2, 73 Liverpool St, Hobart. Go down the laneway to the right of the building, then look for the door at left between the two bamboo pots. Continue upstairs to the second floor. Suggested donation: \$5. All welcome.

Please watch your emails to get updates to our meditation and discussion program, and other events as they are finalised. If you are not on our email list you can join via our website, or email us (see bottom of page).

Tsog dates. Dates based on new moon being day one. Southern hemisphere calendar. Tsog is on Day 10 and Day 25. (See page 6 for explanation of Tsog.)

- *July: Monday 3rd, Tuesday 18th*
- *August: Tuesday 1st, Wednesday 16th Thursday 31st.*
- *September: Friday 29th,*
- *October: Saturday 14, Sunday 29th.*
- *November: Monday 13th, Monday 27th*
- *December: Tuesday 12th and Wednesday 27th*

ABOUT TSOG: www.tashicholing.net/hobart. Click on the "Tsog" tab.



Buddhist NGO supports overseas development projects

BODHI Australia is an NGO which has been providing practical help to countries such as India, Bangladesh, Thailand and Tibet since 1989.

Some of BODHI's projects include education support for the descendants of refugees, scholarships for underprivileged children, providing IT training to students, providing creche facilities and women's health support. The group has completed around 50 similar projects.

BODHI also works tirelessly in raising awareness of issues such as injustice, climate change, and the natural

environment (such as the effect of palm oil products on orangutan populations).

BODHI stands for Benevolent Organisation for Development, Health and Insight. It is one of the first ever Buddhist-

influenced NGOs in the world. The Buddhist concept of "bodhicitta" is the wish to be of benefit to all beings. Loving kindness should be extended to all forms of life, including people of every race, faith, ethnicity, status or caste. Many practitioners live their own lives deeply influenced by bodhicitta, but BODHI gives us the opportunity to assist with practical and organised expressions of bodhicitta which actively work in the areas of poverty relief, poverty prevention, justice, climate change, inequality, all forms of discrimination, female education and empowerment, and similar issues.

We can do far more as a collective group than we can ever hope to achieve as individuals. See how you can assist in the work of BODHI by visiting their website at www.bodhi-australia.com.

Tilopa's Mahamudra teaching to Naropa

Homage to the Eighty Four Mahasiddhas!
Homage to Mahamudra!
Homage to the Vajra Dakini!

Mahamudra cannot be taught. But most intelligent
Naropa,
Since you have undergone rigorous austerity,
With forbearance in suffering and with devotion to your
Guru,
Blessed One, take this secret instruction to heart.

Is space anywhere supported? Upon what does it rest?
Like space, Mahamudra is dependant upon nothing;
Relax and settle in the continuum of unalloyed purity,
And, your bonds loosening, release is certain.

Gazing intently into the empty sky, vision ceases;
Likewise, when mind gazes into mind itself,
The train of discursive and conceptual thought ends
And supreme enlightenment is gained.

Like the morning mist that dissolves into thin air,
Going nowhere but ceasing to be,
Waves of conceptualization, all the mind's creation,
dissolve,
When you behold your mind's true nature.

Pure space has neither colour nor shape
And it cannot be stained either black or white;
So also, mind's essence is beyond both colour and shape
And it cannot be sullied by black or white deeds.

The darkness of a thousand aeons is powerless
To dim the crystal clarity of the sun's heart;
And likewise, aeons of samsara have no power
To veil the clear light of the mind's essence.

Although space has been designated "empty",
In reality it is inexpressible;
Although the nature of mind is called "clear light",
Its every ascription is baseless verbal fiction.

The mind's original nature is like space;
It pervades and embraces all things under the sun.

Be still and stay relaxed in genuine ease,
Be quiet and let sound reverberate as an echo,
Keep your mind silent and watch the ending of all
worlds.

The body is essentially empty like the stem of a reed,
And the mind, like pure space, utterly transcends the
world of thought:
Relax into your intrinsic nature with neither abandon nor
control -
Mind with no objective is Mahamudra -
And, with practice perfected, supreme enlightenment is
gained.

The clear light of Mahamudra cannot be revealed
By the canonical scriptures or metaphysical treatises
Of the Mantravada, the Paramitas or the Tripitaka;
The clear light is veiled by concepts and ideals.

By harbouring rigid precepts the true samaya is impaired,
But with cessation of mental activity all fixed notions
subside;
When the swell of the ocean is at one with its peaceful
depths,
When mind never strays from indeterminate, non-
conceptual truth,
The unbroken samaya is a lamp lit in spiritual darkness.

Free of intellectual conceits, disavowing dogmatic
principles,
The truth of every school and scripture is revealed.

Absorbed in Mahamudra, you are free from the prison of
samsara;
Poised in Mahamudra, guilt and negativity are
consumed;
And as master of Mahamudra you are the light of the
Doctrine.

The fool in his ignorance, disdainning Mahamudra,
Knows nothing but struggle in the flood of samsara.
Have compassion for those who suffer constant anxiety!
Sick of unrelenting pain and desiring release, adhere to a
master,
For when his blessing touches your heart, the mind is
liberated.

KYE HO! Listen with joy!
Investment in samsara is futile; it is the cause of every
anxiety.
Since worldly involvement is pointless, seek the heart of
reality!

In the transcending of mind's dualities is Supreme vision;
In a still and silent mind is Supreme Meditation;
In spontaneity is Supreme Activity;
And when all hopes and fears have died, the Goal is
reached.

Beyond all mental images the mind is naturally clear:
Follow no path to follow the path of the Buddhas;
Employ no technique to gain supreme enlightenment.

KYE MA! Listen with sympathy!
With insight into your sorry worldly predicament,
Realising that nothing can last, that all is as dreamlike
illusion,
Meaningless illusion provoking frustration and boredom,
Turn around and abandon your mundane pursuits.

Cut away involvement with your homeland and friends

And meditate alone in a
forest or mountain retreat;
Exist there in a state of non-
meditation
And attaining no-
attainment, you attain
Mahamudra.

A tree spreads its branches
and puts forth leaves,
But when its root is cut its
foliage withers;
So too, when the root of the
mind is severed,
The branches of the tree of
samsara die

A single lamp dispels the
darkness of a thousand
aeons;
Likewise, a single flash of
the mind's clear light
Erases aeons of karmic
conditioning and spiritual
blindness.

KYE HO! Listen with joy!
The truth beyond mind
cannot be grasped by any
faculty of mind;
The meaning of non-action
cannot be understood in
compulsive activity;
To realise the meaning of
non-action and beyond mind,
Cut the mind at its root and rest in naked awareness.

Allow the muddy waters of mental activity to clear;
Refrain from both positive and negative projection -
leave appearances alone:
The phenomenal world, without addition or subtraction,
is Mahamudra.

The unborn omnipresent base dissolves your impulses
and delusions:
Do not be conceited or calculating but rest in the unborn
essence
And let all conceptions of yourself and the universe melt
away.

The highest vision opens every gate;
The highest meditation plumbs the infinite depths;
The highest activity is ungoverned yet decisive;
And the highest goal is ordinary being devoid of hope
and fear.

At first your karma is like a river falling through a gorge;
In mid-course it flows like a gently meandering River
Ganga;



Above: Tilopa thangka

And finally, as a river becomes
one with the ocean,
It ends in consummation like the
meeting of mother and son.

If the mind is dull and you
are unable to practice these
instructions,
Retaining essential breath and
expelling the sap of awareness,
Practising fixed gazes - methods
of focussing the mind,
Discipline yourself until the state
of total awareness abides.

When serving a *karmamudra*, the
pure awareness
of bliss and emptiness will arise:
Composed in a blessed union of
insight and means,
Slowly send down, retain and
draw back up the bodhichitta,
And conducting it to the source,
saturate the entire body.
But only if lust and attachment
are absent will that awareness
arise.

Then gaining long-life and
eternal youth, waxing like the
moon,
Radiant and clear, with the
strength of a lion,
You will quickly gain mundane
power and supreme enlightenment.

May this pith instruction in Mahamudra
Remain in the hearts of fortunate beings.

*Colophon: Tilopa's Mahamudra Instruction to Naropa in
twenty Eight Verses was transmitted by the Great Guru and
Mahasiddha Tilopa to the Kashmiri Pandit, Sage and Siddha,
Naropa, near the banks of the River Ganga upon the completion
of his Twelve Austerities. Naropa transmitted the teaching
in Sanskrit in the form of twenty eight verses to the great
Tibetan translator Mar pa Chos kyi blos gros, who made a free
translation of it at his village of Pulahari on the Tibet - Bhutan
border.*

*This text is contained in the collection of Mahamudra
instruction called the Do ha mdzod brgyad ces bya ba Phyang
rgya chen po'i man ngag gsal bar ston pa'i gzhung, which
is printed at the Gyalwa Karmapa's monastery at Rumtek,
Sikkim. The Tibetan title is Phyang rgya chen po'i man ngag, or
Phyang rgya chen po rdo rje'i tsig rkang nyi shu rtsa brgyad pa.*

*This translation into English has been done by Kunzang Tenzin
in 1977, after transmission of the oral teaching by Khamtrul
Rinpoche in Tashi Jong, Kangra Valley, India.*

Zen retreat report

During the first week of April, we held a six day sesshin at Dorje Ling with Zen Master Doko-san.

Doko-san is the Abbot of Dochu-an Zen temple in Byron Bay, and during the last two years has regularly been bringing the teachings to Tasmania.

This was the first retreat with Doko-san at Dorje-Ling, and certainly won't be the last. In fact the final words of the retreat were 'next time lets make it ten days up here'.

There were twenty of us on this retreat, with a number of people having experienced their first stay at Dorje Ling, all of whom were very much supported by the handful of people who are completely 'old hand' up there. The combination of rustic huts dispersed through the bush and the scattered tents set the tone of a week dropping into pure simplicity.

We all left with a great sense of gratefulness. Dorje Ling is infused with its history of great teachers and practitioners. It was a gift to meet the caretaker and have his gentle background support. And a gift to simply be on that piece of land in a valley that clearly holds its own. This, combined with Doko-san's masterful teachings shaped a very potent retreat.

If you are interested in further events with Doko-san and would like to be added to the mailing list, please email Maddy or Justine [at silentzenretreats@gmail.com](mailto:silentzenretreats@gmail.com).

Maddy

REFLECTING ON DOKO'S RECENT RETREAT

Getting out of a warm sleeping bag into the chill pre-dawn darkness, donning a head torch and wandering in silence with others, like so many fireflies, towards the beacon of the Gomba – surely we're bonkers! But no...

Wake up!

Here, Now, Open.

This really is it.

This really is all.

The no-nonsense enthusiasm and clarity that Doko uses to make real the Buddha's teaching is, quite simply, a delight. This Aussie Zen dude Rocks! I always get a sense with Doko that he can't help but tell it like it is. So, although he puts his teacher's hat on when he sits his cushion, he seems equally comfortable to take it off and let us into some of the secrets of being a teacher. Like the way we keep trying to interpret the teachings through our crazy personality filters, or our gender conditioning, or the traps inherent in the Western mindset. It feels like he trusts us enough to talk unscripted from the heart of

his personal experience. Just genuine straight talk that gets under our self-protective guards.

Doko clearly has a calling to teach the dharma. Among a number of gems over the 5 days he conveyed the real possibility for each of us to lose the fetters of our egoic self-importance, to let go of our attachment to security in rites and rituals, and gave us confidence in our ability to apply ourselves and truly flow with this life (YAY!).

On this retreat I also got an insight into the breadth of his training beyond the traditional way of Zen through his seamless integration of Tibetan Buddhist wisdom into his dharma talks. Given the setting at Dorje Ling this seemed so appropriate and respectful toward the many practitioners who have held this sacred space over the years.

So to sum up..... top stuff! Beautifully supported by our own gorgeous Maddy, two inspirational monks and Justine (though how she gracefully navigates the balance between being Doko's wife, retreat co-ordinator and student is baffling to me), and the amazing Richard who far exceeded our expectations of retreat cooking. The caretaker, as always, was a quiet presence supporting us all so it was a treat to amuse him with the amount of work these silent Zen types got through. Once again, it was lovely to participate in giving dana to the land, both as a way of practicing the teachings and as a gift to the ongoing work of Dorje Ling. Hopefully we can sit together again in this beautiful place.

And now – onward into ever-present spaciousness.

Jill

ZEN AT DORJE LING

What a place
for training
in moving towards what is.
Food prepared by cook
with lifelong passion for exactly that.
Meditation space firmly held
by monks
and dedicated practitioners.
Doko teaching gentle, also
relentless focus on
what's essential.
Plenty of humour too.
What a treat
this retreat.

~ Anon.

Easter working bee report

Fifteen wonderful people came along to our Bee this Easter, and enjoyed some good company along with some hard work.

A variety of small jobs were undertaken such as wood splitting, track work, gardening, de-stilling, shed tidying and re-arranging, and rubbish removal. A small heater was moved down to the Villa and given a coat of black paint. Damien came with his tractor and assisted in moving a large stone into place for the memorial walk, and two large logs ready for the rebuilding of the bridge to the dam.

Some people took time out to join in the Valley's harvest festival and thoroughly enjoyed the time.

As usual we shared cooking duties and managed to knock together some excellent gourmet meals between the work. Thanks to all who attended and helped us to keep the Centre in great condition!

Maria Grist



Sound & Silence retreat report

The second annual Sound & Silence retreat (March 25 - 28) drew ten participants into the forests and ambience of Dorje Ling to spend up to three days with Satyamo and Jera, exploring sound and music combined with times of mindful silence. This combination, within the energy field that Dorje Ling has, creates a special awareness and sensitivity of both oneself and the external world, that is hard to describe.

The Sound & Silence practices are based on classical yoga with an emphasis on Nada Yoga (sound vibration), with the addition of natural voice-opening and harmony singing, that brings a wonderful connection between people, a release of energy and joy of life.

The daily 'sharing circle' provided a supportive space for people to express whatever was arising for them, while the 'sound bath' on the final evening was a beautiful and special event where each person had the experience of receiving healing through sound vibration, and of giving that to others.

Times of silence are so precious in this noisy world...time to become sensitised to the sounds of nature and every moment of being alive and breathing, sensitive to the inner self. The twelve people who gathered to create the Sound & Silence community this March found themselves becoming more and more 'tuned in', more

open and aware as the time went by, thus building personal reserves of this inner space that can then be drawn upon as a resource when needed 'out there in the world'... the inner silence that is so restful.

Sound & Silence is intended as an ongoing annual event. In 2018, Jera and Satyamo are planning to run this beautiful retreat for up to five days. If you would like to find out more about Sound & Silence or similar events, please email Satyamo at yogasoundsong@gmail.com

OM - OM - OM

Satyamo



Threads Acro FlyAway Retreat

For the second year, we made our way to Dorje Ling to share, play, connect, heal, train and move. Our days were filled with high energy acroyoga and acrobatics training, yoga, natural movement, and fun times enjoying the slack lines and wobbly pontoons on the water. The high-energy times were complemented with healing sessions of mindfulness, massage and breath work.

On the seventh day, we welcomed the community of Lorinna and encouraged our students to share some of what they had learned with the children and keen adults. The crew from a local natural building workshop came as well and there was lots of sharing and teaching happening under the tent until dinner time.

At our sharing circle during the closing ceremony, many beautiful memories were shared of personal breakthroughs, insights and the love of the support shared amongst the new community. The energy and spirit of Dorje Ling and the land was an ever-present reminder for everyone to trust in the connections we shared daily without distractions from the 'outside' world.

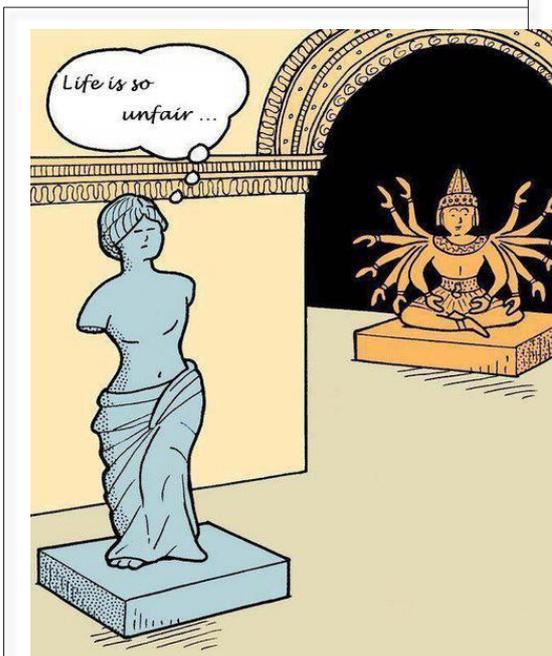
Our food was prepared by an amazing crew of local Lorinna folk with help from visiting volunteers. Each meal was simply stunning and delicious and so appreciated by everyone. The care and love poured into the food nourished us throughout the retreat.

We feel everything progressed quite smoothly, apart from the challenges presented by the cold, windy and unpredictable weather.

Cold weather is an added challenge to keep muscles warm, but is all part of the Tasmanian experience.

We enjoyed our time at Dorje Ling and look forward to creating more happy memories in the future!

Ebony

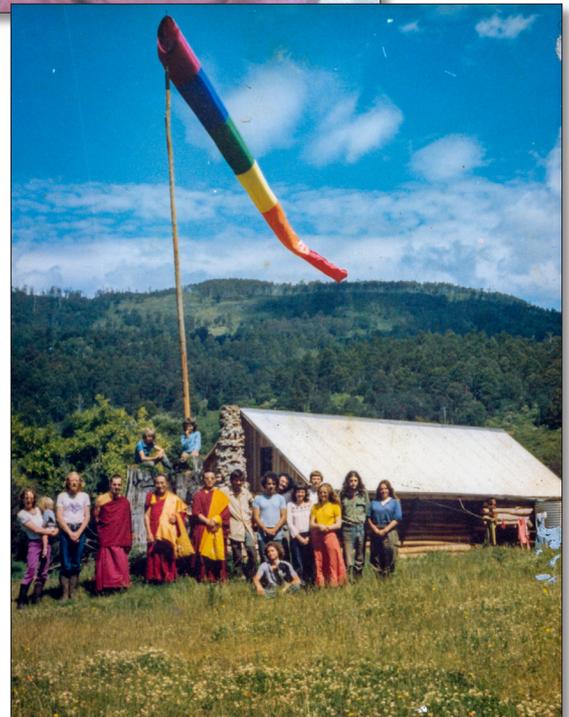


History Spot

Photos from the early days at Illusion Farm (which was later renamed Dorje Ling Retreat Centre). Thanks to Arwen McCutcheon for these wonderful photos!



Left: Zasep Tulku Rinpoche.



Tashi Choling Dharma Foundation Inc.

Tashi Choling Dharma Foundation Inc. is a non-profit incorporated association based in Tasmania, Australia.

Our Spiritual Director is Zasep Tulku Rinpoche.

TCDF Inc. aims to ensure the continuity of the study and practice of buddhadharma through providing teachers, courses and facilities, to foster open communication amongst all spiritual traditions, and to bring benefit to others through providing opportunities for the development of wisdom and compassion.

We have two main thrusts: Hobart Buddhist Meditation Centre (running in Hobart since 1982) and Dorje Ling Retreat Centre (running at Lorinna, Tasmania since 1977, and purchased by us in 2002).

You can find out more about Tashi Choling at www.tashicholing.net



*2017 committee.
Charles and Jill missing from this photo.*

Become a member

Memberships are the lifeblood of our organisation.

You can become a member in two ways:

- Become a regular member: \$50 per year.
- Donate to Dorje Ling Retreat Centre and automatically become a member.

To join, go to our [web site](http://www.tashicholing.net).



We also deeply appreciate any practical help that you can give to our Retreat Centre at Lorinna. Jobs may vary from large (e.g. caretaking or building projects) through to small (e.g. gardening or cleaning).

You can also help us by supporting our fundraising ventures, serving on our committee, making a bequest, or simply attending retreats or coming along to our regular meditation meetings in Hobart on Tuesday evenings (see p. 2).

We thank Senator Andrew Wilkie for his kind assistance with printing this newsletter.

Committee 2017

Guy Turnbull – President
Kate MacNicol – Vice President
Madhu Lilley – Secretary
George Ramm – Treasurer
Roger MacLennan – Public Officer
Jill Wright, Charles Chadwick, Maria Grist, John Grist – General Committee

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