

Tsadra Foundation

final report for Danielle Blouin

Phase two of Sopa Choling Three Year Retreat,

Nova Scotia, Canada

January 1st to July 25th 2015

As was said in the first report for Phase 2, repeating the cycles of Vajrayogini and Chakrasamvara was very good because it was done this time according to a different tradition, and with a deepened personal experience. Please see the attached schedule for details. Vajrayogini was the traditional practice, while Chakrasamvara was done according to Karma Chagme's instructions when previously, I had followed the Taranatha tradition.

As head choppon, the group practice periods were more challenging, and the learning even greater. On top of having to study and learn the various roles in a short time, I had to prepare the many ritual components, set up the elaborate shrines, and was often called on to answer questions from the daily choppons and give feedbacks. I am grateful for the occasion it was to develop the expertise and the confidence that comes with it. More specifically, having performed by myself a fire offering earlier, I ended up also coordinating the first of these programs, which was a new experience. I feel, and it was my initial reason to take on this job, that I can now organize, supervise and choppon pretty much any practice our sangha has to offer, and expect to be called to help at my local center.

My personal difficulties were not so much with the practices but with learning to manage my energy in order to make the most of the retreat time and avoid getting sick. This is something I discovered in Phase 1, so this time, with the support of our Drukpon, the Dekyong and the group, I learned when to stop and was able to maintain a more healthy balance. However at one point an infection I had last summer came back (see report for first part of Phase 2). So I had to go out to consult a doctor, have

tests done, etc. Each four times was for half a day only so I didn't find it had a negative impact on my practice.

At Sopa Choling the decision to go out to consult a doctor when sick is left to the retreatant. I appreciate the group situation and the richness of rubbing against each other's confused or enlightened states of mind, and it's been helpful in the past to have that choice. However, in the case of this illness I found it was too much expected that I would consult. It didn't help my timid attempt to stay with the illness and include it in my practice, as recommended in the Mahamudra instructions. Eventually I decided not to pursue the tests anymore and focused on these. The results were astonishing and constitute a turning point on my path. Making that decision had a lot to do with a new found confidence that developed with the practices.

To summarize, it was a year very rich in challenges, new realizations and accomplishments, and I feel the results meet the expectations Tsadra Foundation has expressed in our contract.

Fourth Recitation

12/2-9	65-72	Slight emphasis on vase breathing
12/5	68	T3 Mahakala Feast
12/6	69	Sojong, Sadhana of Mahamudra
12/9-16	72-79	Greater emphasis on vase breathing
12/10	73	T3 Werma practice
12/15	78	1:00-4:45 Vajrayogini feast prep/tormas*
12/16	79	T2-3 Vajrayogini feast

Fifth Recitation

12/16-23	79-86	Individual Practice
12/21	84	Sojong, Sadhana of Mahamudra
12/23-1/6	86-100	T2-3 Group Mahamudra Practice
12/30	93	1:00-4:45 Chakrasamvara feast prep/tormas*
12/31	94	T2-3 Chakrasamvara feast
1/3	97	T3 Mahakala Feast
1/4	98	Sojong, Sadhana of Mahamudra

*Due to the amount of preparations for the Drupchö/Self Abhisheka and Fire Puja, feast prep will commence 1:00 and continue until 4:45. The torma chief will announce a 15 minute tea and bathroom break. If you have lunch clean-up, please come as quickly as you can to join the group.

Group Practice

<u>No feasts or other practices during the next 22 days</u>		
1/6 prep day	1/6-1/13	
1/7 - 1/13	1/13-1/20	100-106 Drupchö
1/14 - 1/20	1/20-1/27	107-113 Self-Abhisheka
	1/20	114 Sojong, Sadhana of Mahamudra

Fire Puja

1/21	1/21-1/28	114 Fire Puja Set up
1/21 - 1/28	1/28-1/29	115-121 Fire Puja
1/28	1/29-1/29	121 Final Feast
1/29	1/29-1/29	122 Fire Puja take down
		Chakrasamvara Ghopons set-up shrine

Secret Practice

1/29	123	Chakrasamvara Feast
		T-4 Secret Practice
1/29-3/9	123-162 +4	Secret Practice
	123-131	1st Recitation, one day each stage
2/2	127	T3 Mahakala Feast
2/3	128	Sojong, Sadhana of Mahamudra
2/6-2/10	131-135	2nd Recitation
2/7	132	Werma Feast
2/10-2/22	135-147	3rd Recitation, 3 days each
2/13	139	T3 Vajrayogini feast prep/tormas
2/14	140	T2-3 Vajrayogini Feast
2/18	144	Sojong, Sadhana of Mahamudra
2/19	145	Shambhala Day
2/22-3/1	147-154	T4 4th Recitation
3/1-3/9	154-162	T4 5th Recitation

PRACTICE SCHEDULE
PHASE 2
MARCH TO JULY 2015

<u>Date</u>	<u>Day</u>	
3/4	157	Milarepa Day, No Mahakala Feast
3/5	158	Sojong

Outer Chakrasamvara Practice, 90 days

3/8-6/5	161-250	Chakrasamvara Outer practice
3/8	161	T1 Individual Vajrayogini Feast, breakfast delay 1 hour
		T2 Chakrasamvara preparations
		T3 VFS Outer Chakrasamvara Group Practice
3/9	162	T3 Werma <i>practice</i>
3/14	167	T3 Vajrayogini Feast Prep
3/15	168	T2-3 Vajrayogini Feast
3/20	173	Sojong
3/28	181	T3 Chakrasamvara Feast Prep
3/29	182	T2-3 Chakrasamvara Feast
4/3	187	T3 Mahakala Feast
4/4	188	Sojong
		Trungpa Rinpoche Parinirvana
4/8	192	T3 Werma
4/13	197	T3 Vjrayogini Feast Prep
4/14	198	T2-3 Vajrayogini Feast
4/18	202	Sojong
4/27	211	T3 Chakrasamvara Feast Prep
4/28	212	T2-3 Chakrasamvara Feast
5/3	217	T3 Mahakala Feast
5/4	218	Sojong
5/8	222	T3 Werma
5/12	226	T3 Vajrayogini Feast Prep
5/13	227	T2-3 Vajrayogini Feast
5/18	232	Sojong
5/27	241	T3 Chakrasamvara Feast Prep
5/28	242	T2-3 Chakrasamvara Feast
6/1	246	T3 Mahakala Feast
6/2	247	Sojong ~ <i>Vaishaka day</i>

Group Practice 30 Days

No additional feasts during group practice

6/6-6/16	251-261	Inner Practice (optional sand mandala)
6/16	261	Sojong
6/17	262	Fire Offering Set-up
6/18-6/22	263-267	Fire Offering
6/21	266	Summer Solstice
6/23	268	Fire Offering Take Down
6/24-7/3	269-278	Secret Practice
7/2	277	Sojong

Very Secret Practice 19 Days

7/4-7/22	279-297	T1 VFS Very Secret Practice
7/5	280	T3 Werma
7/10	285	T3 Vajrayogini Feast Prep
7/11	286	T2-3 Vajrayogini Feast
7/16	291	Sojong
7/19 ²²	297	T1 VLS Very Secret Practice T2 (T3 as necessary) Chakrasamvara Feast Prep Elaborate Chakrasamvara Feast
7/23-7/24	298-299	No Thuns Clean-up Pack-up Rest
7/25	300	Benefactor Appreciation Circle Gate Opens