

IVONNE PRIETO ROSE
Contemplative Scholarship
2014 Year End Report

To: Anthony Chapman, Director of Contemplative Scholarships

Daily Retreat Schedule

4:30am – 6:00am Dawn session | 6:00am Confession of Downfalls, Chabtor & Riwo Sang Cho
8:00am – 11:00am Morning session | 2:00pm – 3:30 pm Afternoon session | 3:30pm Vajrakilaya
4:15pm Mahakala & Sur Cho 7:00pm – 8:30 pm Evening session | 8:30pm Chöd

Monthly Practice Duty Rotation

Cloister retreatants rotate through the following duties each month of the Tibetan calendar:

Vajra Master [dorje lopon]

Shrine Master [chopon]

Chant Leader [umze]

Head Drummer [ngapon]

2014 Retreat Practice Schedule

	begin	end
Konchog Chidu: Four Activities	<i>Tue, 31-Dec-2013</i>	Sat, 4-Jan-2014
Konchog Chidu: Long Life Practice	Sun, 5-Jan-2014	Sun, 12-Jan-2014
Seven Points of Mind Training	Sun, 12-Jan-2014	Tue, 28-Jan-2014
Mahamudra Shamatha	Tue, 28-Jan-2014	Thu, 13-Feb-2014
Mahamudra Vipashyana	Thu, 13-Feb-2014	Sat, 1-Mar-2014
Vajrayogini :- outer, inner , secret, mandala, fire offering	Sat, 1-Mar-2014	Fri, 12-Sep-2014
Chakrasamvara:- Outer, inner, secret, fire offering	Fri, 12-Sep-2014	<i>Tue, 10-Feb-2015</i>

Accounting Statement

I certify that I used my 2014 grant funds for the purposes stated in my contract with Tsadra Foundation.

Contract Activity Statement

I certify that I devoted all of my time uninterruptedly since the start of retreat on February 25, 2013 to date to contemplative practice as defined in my contract with Tsadra Foundation.

Personal Statement

I am happy to report that 2014 was largely uneventful regarding the boundary skirmishes that marked the first year of retreat at Vajra Vidya. When Christopher and I laid our concerns before Khenpos Lobsang and Jigme, they were understanding and supportive, and made significant changes.

That is not to say that no disturbances arose. But thankfully, the lapses were fewer, and did not rise to the disruptive level of the first six months of retreat. So, I focus on fostering a conducive inner space for practice, while not getting waylaid by external conditions. A significant support is my daily diet of prostrations: I completed a second set of 111,111 on February 23 and a third set on November 26. I aspire to continue for as long as sustainable.

Without question, the practice highlight of the year was Vajrayogini, spanning over six months from early March to mid-September. I do best with stable long-term routines, so the possibility for depth was invaluable for me. I fulfilled the 400,000 mantra requirement for the outer practice, and exceeded the 1,600,000 accumulation for inner and secret phases. We are now midway into Chakrasamvara practice. I reached the 400,000 requirement for the essence mantra and am approaching the 700,000 allotted for the short mantra. The development of my practice skills and experiences feels modest, yet steady and sure. To me, this is both reassuring and motivating.

At the tail end of Vajrayogini Inner Practice, we were blessed with a rare two-week visit from Kyabje Thrangu Rinpoche, who conferred Chakrasamvara, Gyalwa Gyatso, Amitabha, and White Tara empowerments. His chopon, Lobsang Dorje, upheld a sterling standard of discipline, service, and boundaries throughout. Christopher and I were exhilarated to benefit from his hearty work ethic and encouragement to stretch to new heights. In a short time, we learned a great deal.

During the last year, Christopher and I forged deep, positive connections with Khenpos Lobsang and Jigme, and strong friendships with the cooks, both of them mature and admirable practitioners. The six off-site participants practice at home, most on a part-time basis. We don't see them often, but enjoy good friendships with them. The relationship with our two fellow cloister retreatants, though somewhat improved, remains challenging. Nevertheless, the situation gifts me ample opportunity to nurture such vital qualities as forgiveness, compassion, insight, and patience—towards others, and also myself. I value the enduring impact of these lessons, even preferring my trials, at times, to the jolly camaraderie I had (perhaps naively) envisioned as a given in long retreat.

Overall, I would say my task is much the same as ever: accepting the discomforts of not having all I would like, while rejoicing in the advantages available. Retreat offers me signal conditions for this training. With the passage of time and improved clarity on boundaries—and most importantly, the deeper practice this enabled—the process feels more easeful. My experience is further whetting my appetite for individual retreat to delve deeper into contemplative practice.

Onwards!