

Yeshe Rabsal  
KTC Monastery  
245 Sheafe Road  
Wappingers Falls  
New York

June 19<sup>th</sup> 2015

Tsadra Foundation

Dear Tsadra Foundation,

The following is a final report as requested by yourselves for the completion of my three year retreat.

### i) Activity Summary

#### Daily Schedule

4am	Morning Thun – including ngndro practices and gyuncher commitments, followed by Tunzhi and Chotor.
6am	Morning Tsokpa – Group chanting in the shrine room.
8am	Breakfast
8.20am	1 <sup>st</sup> Thun – Yidam practice followed by Trulkhor practice as a group in the yoga room.
12.00 – 2.00	Lunch
2pm	2 <sup>nd</sup> Thun – Yidam practice in room
4.30	Evening Protector practices, chanted as a group in shrine room.
5.45	Dinner
6 – 9.30pm	3 <sup>rd</sup> Thun – Yidam practice followed by Cho and Dewachen monlam in room.

#### Deity Practices

The following is a list of practices that we participated in in chronological order:

Dorje Purbha – 3 weeks

The Four Common Preliminaries – 1 month

The four Un-common Preliminaries - 5 months

Lhadrup practices: Marpa, Milarepa, Gampopa and Karma Pakshi – 3 months

Meditation Practices: Shinay, Lhatong, Mind Training and Mahamudra – 6 weeks

Dorje Phagmo Yidam practice – 6 months

The Six Yogas of Naropa – 4 months

Khorlo Demchog Yidam practice – 3 months

Gyalwa Gyamtso Yidam practice – 3 months

Cho Tsog – 1 month

Lha Zhi – 1 month

Gyu De Nga yidam practice – 6 months

Mahakhala protector practice – 1 month

Amithabha deity practice – 3 weeks

White Tara deity practice – 3 weeks

## ii) Appraisal of Retreat

The three year retreat was a particularly challenging experience for me in many ways.

In regards to relating to the practices themselves, I feel that often it was not easy to be able to focus my mind directly towards the deities as I had hoped to before retreat. This was partly due to the energy that the practices arose in me which often left me not knowing how to control my habitual thought patterns. This made it difficult for me to focus my mind on the deity practices. Through consultation with Lama Norlha Rinpoche I found it was necessary to rely more heavily on recognizing mind's essence as the means to working with the energies and thought patterns and, in doing so relating with the deity through this recognition.

As retreat progressed I found this to be the main form of my practice which enabled me to bring together more and more the 'fuel-for-practice' that is the emotions which arise in daily living situations of a group retreat, with the deity practice of thun times and the recognizing of the inherent essence of all experience, worldly or spiritual, that is the nature of mind.

With regards to the group living aspect of retreat, this I can also say was often very challenging for me. I found that the dynamic of group living under a retreat environment exposed a rawness of emotional sensitivity that I was previously unaware of. This made for some uncomfortable relationships at times which over the course of the three-and-a-half years forced me to continually evaluate my interactions with others and in particular in how I react to difficult circumstances. This was a painful lesson for me of learning to relinquish my deeply rooted desire to consciously and sub-consciously influence situations in an attempt to try to alleviate my own dissatisfaction. In short, this meant looking to my own mind as the cause of my suffering as opposed to the external situation. I found that the extent to which I would like to 'draw the line' on this fundamental truth of Buddhism was continually being questioned in the face of what seemed to be very unreasonable circumstances which, in retrospect was most often just my own small-mindedness. I also found that the more that I was able to take ownership of my own discomfort, the more that I was able to communicate reasonably with that outside of me that was in-fact, unreasonable.

## iii) Looking to the Future

I feel that the impact of retreat upon myself is a very deep one. In the time since finishing retreat – almost one month now – it has been very encouraging to me to see how I am able to relate to others in a much more open-hearted way. This is most notable in encounters which once I might have taken personally or been offended, where now I am able to laugh or smile and to not take myself so seriously. I feel that I am also able to be much more present in the moment so that how I communicate is less contrived and more genuine and that I am much more aware of where I might be trying to impose myself on situations.

It can seem that such changes are on a very subtle level and may not be of much benefit in such a material world as we are in today. For me though I feel that such subtle changes are evidence of the fruit of spiritual practice and for this I am truly grateful. And I do believe that such qualities as these do have a near-and-far reaching effect on all those around us. It might be comparable to a truck which once was in much need of servicing which has since been somewhat taken to pieces and cleaned and repaired and so now pumps out less and less pollution in to the atmosphere. And of course there is still much more to do in this fashion as this is my on-going practice and in reality, the road starts here.

Practically speaking, my journey is set to continue at KTC Monastery under the guidance and blessings of my root lama, Lama Norlha Rinpoche. He has suggested already that I will be helping to take care of the new monastery building, the Meitrefya Centre which is nearing completion. I am very happy to help Rinpoche in whatever capacity I am able to as I feel completely indebted to him for his kindness towards me and that he knows what is best for me. In doing so I hope that I will

benefit beings as much as I am able to and that I deepen my own practice also.

iv) Usage of Funds

I can confirm that the scholarship funds allocated to me for the purpose of retreat were used as set forth in the terms of the agreement.

I hope that information contained within this final report is sufficient for your needs. Please let me know if you require further information and I will be happy to help.

I would like to take this opportunity once again to thank Tsadra Foundation for your kind support of me and those like me on this spiritual path. To think that such a charitable organisation exists amidst what can seem like such unfavourable conditions must truly be the Buddhas' blessings!

Yours very gratefully,

Yeshe Rabsal  
(Kevin Chowings)