

Anthony Chapman
Director of Contemplative Scholarship
Tsadra Foundation
PO Box 20192
New York, NY
U.S.A.

June 17th, 2015

RE: Contemplative Scholarship Grant.

Dear Mr. Chapman

I have successfully completed all aspects of the curriculum for the three and a half year retreat program. The retreat was the most important spiritual journey of my life. I'm eternally grateful and thankful to Tsadra foundation for the grant, which made it possible for me to practice these profound teachings and I'm determined to continue on the path and I hope to benefit sentient beings.

The following is the daily Schedule for the final grant period.

4:00am	Ngondro and Prostrations and Gyunchir
5:35am	Chutor Offerings
6:00am - 8:00am	Morning Tsokpa (Prayers)
8:00am - 8:20am	Breakfast
8:20am - 11:00am	Practice Session 1 and Gyunchir
11:00am – 12:00 noon	Trulkor and Gyunchir
12:00 - 2:00pm	Lunch prayers , Lunch and Work period /Tibetan Lessons or Free time
2:00 – 5:00pm	Practice Session 2 and Gyunchir
5:00 - 6:30pm	Evening Tsokpa (Prayers)
6:30 - 6:45	Dinner
6:45 – 9:00	Practice Session 3 and Gyunchir
9:00 - 9:30	Concluding Rituals, Chod and Concluding Prayers

Monthly practice schedule:

The following daily practices were completed this year for the final grant period labeled practice Session 1, 2, and 3 above.

August 2014 – Feb 2015: Gyu de Nga

March 2015 – March 2015: Bernachen- Tsendring,

March 2015 – April 2015: Amitabha ,

April 2015 – May 2015: White Tara

Appraisal of the Retreat, its strengths and weakness:

Strengths:

- The curriculum of the Three year retreat provides the complete teachings from beginning to end the whole vision of the lineage, and all the practices the lineage offers. As the retreat progresses, each succeeding practice depends on experiential understanding gradually gained in the practices that came before, so we are able develop a very solid basis for Dharma practice.

-The retreat provides the best condition to develop our meditations skills and to become familiar with our minds, our thoughts, our neurosis and the insight to our wisdom. In the retreat all our habitual emotions, thoughts and our human interactions are magnified –Anger, hate, envy, fear, pride , love, joy compassion etc.. And having the awareness and understanding to the nature of our minds, we are able to apply the tools provided by the profound teachings, and have the option to be “responsive” rather than be “reactive”. As a result we are able genuinely cultivate bodhicitta and our intention becomes stronger to benefit sentient beings as we have an experiential understanding of our habitual emotions and ego clinging.

-Most importantly, had the opportunity in this life time to meet a genuine teacher lama Norlha Rinpoche who has the whole lineage transmission and who is an perfect example of the wisdom he teaches, **and also the generosity of my benefactor Tsadra Foundation who provided me with the sponsorship and gave me the opportunity to be able to practice Dharma and to build a strong foundation and motivation to benefit sentient beings**

Weaknesses:

-Although the curriculum of each practice has a given allotted time in the retreat, I wish we could spend more time with each practice. Three years felt too short and went by too fast.

-Had more time to learn the Tibetan language more extensively.

How has the retreat prepared me to benefit others and have a positive impact in the world after the retreat.

-Before I did the three retreat I encountered the most valuable lesson of impermanence, when my mother suddenly passed away when she was only 50 years old, I realized then the futility of this life and I intensely questioned the real purpose of our existence in this transient life and realized the importance of having an altruistic motivation to benefit others. And although I had a strong affinity from a young age to help sentient beings, I did not have the skills that the curriculum of the retreat provides.

-Through study, reflection, meditation, practice and the blessing of the lineage, the retreat provides a clear insight into the nature of mind, the confusion and the suffering and also the innate wisdom. You experience the way the mind works, and recognize the impermanence and emptiness of all external and internal phenomena. There is a “pause” before you react, rather than being on auto pilot “reactive” in all mental stimuli and emotions, positive or negative. And as the experience deepens with meditation your compassion deepens and you cultivate bodhicitta and have strong intention to help sentient beings.

As to how I can have a positive impact in the world after retreat, a good example is my teacher, who I would like to emulate. He not only teaches us dharma but he embodies it, one can see this clearly in his speech and his actions, the compassion and kindness overflows genuinely and effortlessly. And people come from all over the world to be near his presence and to listen to Dharma teachings.

Also an immense gratitude naturally arises to all who supported and nurtured me during the retreat and genuine appreciation for their kindness arises, namely, my teacher, family, friends, the sangha and most importantly **Tsadra foundation for their help and support and a deep and sincere wish to be able to repay their kindness and a strong motivation to follow through my intention to help sentient beings.**

We concluded with fire offering ceremony and the retreat boundary was opened on May 21st 2015.

All funds received were used as specified in the grant contract.

Thank you very much for your support, words can't express how very thankful I'm for the support.

Aria Das

Kagyu Thubten Choling
245 Sheafe Road
Wappingers Falls, NY 12590