

12-07-15

Dear Lama Drupgyn and Tsadra,

This letter is the requisite annual report for Julia King Tamang, on three year retreat with Lama Michael Conklin and Kagyu Changchub Chuling, at Ser Cho Osel Ling, in Washington, USA.

First, let me again express my gratitude for the award from Tsadra. After completing the first 8 months of retreat, I feel certain it will be one of the most valuable endeavors in my life.

If you need any information not provided here, please contact the Retreat Master, Lama Michael Conklin and he will let me know. His email is CONKLIN@KCC.ORG. His phone is 503.890.4243.

DAILY SCHEDULE

3:15	I RISE EARLY for PERSONAL PRACTICE COMMITMENTS
4:00 - 6:30	PERSONAL SESSION (STARTS @ 4AM)
6:30 - 8:00	GROUP SESSION - GREEN TARA
8:00 - 9:00	BREAKFAST
9:00 - 11:30	PERSONAL SESSION
11:30 - 2:00	LUNCH
2:00 - 4:00	PERSONAL SESSION
4:00 - 4:30	BREAK
4:30 - 6:00	GROUP SESSION - CHAKDRAKPA
6:00 - 7:00	DINNER
7:00 - 9:00	PERSONAL SESSION

I USUALLY CONTINUE UNTIL AT LEAST 10 PM, SOMETIMES LATER. I USE THE TIME FOR PRACTICE, STUDY AND STRETCHING.

CURRENT PRACTICES - DAILY and MONTHLY

- WATER TORMA
- 3 SKANDHA SUTRA
- GREEN TARA
- HAYAGRIVA
- NGONDRO
- CHAKDRAKPA - BOTH THE CONCISE and LONG FORMS
- MISC. PREVIOUS PERSONAL PRACTICE COMMITMENTS
- RISING YOGA
- MANY ASPIRATION PRAYERS
- SHAMATHA
- MITHAMUDRA
- 4 THOUGHTS
- TONGLEN
- FOUR IMMEASURABLES
- MILAREPATSOK
- * CHÖD BEGINS THIS MONTH

CHALLENGES, ETC.

I HAVE NOT EXPERIENCED CHALLENGES BEYOND THE USUAL UPS AND DOWNS OF RETREAT AND SOME MINOR ACNES AND PAINS. THERE WERE MANY, MANY FIRES IN THIS LOCATE IN SUMMER AND I DID HAVE A LITTLE ASTHMA, BUT IT WAS WORKABLE.

I FEEL VERY HEALTHY, BOTH PHYSICALLY AND PSYCHOLOGICALLY. I AM VERY, VERY HAPPY TO BE HERE. THE FACILITY IS WONDERFUL. THE LOCATE IS QUIET AND THE WEATHER - NOT IN SUMMER, AND SNOWING BY NOVEMBER, IS SUPPORTIVE OF PRACTICE. STAFF ARE HELPFUL AND OUR GROUP OF 5 IN THE NORTH CLUSTER ARE A HIGH-FUNCTIONING, SELF-RESPONSIBLE GROUP.

PROGRESS

I FINISHED NGONDRO LAST MONTH AND HAVE BEGUN A DAILY REGIMEN THAT WILL ALLOW ME TO FINISH TWO MORE FULL NGONDROS BEFORE RETREAT UNCLUDES. THIS WILL FULFIL MY COMMITMENT TO MYSELF TO COMPLETE 4 NGONDROS BEFORE I TURN 65.

I CONTINUE TO WORK ON TIBETAN. I DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME TO DEVOTE TO IT, BUT BETWEEN OUR TEXTS A DICTIONARY AND A GRAMMAR BOOK, I AM MAKING SOME PROGRESS. I HOPE TO CONTINUE MY SKYPE-KNOWLEDGE LESSONS WITH GEN DOWA IN DARJEELING AFTER RETREAT.

NOTES

MY GREATER PROJECT MANAGEMENT SKILLS KEEP ME ON TRACK. AND ACCOUNTABLE TO TSADRA, MY TEACHERS AND MYSELF.

I FEEL VERY MOTIVATED TO DO MY BEST IN PRACTICE AND IN OUR VARIOUS ROLES (OMZE, CHOPIN, ETC.) AS A MEANS OF EMBODYING THE GRATITUDE I FEEL TO THE MANY BENEFACTORS OF MY PRACTICE AND THE RETREAT. SO MANY GAVE SO MUCH TO MAKE THIS POSSIBLE.

I DO STUDY. I LIMIT MY READING, IN AGREEMENT WITH MY VMA. I TAKE CAREFUL NOTES. I MISS MY LAPTOP FOR THIS - BUT UNDERSTAND THE RATIONALE FOR NOT ALLOWING THEM.

I ENJOY THE MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS AND TORMA MAKING. OUR GROUP MAKES 70 TORMAS OVER WEDNESDAY LUNCH HOUR.

I HAVE WORKED DILIGENTLY ON FITNESS. IT'S BEEN HARD TO FIND THE TIME, BUT WALKING AND STRETCHING HAVE FELT ESSENTIAL. I'VE DROPPED THIRTY POUNDS AND HOPE TO BE IN BETTER SHAPE, EVEN, WHEN WE GET TO THE PHYSICAL YOGAS.

MY 80-YEAR OLD MOTHER AND SON AND DAUGHTER ARE FLOURISHING WITHOUT ME. MY SON HAS HIS FIRST PROFESSIONAL JOB - AS AN AIDS PREVENTION EDUCATOR - AND MY DAUGHTER STARTED HER OWN BUSINESS AND HAS ACCOMPLISHED BREAK EVEN IN HER FIRST YEAR.

RETREAT IN THIS SMALL GROUP PROVIDES A USEFUL LENS FOR MY PERSONAL GROWTH. I AM GREATFUL FOR THE OPPORTUNITY.

THE VATRAYANA SO FAR HAS PROVED TO BE FASCINATING. IT CHALLENGES EVERY MENTAL MODEL AND CULTURAL ASSUMPTION I HOLD. IT'S EXCITING TO HAVE THIS PROLONGED, INTENSIVE PLATFORM TO EXPERIMENT.

AS RETREAT PROGRESSES MY RESPECT AND GRATITUDE FOR THE LINEAGE AND FOR THOSE PRACTITIONERS IN THE GENERATIONS BEFORE ME IN THE WEST, GROWS DEEPER.

THANK YOU, MANY MANY TIMES OVER FOR YOUR SUPPORT. I HOPE TO BE A "GOOD INVESTMENT." I'LL DO MY BEST TO CONTINUE AFTER RETREAT TO NURTURE MY OWN PRACTICE AND TO HELP OTHERS. I'D RATHER FAIL IN THE Dharma THAN SUCCEED IN ANY SECULAR ENDEAVOR.

BEST WISHES FOR A SUCCESSFUL YEAR IN 2016. I LOOK FORWARD TO ANOTHER REPORT IN DECEMBER, 2016.

WITH GREAT RESPECT, AND WISHES TO BENEFIT ALL BEINGS,

JULIA KING TAMMING
SER CHÖ ÖSEL LING RETREAT

