



TARA MANDALA® 2023

# GRATITUDE REPORT

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*Embodying the Sacred Feminine  
and Celebrating the Magic of Sangha*

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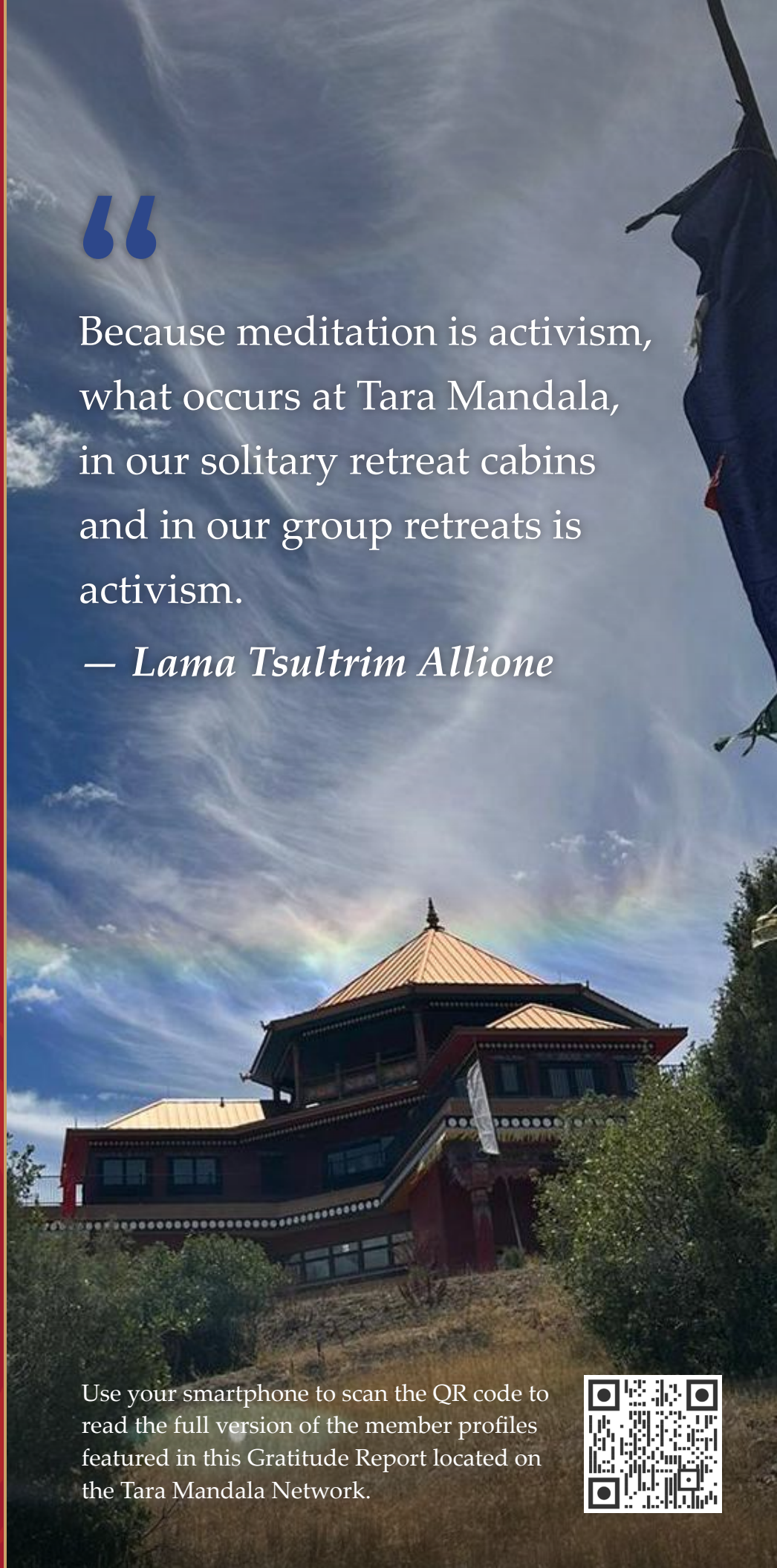
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Cover Art: Giving Life by Lama Tsultrim Allione

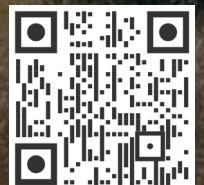


Because meditation is activism, what occurs at Tara Mandala, in our solitary retreat cabins and in our group retreats is activism.

— *Lama Tsultrim Allione*



Use your smartphone to scan the QR code to read the full version of the member profiles featured in this Gratitude Report located on the Tara Mandala Network.



# *Lama Tsultrim Allione*

“There are very few places in the world that are actually dedicated to depth, meditation, and contemplation. And as the world speeds up and catches on fire, we need places of refuge and places of restoration, and we also need deep practice. Because meditation is activism, what occurs at Tara Mandala, in our solitary retreat cabins, and in our group retreats is activism. And although in some ways meditation is doing nothing, the very act of stopping in a world that’s going faster and faster has a big impact and is a revolutionary act. I’m grateful to all of those who are participating in this form of activism, and I’m grateful to the land and the spirits of the land of Tara Mandala, and you for holding the depth of practice that is occurring there and that stretches out from there all around the world.”

— *Lama Tsultrim Allione*



# Going Beyond.

Sitting on Prayer Flag Ridge, immersed in Prajnaparamita meditation practice, we look into the vast sky and chant, “Gaté Gaté Paragaté Parasamgaté Bodhi Svaha!” which means “gone, gone, gone beyond, completely gone beyond, to awakening, so be it!”

At Tara Mandala, we embrace an approach to Dharma practice that goes beyond traditional male-dominated, patriarchal forms to rebalance the feminine and masculine. The sacred and the feminine are embodied in our daily practice and expressed in our sense of connection as Sangha. It’s how we actualize the meaning of going beyond.

The feminine aspect of Buddhist practice represents wisdom and emphasizes personal empowerment and inner transformation. It encourages us to tap into a fuller sense of our innate human capacities and awaken to our true nature.

Embracing the sacred feminine asks us to explore more holistic ways of being and thinking by recognizing the interconnectedness of all things. It promotes inclusivity and values diversity, allowing a broad range of perspectives and possibilities to emerge. It focuses on empathy, intuition, and cooperation, helping us cultivate the problem-solving skills needed for a world grappling with complex issues.

The sacred feminine focuses on caring, healing, and nurturing, enabling us to address emotional and psychological wounds resulting from living in a violent, rapidly changing, and disconnected world. It calls for an intimate, heartfelt relationship with nature and the natural cycles of life. It values the well-being of living systems based on the fundamental truth of our interdependence with everything.

The unique and powerful integration of the sacred feminine and Sangha is why I am so enthusiastic about Tara Mandala’s potential to be a force for positive change in today’s world. For when we feel a deep sense of wholeness, belonging, and balance, we’re ready to meet our shared challenges with wisdom, compassion, and skillful activism.

Thank you for your support. We hope you enjoy the magic that is Tara Mandala!

— **Robert Thomas, Tara Mandala Executive Director**

# *The Arrival of Sacred Relics*

In this crystal stupa rests the sacred relics of Shakyamuni Buddha, Machig Labdrön, and Taktsang Rinpoche. The sacred relics found their new home among the Tara Mandala Sangha during a momentous Tsog ceremony at the Ösel Nyingtig retreat this past summer. Our aspiration is to build a stupa to house these relics. This will benefit our Sangha by creating the cause for good health, harmony, peace, prosperity, and Dharma realization.

# *Manifesting the Mother Lineage*

“Magyu is my heart. For a long time, I didn’t know where all the practices that I kept receiving should go. Then, I was reading about the life of Machig Labdrön, and it said she had a ‘Mother lineage’ and a ‘Father lineage.’ The Mother lineage are the practices that she received directly from various deities or through her visions and meditation experiences, her Tantric teaching. So the origins of Magyu, the Mother Lineage, was right there. Suddenly, I knew, it’s where all of this goes!”

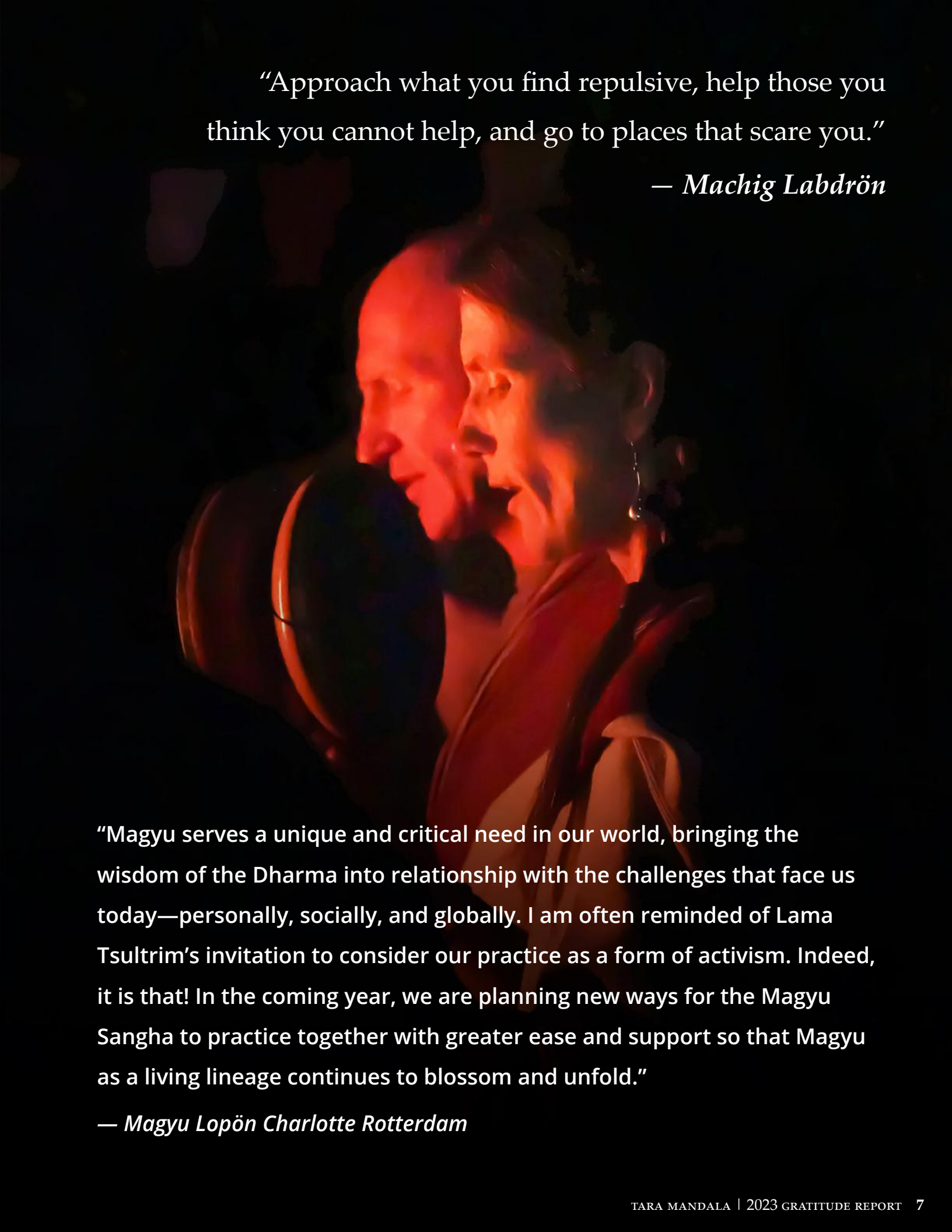
— *Lama Tsultrim Allione*

*Overnight Chod dulzhug on Prayer Flag Ridge, 2023*



“I have so much gratitude for Magyu. It has been a huge part of my life. The Sangha makes me feel like I’m right where I should be and we are all walking this path together. Having this path to follow gives me focus in my life, retreats to look forward to, and a great deal of joy.”

— *Martha Torielli, Magyu Member*



“Approach what you find repulsive, help those you think you cannot help, and go to places that scare you.”

— *Machig Labdrön*

“Magyu serves a unique and critical need in our world, bringing the wisdom of the Dharma into relationship with the challenges that face us today—personally, socially, and globally. I am often reminded of Lama Tsultrim’s invitation to consider our practice as a form of activism. Indeed, it is that! In the coming year, we are planning new ways for the Magyu Sangha to practice together with greater ease and support so that Magyu as a living lineage continues to blossom and unfold.”

— *Magyu Lopön Charlotte Rotterdam*



# Tara

*Expressing Our  
True Wisdom  
and Power*

**TARA THIRTEEN** – Victorious Over War and Inner and Outer Obstacles

*The Tara Mandala Community has accumulated 9,760,666 mantras for all those impacted by the war in Ukraine.*

Upon entering Tara Mandala's Tara Temple, you are encircled by 21 large Tara statues. Their energy is powerful yet quiet and grounding.



“Tara, the beloved Buddhist goddess and female buddha of compassion, manifests in twenty-one different forms—some peaceful, others fierce—with different enlightened qualities that can help us through the joys and hardships we experience...the twenty-one Taras’ iconography, mantras, and enlightened activities are expressions of different enlightened qualities all radiating from

the same source—the Great Mother, the womb of totality. As a fully awakened Buddha, Tara emerged from the slumber of ignorance that kept her separated from her true nature, true power, and true potential. In Tara, we may find themes similar to our own life and ways we have or can overcome obstacles to heal and embody our true wisdom and power.”

— Dorje Lopön Chandra Easton, from her upcoming book, *Embodying Tara, 21 Manifestations to Awaken Your Innate Wisdom*





**TARA ONE**

*Swift Heroine Who Removes Obstacles  
& Increases Bodhicitta*



**TARA TWO**

*Melodious One, the Source of Intelligence*



**TARA THREE**

*Golden One Who Increases Merit and Prosperity*



**TARA FOUR**

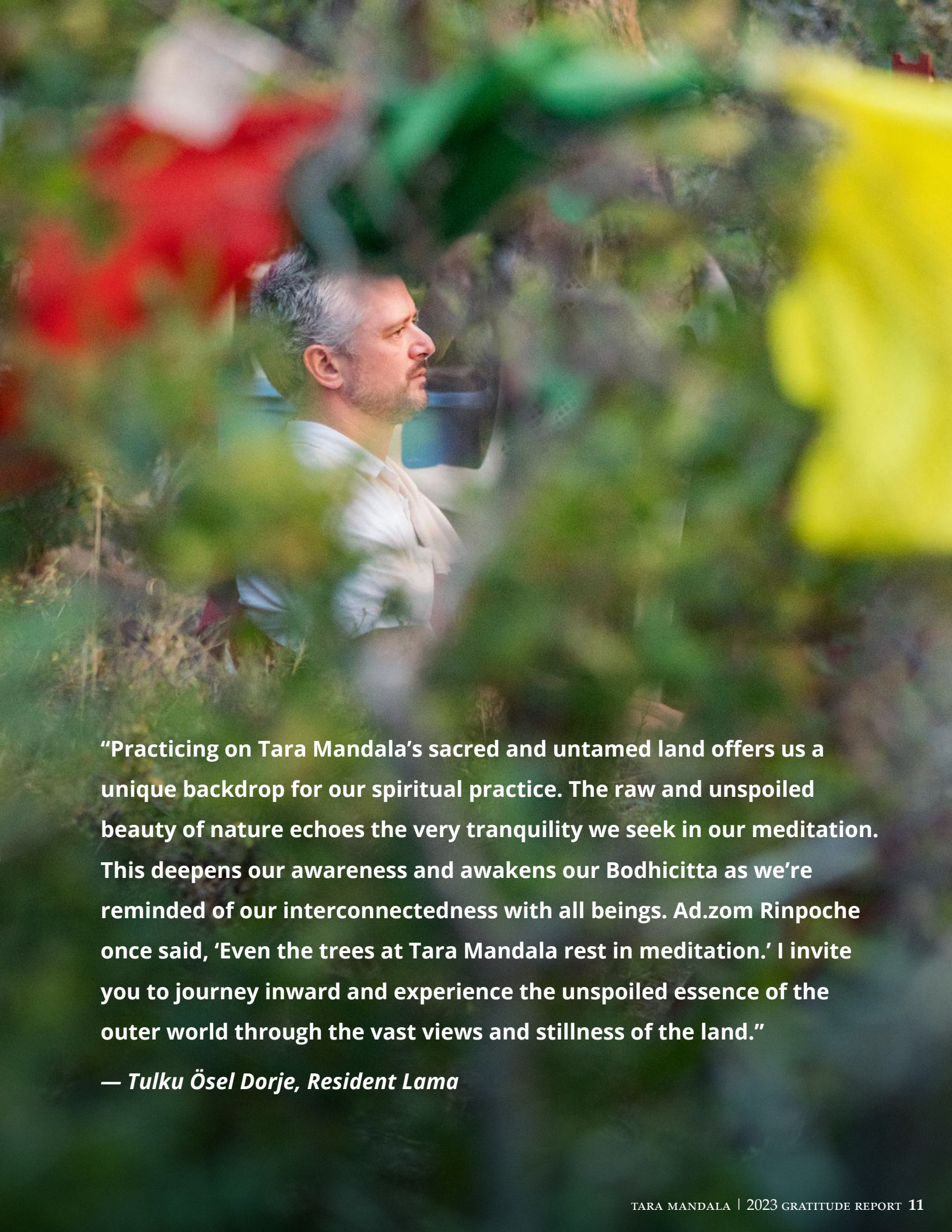
*Victorious Queen of Crowning Light*



"I'm just so grateful for Tara Mandala and the satellite sanghas for all the teachings and practices. Since I was in my 20's, I've been focused on becoming more aware of my mind and having more self-control with my mind...being able to express love more fully in all ways with my family and with all communities. Tara Mandala is an incredible resource for that."

— Denise Williams, Ösel Nyintig & Tara Mandala Writers Guild





**“Practicing on Tara Mandala’s sacred and untamed land offers us a unique backdrop for our spiritual practice. The raw and unspoiled beauty of nature echoes the very tranquility we seek in our meditation. This deepens our awareness and awakens our Bodhicitta as we’re reminded of our interconnectedness with all beings. Ad.zom Rinpoche once said, ‘Even the trees at Tara Mandala rest in meditation.’ I invite you to journey inward and experience the unspoiled essence of the outer world through the vast views and stillness of the land.”**

**— Tulku Ösel Dorje, Resident Lama**

# Expanding Our Horizons

In 2022, Tara Mandala quietly launched an online practice community as an experiment to nurture a sense of support, connection, and belonging for our far-flung Sangha. A year later, growing only by word-of-mouth, we have over 1,500 active members. We offer group practice, meditation, and connection to teachers and fellow practitioners. Next year, we will expand and enhance our platform as a benefit for Sustaining Sangha members, enabling us to provide even more content, practice events, and support for your practice.

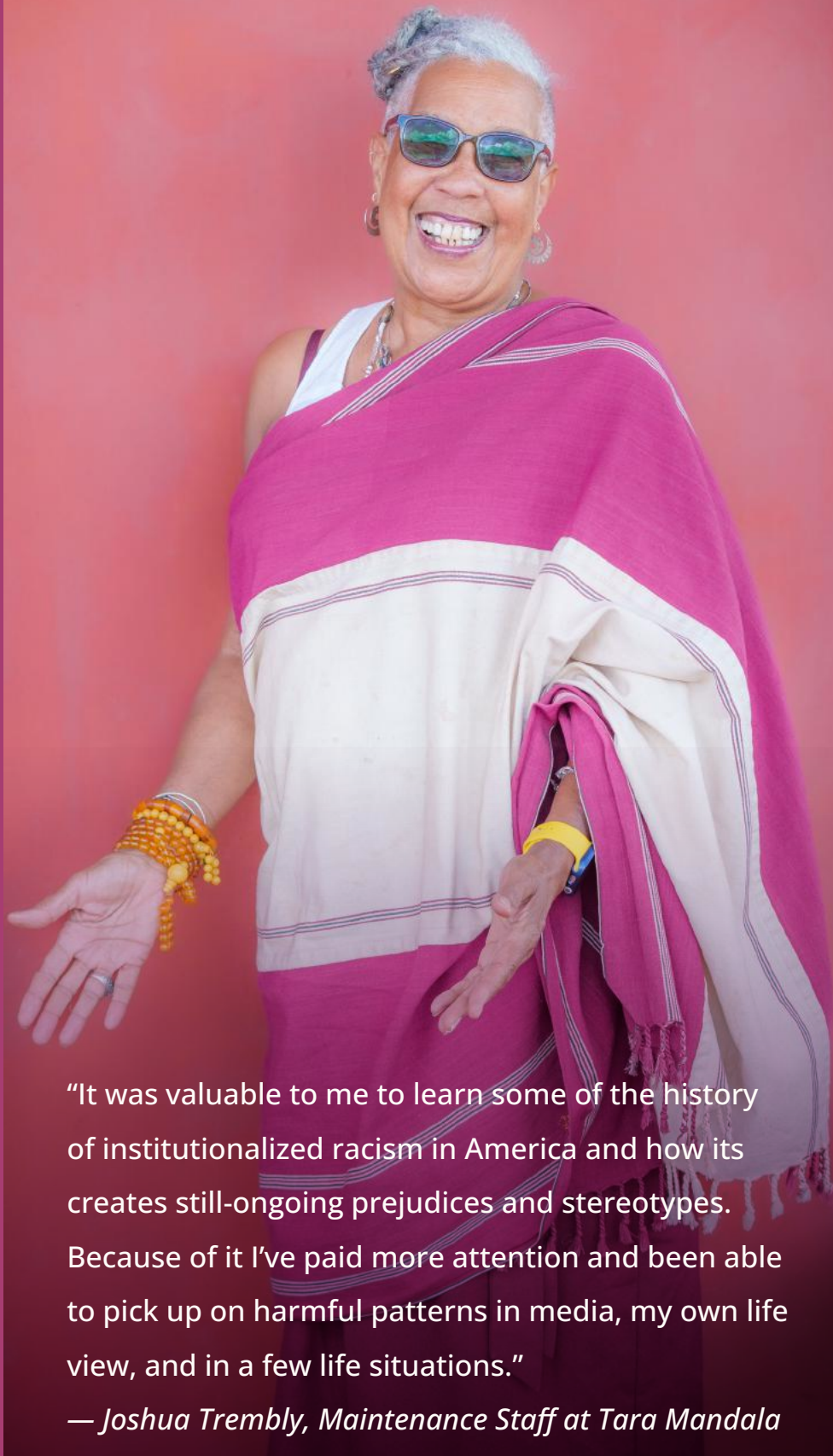


"I love getting up in the morning and doing the Open Sit meditation. It is so important for me. I didn't know it would be so important, but it is! Sometimes it's only eight or nine people, but it's still a blessing, and I'm so grateful. It's also a very touching experience and a wonderful way for a lot of us who can't travel to feel connected to Tara Mandala."

— Louise Venetucci, Sustaining Sangha Member

# *Super Skillful Means*

This year, we looked to Senior Teacher Karla Jackson-Brewer to help us open new doors to cultivating wisdom, compassion, and skillful means. Karla is not only a Senior Tara Mandala teacher, she is also a professor of Women & Gender Studies and Africana Studies at Rutgers University. Her fresh and powerful approach was to combine the research and rigor of contemporary Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion work with the principles and practices of Vajrayana Buddhism. The eight weeks of teachings given to the Tara Mandala staff were such a smashing success, that next year we will offer it to the entire Tara Mandala Sangha. You will not want to miss this!



“It was valuable to me to learn some of the history of institutionalized racism in America and how it creates still-ongoing prejudices and stereotypes. Because of it I’ve paid more attention and been able to pick up on harmful patterns in media, my own life view, and in a few life situations.”

— *Joshua Trembly, Maintenance Staff at Tara Mandala*



# My Journey to Bhutan

By Moses Mohan



*Moses Mohan & fellow pilgrims  
in Bhutan*

I am deeply grateful to Lama Tsultrim, Lopöns Polly Ryan and Karla Jackson-Brewer, Tara Mandala, and my fellow pilgrims for the precious opportunity to join this year's pilgrimage to Bhutan. One of my teachers, Lama Anne Klein once commented that after a pilgrimage, one is forever connected to those sacred places and their blessings.

In many ways, that feels true for me. Something has come alive in me. It has been a great source of energy for continued practice. In hopes of deepening my connection to the sacred land of Bhutan and the blessings I received on this pilgrimage, I want to share with you the three sources of inspiration that

resonated most for me. These three are like the pure, pristine water of Dharma and Wisdom, constrained only by my limitations and faults in recall and expression.

## The Tantric Community of Druk Zangri Khamar

The community of Druk Zangri Khamar–Machig Labdrön's seat in Bhutan–has been a great source of inspiration. I had read of Tantric Buddhist communities of practice in books, but they often felt more like fiction than reality. But in Druk Zangri Khamar, I got to experience a living community of tantric Buddhist practitioners: lay and monastic, women and men, old and young, living and practicing together in harmony. To see in the main temple gomchenmas (female lay tantric practitioners) seated in the first row and leading practices deeply moved and inspired me. It felt like a living embodiment of the one taste of practice, transcending gender, spiritual form, age, and other conventional designations, especially in an unfortunately still predominantly patriarchal world.

Read more about Moses' journey to Bhutan with the QR code on page 1 or going to the [Tara Mandala Network](#).

# *We Are Living Dharma!*

This Summer we launched our Living Dharma Apprentice program to give Sangha members an opportunity to immerse themselves in the joys of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. We hope you join us next Summer.



“Being in the Living Dharma Apprentice program felt like a never-ending stream of teachings: the beauty of waking up on “the Land,” its stillness and vastness naturally settling my mind, the cool breeze and birds singing, bringing a sense of clarity and freshness to each moment. Formal practice, meals, and work-practice—everything felt like an occasion to cultivate mindfulness and compassion. But the most precious blessing was being able to directly experience the meaning of Sangha. My fellow practitioners supported my practice and increased my understanding in ways I couldn’t even imagine. It reassures me to think that the bonds created this summer are so profound that we’ll have many lifetimes together so that I can try to repay their kindness.”

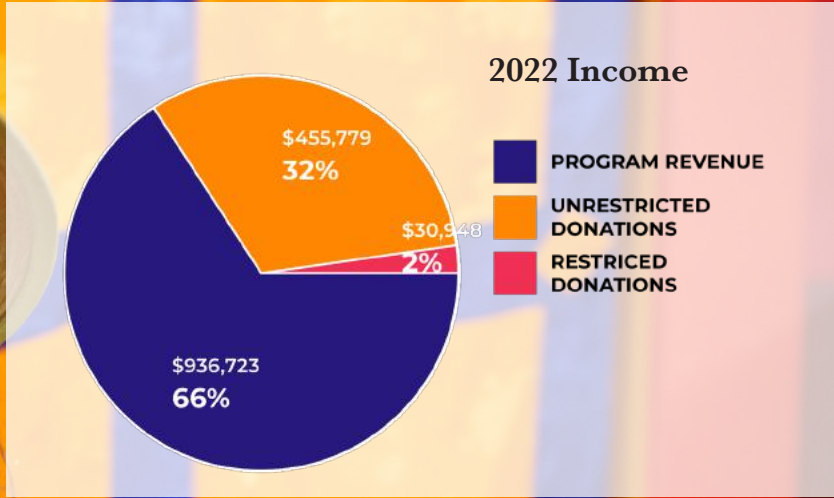
— *With gratitude, Matteo, Living Dharma Apprentice, Summer 2023*



# *The Numbers*

*A Year in the Life of Our Sangha*

**Total Program Participants: 2,459**  
**Global Sanghas: 44**  
**Sustaining Sangha Members: 460**  
**Horses on the Land: 12**  
**Practitioners Receiving Financial Assistance: 750**  
**People in Long-Term Study Pathways: 415**  
**Wisdom Rising Podcast Downloads: 13,114**  
**People in Solitary Personal Retreats: 56**  
**Days in Personal Retreat: 738**  
**Feeding Your Demons® Facilitators Certified: 191**  
**Tara Mandala Network Members: 1,537**



“Because we live in the times that we live in, our connection to the sacred and spiritual has been lost. I think that’s one of the reasons why people feel so lost, because as a culture, we’ve lost our connection to the sacred and spiritual. But it can be found through nature. It can be found through art, by just cultivating that inner awareness.”

— Kamala Woods, Second-generation Tara Mandala Sangha Member





# Member Profile

## Seeing Myself In Buddhism

“There’s a meme out there of a young black girl standing in an aisle at Toys”R”Us looking up at a wall of white Barbie dolls. It’s about where you see yourself—and somehow, you’re just not there. It was like this for me in Buddhism. I mean, Vajrayana is much better than most. There are lots of female deities, but it’s not the same as seeing a female lama and being with female teachers and really ‘un-covering’ the role of the sacred feminine. For Lama Tsultrim to take on this Herculean task—with her husband David—to bring that all forward, making it front and center, is just unbelievable.”

— *Juanita Brigid McCarron, Sustaining Sangha and Ösel Nyingtig member*

To read Juanita’s full profile, use the QR code on page 1 or go to the [Tara Mandala Network](#).

# Our Gratitude for Your Support!

Thank you for supporting of our mission to encourage the development of wisdom and compassion for the benefit of all beings. Because of your generous contributions, we can welcome new practitioners, help them go deeper in their practice, and enable them to realize their full human potential as awakened beings. Join us in recognizing and appreciating the many Tara Mandala Sangha members who made financial gifts between July 2022 and June 2023.

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# Member Profile

“All these Dharma practices are opening my heart, my consciousness, and my awareness, which has had a huge impact on my teaching and art. Even now, I feel like it’s still slowly coming out and through me, and I don’t know where it is all going yet. It’s just a process. This is what I love about Lama Tsultrim. She can take the rigor of traditional practice and then really go into the unknown, into the light. She can be very intuitive, but it comes from deep knowledge and rigorous experience. Because I’m also very much like that, I deeply appreciate this about Lama Tsultrim.”

— *Daria Faïn, Sustaining Sangha member*



Jennifer Todd • \*Eliza Tokaj • Evona Tollison • Chris Tomlinson • \*Joyce Tompsett • Tina Topalian • \*Martha Tornielli • \*Csilla Torok • Beatrix Toth • Peter Barnabas Toth • Tibor Toth • Krisztina Toth-Beda • \*Beth Ann Townsend • \*Elisabeth Townsend • Paul Trafford • \*Lissa Treasure • Elena Trethowan • Eliana Trinaistic • Georgia Triplett • Jim Trivelpiece • Benoit Trufanow • Anne Trumble • Paul Tsang • Vivian Tsang • Benjamin Tse • Laura Tulli • Christine Turcotte • Amy Turner • \*Matthew Turner • Kristen Tussey • Lisa Tweedell • Cary Twomey • \*Dola Twomey • Katherine Twomey • \*Grzegorz Leszek Tyniec • Louise Tyo • \*Renate Ulmer • Kathy Uno • Yelmi Urrutia • Paolo Vaccari • Gergely Vadasz • Andrea Vafiopoulos • Peter Valencik • Andrea Van Becelaere • Martijn Van Beek • L.M.E. Van Breukelen • Piet Van Der AA • Lopa van der Mersch • Anita Van Der Pluijm • Margo Van Greta • Joop Van Herk • Paula Van Lammeren • Sara Van Norman • Rianne van Rijsewijk • \*Anjel Van Slyke • Karla Vandenberg • Sarah Vandenberg • Els Vanderheijden • Helene Vanderhulst • Shiela VanDerveer • Tania Varela-Ibarra • \*Joanne Varni • Viktoria Vas • Giovanni Vassallo • Louis Vaughan • Kevin Vaught • Mariangela Vecchi • \*Louise Venetucci • Emma Verey • Andrej Vician • Stefanie Vidal • Martyne Viens • \*Nicole Vigna • Jeanne Villa • Judith Vilsmeier • Irina Vityk • \*Ryn Vlachou • Gudrun Voelker • Andrea Volbers • \*Teresa Vollan • Moria Volz • \*Sigrun von Borcke • Andreas Von Ruden • Katja Vos • Eva Vybrancova • \*Emily Brook Wachsmann • \*Laura Wade Jaster • Jenna Wade • Ernst Waelti • SarahLane Waite • Kristin Wakeman • \*Genevieve Walker • Riley Walker • Justin Wall • Andrew Walsh • Dale Walter • Maria Walton • \*Sherry Walton • Annie Ward • \*Jackson Ward • Patricia Waring • \*Jennifer Warren • \*Mariana Wartchow • Kimberly Washburn • Josephine Watson • George Watt • Jennifer Way • Julia Weaver • Deborah Webb • \*Kate Webb • William Webber • Claudia Weber • Tom Weber • \*Vicki Rice Weber • Donna Wegfenrt • \*Lee Weinstein • Bettina Weisserth • Naomi Weissler • Todd Welstein • Nadia Werby • Peter Werges • Rosemary Werner • Robin West • Melanie Westfield • Steve Westin • \*Francesca Rome-Marie • Trinley Wheelhouse • \*Michael Whelan • \*Geneva Whitaker • Alexandra White • Emily White • \*Jennifer White • Laura White • Melissa White • Robert White • \*Selina White • Stephen White • \*Jessica Whitesel • \*Heath Whitney • \*Tracy Whyte • \*Susanne Wieneke • Gerry Wiener • \*Isabel Wienold • Miriam Emily Wilcox • \*Lisa Wild • \*Amy Wilder • Becca Jay Wilder • Laena Wilder • Elizabeth Wilding • \*Jacqueline Wilkosz • Christopher Willcox • Athena Williams • Craig Williams • \*Denise Williams • Julia Willinger • Melissa Willowhawk • Sascha Winert • Maarten Winkel • Spirit Wiseman • Barbara Wiss • Jeanette Witten • \*Katia Wolf • \*Sierra Wolf • \*Whitney Wolf • \*Deb Wolfe • Frederick Wolff • Zach Wollard • CG Wong • \*Heidi Wong • Robi Wood • Sara Woodard • Angela Woyar • Astri Wright • \*Yimeng Wu • \*Sabine Wurst • Trent Wuster • Joanna Wyszomirski • Wen Yi Xing • Nirit Yadin • \*Lisa Yannios • \*Esteban Yepes • Jungeun You • \*Celeste Young • Kathryn Young • \*Kevin Young • Matilda Young • Nan Young • Steven Young • Janet Yu • Enpeng Yuan • Keiichi Yumen • Timofey Zakirov • Simon Zalkind • E Van Zandt • Joshua Zatz • \*Jeanette Zechner • Yi Zhao • \*Ian Zigterman • Debra Zimmerman • Heidrun Zoschg • Repasy Zsolt • Suzanne Zuckerman

(\* Sustaining Sangha Members)



# *The Arrival of Ushnishavijaya*

Due to the extraordinary generosity of our Sangha, the 30" statue of Ushnishavijaya (Namgyalma), arrived this Summer. She is an eight-armed, three-faced, Goddess of Longevity, one of the earliest Buddhist goddesses. Ushnishavijaya—meaning “Victorious One Emanated from the Crown of the Buddha”—is a key deity in Lama Tsultrim’s Machig Longevity Terma received in Bhutan in 2017. This extraordinary statue was made by Bijaya Shakya, the same Nepalese statue maker who made all of our temple statues. She will certainly increase Lama’s life and bring great benefit to the entire Sangha.

# *Come Celebrate our 30th Anniversary Next Year!*

Join us on the land for Tara Mandala's 30th Anniversary in 2024. We have an exciting lineup of longer practice periods, special retreats, powerful ceremonies, and fun celebrations that you will definitely not want to miss!





*Pieter Oosthuizen,  
outgoing Board President*

We express our deep gratitude to Pieter Oosthuizen for serving so wisely and compassionately as our Board President these past six years. His leadership saw a period of global expansion, resilience in the face of the COVID-19 Pandemic, and growth of major programs. We also welcome Celeste Young as our new Board President. Celeste brings a fresh vitality and humor, impressive real-world accomplishments, and a sincere dedication for practice and serving the Tara Mandala Sangha.



*Left to right: Akiko Oncken, Programs Director with Celeste Young, incoming Board President*



# *Thank You!*

*Your generous support makes all this possible.*

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