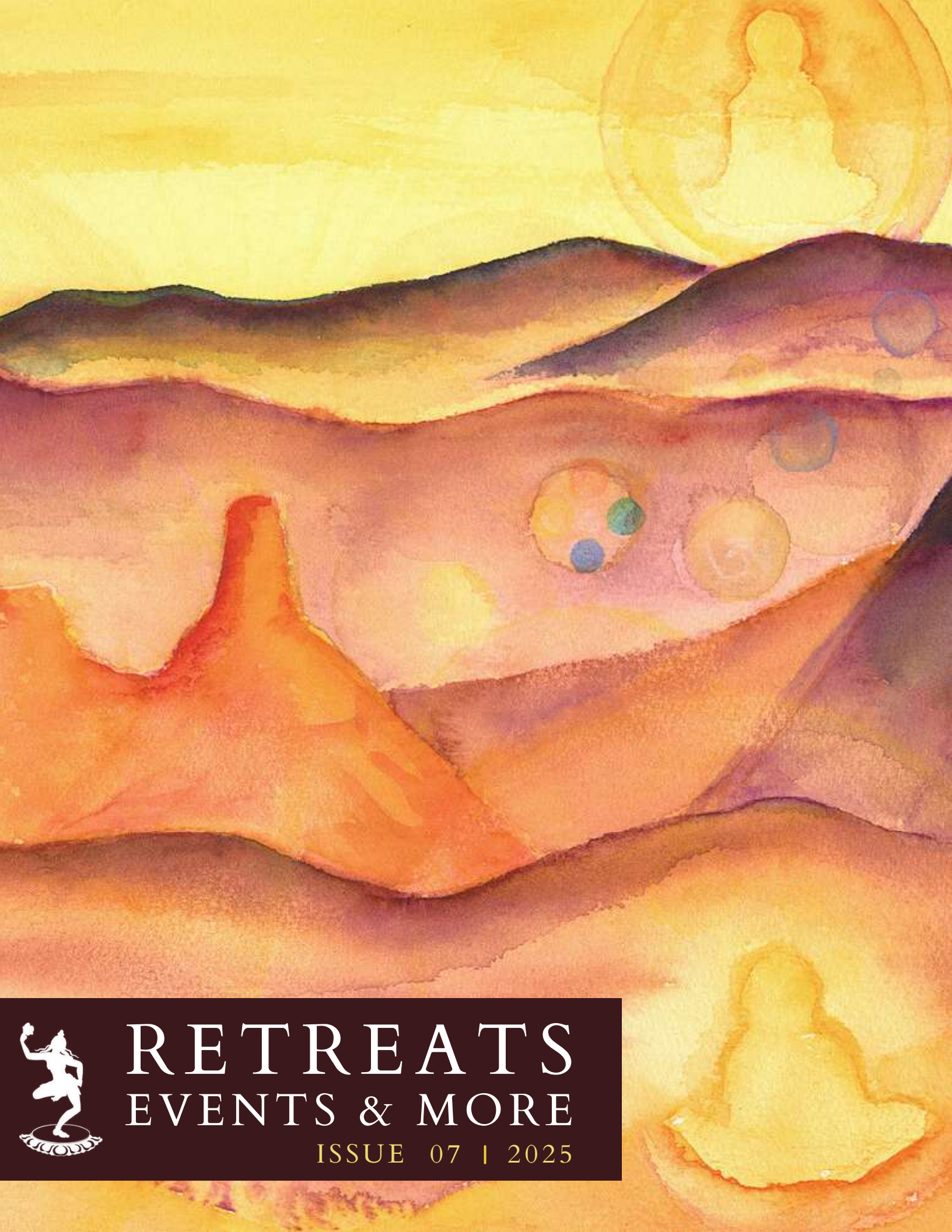




RETREATS EVENTS & MORE

ISSUE 07 | 2025

IN THIS ISSUE



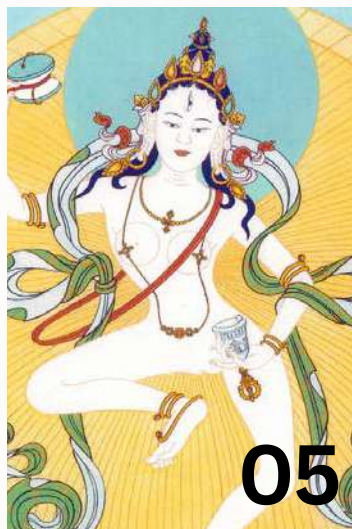
MACHIG PUBLICATIONS®



10



20



05



14



30



42



35

ONSITE RETREATS - 2026

Explore Next Summer Retreat Season at Tara Mandala in Colorado

04

GOING BEYOND "WHAT CAN I DO" TO "HOW CAN I BE"

Dakini Wisdom Moving Us Toward Action

05

SKYMIND RETREAT

Living From Our True Nature

13

A LIVING MANDALA

Tara's Gardens Take Root

22

DAKINIS OF THE BALTIC SEA

The Wild Wisdom of Nature

26

EDI IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Reflections From the EDI Council Members

29

THE MERMAID OF WARSAW

A Polish Legend With a Tibetan Buddhist Heart

36

EDITORS: JENN FAHEY | GRAPHIC DESIGN: DECHEN, DRIMÉ & CADY ALLIONE | EDITORIAL ASSISTANCE: ANNA RAITHEL, JIGME KHANDRO NOBLE, & CADY ALLIONE | PHOTO CREDIT: JOSH BROWNLEE
COVER ART BY LAMA TSULTRIM ALLIONE

LEARN • MEDITATE • FIND COMMUNITY

RETREATS & EVENTS

Upcoming online

OCTOBER
11

EMBODYING THE
INNATE WISDOM AND
COMPASSION OF THE
TWENTY ONE TARAS



OCT-NOV
17-15

MANDALA METHOD:
JOURNEY INTO THE
MANDALA OF THE
SACRED MASCULINE



OCT-NOV
24-21

THE GREAT
PERFECTION



NOVEMBER
07-23

SIMHAMUKHA:
THE LION-
HEADED DAKINI



NOVEMBER
14-16

YESHE TSOGYAL
SADHANA



NOVEMBER
19

DHARMA FRIENDS:
HOW NOT TO LOSE IT
OVER THE HOLIDAYS



DECEMBER
14

FEEDING YOUR DEMONS
COLLECTIVE DEMON
FEEDING PRACTICE
WITH LAMA TSULTRIM





TARA MANDALA RETREAT CENTER

ONSITE RELEASE 2026

JUNE
13-21



DAKINI
RETREAT

JUN-JUL
26-01



WHITE DAKINI
DRUBCHÖ

JULY
02-05



NGÖNDRO
PRACTICE RETREAT

JULY
19-25



FAMILY CAMP

JUL-AUG
30-10



YESHE LAMA

AUGUST
15-20



ÖSEL NYINGTIG
GATHERING

AUGUST
25-30



SKYMIND
MACHIG LABDRÖN &
OPEN AWARENESS

SEPTEMBER
25-30



DEN TOG
CHIGMA CHÖD



Going Beyond

“What Can I Do” to “How Can I Be”

by Lopön Ellen Booth Church

**“Without having to be forsaken, the five poisons are the five great wisdoms
Without having to be eliminated, Samsara is totally pure from the beginning
If you understand that enlightenment is your mind, there is no other meditation.”**

— From ‘The Supreme Source’ by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche



Buddha Dakini

How many times lately have you wondered...
what can I do to help those suffering in the
world?

How can I address the injustices I see?
How can I make a difference?

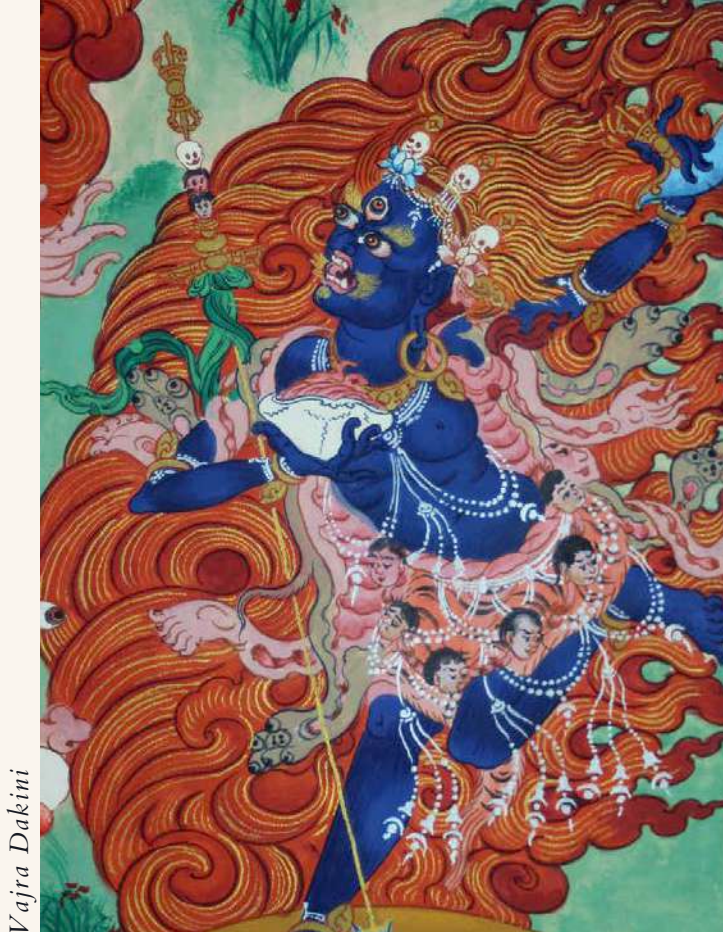
Of course, I know I can and do take
meaningful actions on the social and
political stage. Yet, I feel that these
efforts, while important, are not enough—
change often comes too slowly, and the
suffering I witness is heartbreaking. I am
inspired to do more, to be a stronger force
for positive change. Like everyone else, I
am deeply affected by the pain around me,
and it fuels my resolve to make a
difference.

The sentence I keep hearing in my heart is: How can I go beyond “what can I do” to “how can I be?”

It is moments like these that remind me... I am a Vajrayana mandala practitioner.

I remember to focus on feeling the energy I am experiencing, and I trust the power of sounding seed syllables to turn obscurations into wisdom... not just for myself but for all beings.

How do I want to be in the world? Do I choose to broadcast more reactive energy, or can I transform that impulse into wisdom and compassion?



As the world already echoes with countless reactions, I have the power to elevate my responses into the energy of the five wisdoms for the benefit of all beings.

I look to the mandala for guidance and ask myself:

- Am I feeling overwhelmed?
(Buddha family)
- Am I feeling angry?
(Vajra family)
- Do I feel what I'm doing is not good enough?
(Ratna family)
- Am I grasping for the “right” change or fix I think must happen?
(Padma family)
- Do I feel speedy and anxious in my actions?
(Karma family)



I often reflect on this quote about the mandala that Lama Tsultrim offered in the Three yana Retreat in 2008:

“We are not trying to eliminate emotions in this work, we liberate them into their energy, their true nature. We are not talking about going beyond emotions, we are talking about the energy of emotions containing wisdom, which is exposed once the grasping action of self-clinging is relaxed.”

This is one of the most inspiring aspects of mandala work as it invites us to embrace our emotions without judgment. Instead of trying to eliminate feelings like overwhelm or anger, we learn to connect with their core energy. As mandala practitioners, we have the sacred gift of tuning into the wisdom embedded within these emotions, without the stories, labels, or burdens.

By focusing on the pure energy through sound, color, symbols, and light, we can step into a state of wisdom and compassion, radiating that grace into the world.

This practice reminds us that every emotion carries a profound gift, waiting to be expressed through creative and mindful presence.



Padma Dakini



Ratna Dakini

So then, the questions I ask myself become:

How can I cultivate the limitless space and awareness that allows me to transcend polarization? (Buddha family—sound white syllable **BAM**)

- How does the reflective clarity of heart and mind create space for change in the world? (Vajra family—sound blue syllable **HA**)
- How can I remain rooted in the earth's wisdom and demonstrate unwavering equanimity? (Ratna family—sound yellow syllable **RI**)
- How can I remain open to the diverse perspectives of many viewpoints without needing to manipulate or change them? (Padma family—sound red syllable **NI**)
- How can I be with the flow rather than the force of change and healing? (Karma family—sound green syllable **SA**)

For me, the answer to these questions lies in the sacred seed syllables. Whether I'm reading the news, listening to a podcast, weeding the garden, or washing the dishes—whenever a reactive emotion arises—I intentionally tune into its energy. I take a breath and feel the sound of wisdom arise, I visualize its vibrant color, and feel the movement of pure energy flowing through me. I can do this out loud or even silently in my heart when I am in a difficult conversation with someone.

My intention is to send positive energy into the world, knowing that by embodying it, I am actively helping create a brighter, more harmonious universe, one seed syllable at a time. And I recognize that by “being,” I am “doing” something for all beings... without exception.



Become a Certified Facilitator Mandala Method

New Cohort Starting Soon!

"What is amazing about the mandala work is that we are not trying to get rid of our emotions; we are not trying to destroy this anger or will it into submission. We are transforming that very energy into an intelligent form."

— *Lama Tsultrim Allione*

The Mandala Method provides powerful practices for working with challenging emotions and discovering the wisdom they hold.

The Certification Program is a professional-level training designed for therapists, coaches, counselors, facilitators, sangha leaders, and practitioners who feel called to guide others one-on-one in these methods.

Certification Track

Grounded in personal practice, participants not only learn to guide but also fully immerse themselves in the Mandala Method, experiencing deep transformation while also refining their ability to work with others.



Mandalas occur throughout nature, including in flowers

The Certification track consists of Tara Mandala's three core Mandala Method retreats:

- Journey into the Mandala of the **Empowered Feminine**,
- Journey into the Mandala of the **Sacred Masculine**,
- Journey into the Union of **Sacred Feminine and Masculine** — culminating in a Capstone Certification Retreat.

While the three core retreats are also part of the Magyu program and open to all practitioners, those on the Certification track participate in additional training days, partner practice, and monthly cohort meetings.

The online training includes case studies, trauma sensitivity, gender considerations, and best practices in guiding — all within a supportive and bonded cohort structure that provides encouragement and connection throughout the journey.

“Grounded in personal practice, participants not only learn to guide but also fully immerse themselves in the Mandala Method.”

— Chögé Lisa Erickson

Practices and Authorization

Graduates of the Certification Program are authorized to guide others in the diverse set of Mandala Method practices developed by Lama Tsultrim.

These include the three core mandala meditation practices — Dakini, Buddha, and Yab Yum — as well as enhancement practices such as:

- **Journeys**
- **Life Reviews**
- **Element Meditations**
- **Unblocking/Sound & Light practice**
- **Mandala Work with the Hands**

Together, this range of practices offers multiple entry points for people with different backgrounds to work with the five families of the mandala for personal growth and awakening.



Mandala (artwork by Lama Tsultrim Allione)

Final Opportunity to Join

For those who have already completed Journey into the Mandala of the Empowered Feminine—or who are able to commit to the **self-paced version** now—this is the final opportunity to join the new Certification cohort beginning with the **Journey into the Mandala of the Sacred Masculine** online course starting **October 17th**.

Certification training begins soon after this course, making these the last weeks to step into this cohort.

If you are ready to apply, visit the [Mandala Method Certification Application](#) →

If you have questions, please contact mandalamethod@taramandala.org.

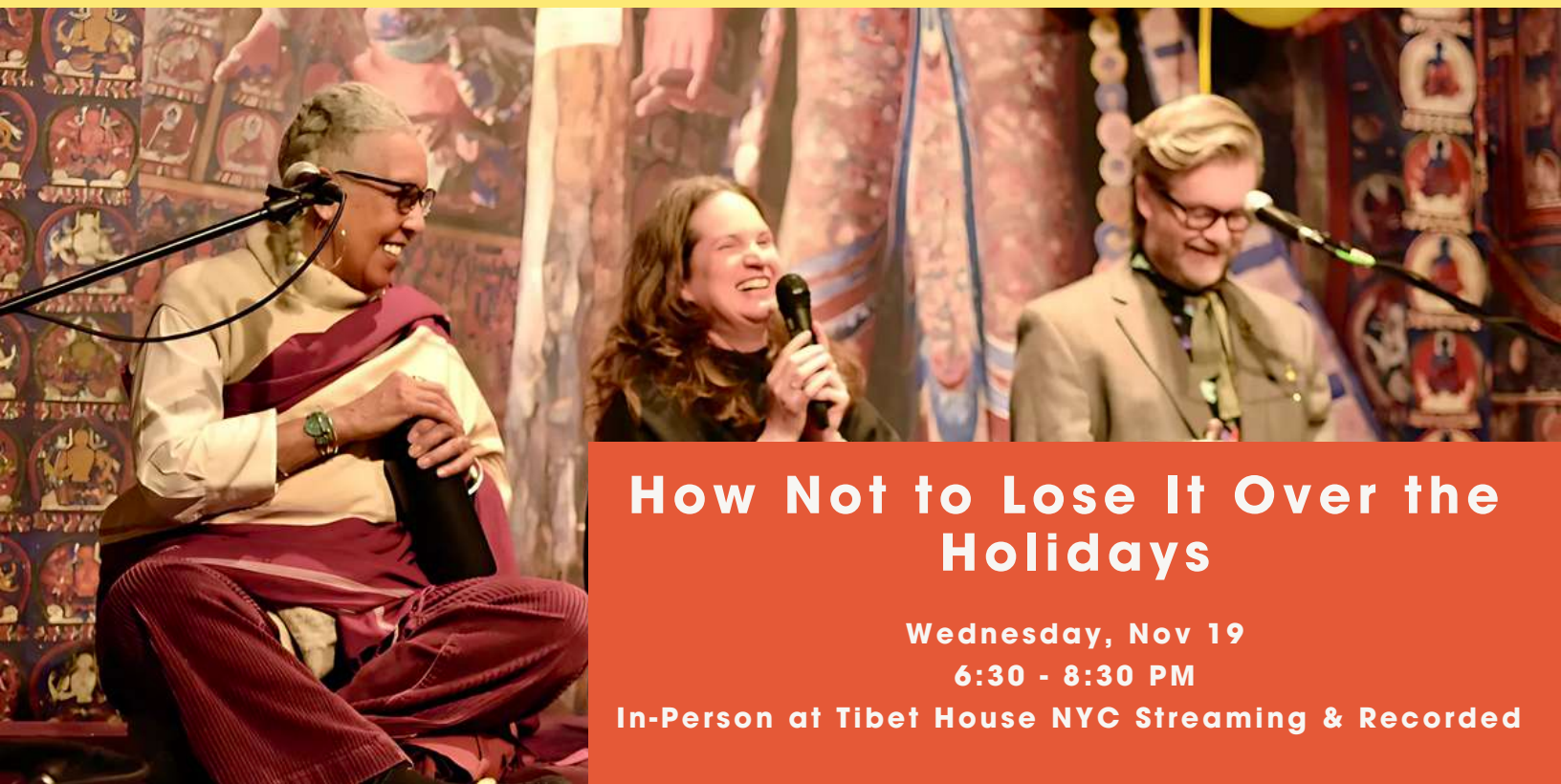
DHARMA FRIENDS

Creating Spiritual Community through Art, Meditation, Dharma and Embodiment Practices.

Timely Dharma teachings + sketch comedy on the hilarity of navigating the holidays. Join Dharma teachers Megan Mook, Lopön Karla Jackson-Brewer, and Kevin Townley, plus comedians Neil D'Astolfo and Isabel Renner, for down-to-earth Dharma teachings + comedic outtakes on the lunacy of navigating the holiday season! After the event, our resident musician Rob Ward will delight us with ambient viola as we mingle and connect (online participants are warmly invited to stay for the music!).



"As educational as a university class" "Deep, transformative and joyous!" "Intellectual, meditative, and moving" "As e
ch I look forward to this!" "Inspiring." "So much fun!" "I can't tell you how much I look forward to this!" "Inspiring." "S
esome." "The music moved me to tears." "Lopön Karla is iconic." "Kevin is a riot. So smart and funny!" "Megan's meditat



How Not to Lose It Over the Holidays

Wednesday, Nov 19

6:30 - 8:30 PM

In-Person at Tibet House NYC Streaming & Recorded

Skymind

Machig Labdrön & Open Awareness

“Skymind is an invitation into the lived experience of the Nature of Mind – the vast, potent, and radiant nature of reality. Though ultimately beyond words or concept, this ground of being is imminently accessible to us, given that it is our very own nature.”

-Dorje Lopön Charlotte Rotterdam

This online retreat is more than an invitation; it is an inspirational way to view and walk through life. By making seamless connections of Machig Labdrön’s most profound teachings to our everyday life, the Skymind practice instructs us to rest, right where we are, just as we are.

The Skymind meditation and teachings help us discover our inherent nobility as enlightened beings and offer techniques to meet whatever arises in our personal and shared human lives with clarity and courage.



Dorje Lopön Charlotte Rotterdam and Lopön Pieter Oosthuizen



Welcoming

Khenmo Tsering Lhamo to Tara Mandala

Tara Mandala is deeply honored to welcome Khenmo Tsering Lhamo to our community. Arriving October 20th on a sponsored visa, she will be in residence to support the Sangha and share her vast knowledge of Buddhist philosophy and ritual practice. Her presence offers an extraordinary opportunity for students to connect and deepen their understanding.

Ordained in 1990 at Shugseb Nunnery in Tibet, Khenmo Tsering has dedicated over three decades to study, practice, and teaching. A graduate of the Nyingma Nunnery Institute in Himachal Pradesh, India, she holds a Master's in Buddhist Philosophy, with advanced studies in the profound texts of Jigmé Lingpa, Longchenpa, and Nagarjuna.

The title "Khenmo," the feminine form of Khenpo, signifies mastery in Buddhist philosophy and teaching, an honor rarely bestowed upon women. Her arrival at Tara Mandala is both historic and inspiring, a flowering of decades of commitment within the Tibetan nunneries, and a living inspiration for practitioners around the world.





Cabin Rehabin'

\$13,800 Raised So Far!

Help us restore our retreat cabins

We began this campaign to improve our cabins this summer and have already raised \$13,800 towards our goal. We still need your help!

The Tara Mandala retreat cabins are like no other place to enter into a deep personal solo retreat. For years, these cabins have been the foundation for insight, clarity, and liberation. Recently, our onsite team went through each of our five cabins and surrounding grounds with a fine-tooth comb, identifying:

- sagging floors
- weathered decks
- need for new water spigots
- solar panels

The lists are detailed, but workable through your contributions to this Cabin Rehabin' project that will support practitioners like yourself for years to come.



From the Archives: Cabin exterior walls installed

Your generosity not only repairs structures but sustains a living tradition.



Ceiling ready to be lovingly restored



Floor showing the wear of time, awaiting renewal

Every gift directly supports retreatants by creating safe, comfortable, and inspiring spaces for deep practice. Together, we ensure these sacred cabins remain places of refuge and transformation for generations of practitioners in the future.



A secluded place in cabins

Ways to Give:

- **Online:** Visit the Tara Mandala website and select Donate.
- **By Mail:** Send a check payable to Tara Mandala to the official mailing address.
- **Gifts of Stock or Planned Giving:** Contact giving@taramandala.org

Instructions for Making a Tax-Free Donation

Tara Mandala is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. All contributions are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.



A Look at Tara Mandala Fall Volunteer Week

This fall, Tara Mandala welcomed a group of eight dedicated volunteers for our annual Fall Volunteer Service Week. Some were returning friends, including one volunteer here for her third time who is now applying for the Living Dharma program next summer. For others, it was their first time to the land, finding that service was a meaningful way to step into the mandala, to connect with the practices, and meet the community. One volunteer reflected:



A heartfelt volunteer in the garden

“It felt so aligned, we have read Lama Tsultrim’s books and joined her online, but now that we have come to the land, we’re joining Magyu and coming back next summer.”

A Week of Practice and Community

Throughout the week, each person was matched with tasks that fit their skills and interests, from clearing and organizing spaces to deep cleaning in the kitchen, making the week both joyful and productive. Alongside the practical work, volunteers joined the daily practices on the land, weaving service with community and spiritual connection.

The week carried the energy of renewal—clearing not only physical spaces but also surfacing and releasing old patterns. Together, the group experienced the unique beauty of giving back to Tara Mandala while cultivating the bonds that sustain our sangha.



Volunteers with Lama Gyurme in the Tara Temple Gardens

Preparing for Winter

As the season turned, attention shifted toward winterizing the retreat center. The team carefully closed yurts, took down dining and glamping tents, and built structures to carefully store gear and supplies so they are ready for use next year. The Trikaya Tara Temple was cleaned from top to bottom, repairs were noted, and spaces were refreshed after an effulgent season of retreats. The existing garden beds were cleared and nourished, preparing for planting Tara's Gardens for next spring.

“Walking through the land now, one can feel the readiness for winter and the strong foundation laid for the year to come.”

— Mia Castle, Tara Mandala Retreat Center Director



Taking down the dining tent outside the Community Building at Tara Mandala

Offer Volunteer Service at Tara Mandala →

Discover how to contribute your skills, support the mandala, and experience meaningful connection through service. Opportunities available year-round.



Tara's Pure Land

Building a Sacred Legacy Together

*"Even amid construction, the atmosphere carries
a powerful presence..."*

In Tara's Pure Land, the Zhitro Temple is taking form. It is not only a building, but a spiritual place of remembrance where you can leave a part of your legacy for future generations.

Each visit to Tara's Pure Land brings a sense of awe, as the temple takes shape before our eyes with new progress visible every day. The roof joists and exterior walls are now in place, the gables and columns have arrived by flatbed truck, and work has begun on the inner rooms. Thanks to the meticulous care of our contractor, Michael Ross, the site remains pristine and revered, free of debris and held continuously in an exalted state.

Even amid construction, the atmosphere carries a powerful presence, reminding us of the sacred purpose of this temple.

Lama Gyurme carefully measured the niches designed to hold as many sacred memorial stupas as possible. These beautifully crafted stupas inlaid with turquoise and coral stones come with an engravable plate to hold your name and sentiments that will create connections with future generations.

By reserving a memorial stupa to hold your or a loved one's ashes in the niches of the columbarium, a part of your legacy will remain with the sangha in perpetuity.

Each stupa will be ceremoniously placed in its niche by our Sangha



Memorial Stupa



Progressing construction of the Zhitro temple at Tara's Pure Land

Learn more about [Tara's Pure Land](#) →



A Living Mandala:

Tara's Gardens Take Root

After a challenging spring of health struggles, Lama Tsultrim returned to Tara Mandala's sacred land and was struck by something unexpected—the sparse gardens surrounding the Trikaya Tara Temple. Everything she has built here has been about cultivation: of practice, of community, of the awakened heart. Now, her vision extends into the earth itself.

Tara's Gardens is more than beautification. It's a living teaching about what happens when intention meets soil, when devotion takes root in the actual ground beneath our feet.

Think of what a garden really is. You take this tiny seed—so small it almost looks like nothing. You put it in the dark, under the soil. And then... it opens. It becomes what it was always meant to be. That's the teaching we practice every time we sit on the cushion. That's the truth we're now being invited to plant into the land at Tara Mandala.

The Gift That Doubles

Here's where something extraordinary happens: a generous matching gift of \$40,000 means every dollar you contribute becomes two. Your \$50 becomes \$100. Your \$500 becomes \$1,000. It's generosity meeting generosity—your offering creating twice the abundance.

We're cultivating \$108,000 in total to create a mandala of herbs, roses, and aromatherapy plants surrounding the temple, while nourishing the living dharma of Tara Mandala's retreats, programs, and sacred land that holds practitioners from around the world.

Each of us has planted ourselves in practice. Each of us is a seed of intention, leaning toward the light of the Dharma. Together, we are growing—sometimes underground, sometimes in radiant bloom. Together, we make a living garden.



Rendering by Landscape Architect Karen Tomkins

The flowers themselves offer teachings and medicine:

Wild Bergamot - for colds, sore throats, digestive issues.

Yarrow - for wound healing, anti-inflammatory, fevers.

Echinacea - for immune support, wounds, colds, infections.

Russian Sage - for digestive aid, calming teas, aromatherapy.

Mullein - for respiratory support, earaches, coughs.



Wild Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*)



Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)



Echinacea (*Echinacea purpurea*)



Russian Sage (*Perovskia atriplicifolia*)



Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)

Gifts That Bloom

Your contribution supports not just the physical garden, but the entire ecosystem of practice at Tara Mandala:

Sacred Grove ~ \$10,000

Flourishing Dharma ~ \$5,000

Garden Sanctuary ~ \$1,000

Blossoming Support ~ \$500

Seeds of Love ~ \$108

Add a personal note with your donation — we'll compile these loving messages into a beautiful book for Lama Tsultrim, creating a garden of words to match the garden of flowers blooming in her honor.

Give by December 31st to be included in the book!

Gift for you: Receive a downloadable PDF of Lama Tsultrim's Seed Syllable Calligraphy ~ golden TAM, in return for your gift!

What We're Really Planting

This is about joining our devotion with the cycles of nature. It's about honoring Lama's vision in a form that will continue to grow and give back long after we're gone. The gardens will support pollinators, provide herbs for healing, offer beauty to retreatants, and stand as a physical reminder that practice doesn't just happen in the meditation hall—it happens everywhere, in everything.

Your contribution—matched dollar for dollar up to **\$40,000**—plants seeds that will bloom for generations.



Lama Tsultrim, flower garden

Plant your seed in Tara's Gardens [here](#) →

Gifts support Tara's Gardens, Tara Mandala's ongoing programs, and where most needed.



Dakinis of the Baltic Sea

by Bettina Höldrich

Dedication

*To Lama Tsultrim Allione
Most precious teacher
You introduced the Dakinis to us
You made it easy and natural to trust in our true nature
Where would we be without you!*

There is a place at the coast of the Baltic Sea, called the Meadows of Stralsund (in German "Sundische Wiesen," west of Ruegen Island). A place full of transformation and wonder! It was the end of September when we came to this wild and beautiful peninsula, just a strip of land between the sea and a big lagoon. 40,000 cranes rest there when they migrate.

Today it's a National Park. But just until a few decades ago, it was a place of warfare and exploitation. Big farming companies, one after another, tried to squeeze some profit out of the land, applying more and more chemical fertilizer. But the soil was too sandy, they all failed.



Sundische Wiesen National Park, Germany

Most of the time, military people used the isolated land to “play war.” First the Prussian army. Then the Nazis forced the few small farmers that were left to leave their land, and used the farm houses as targets for their bombs.

After World War II, the National Democratic army took over, continuing to bring war to this peaceful place of nature. All of them drained the marshland, taking away a rare and precious refuge for animals, birds and plants.

The Meadows of Stralsund have been mistreated for so long in so many ways. And yet, as someone in a leaflet of the National Park stated:

“The land didn't allow anyone to force it into something else than what it really is — wilderness, nature, free of any kind of dominance.”

Today it again displays all its beauty to people that come to experience it. Only a few trails run through it, the rest is complete wilderness. When the cranes are there, there is a limited number of visitors. So rare and precious in the middle of Europe. They opened up canals to the sea in order to let in water and reestablish the marshland. And the wildlife is coming back!



Like the Dakinis of the Baltic sea always preserved the land for a time of peace. No matter how much greed and hatred there is on the surface, the “true nature” remains untouched. And it's so beautiful when it shines through! When we walked down that trail, we said, Our vision when we walked down that trail:

Just imagine if all the places of war could be like this one day—transformed into peaceful protected areas where nature can unfold!

But it's not easy to imagine, with all those wars that are going on!

Right—but when we were young, Germany was divided by the wall, countries were separated by the Iron curtain, and we had the Cold War—who would have imagined that one day the army would leave, and we would be allowed to walk here freely and peacefully, in the middle of nature??

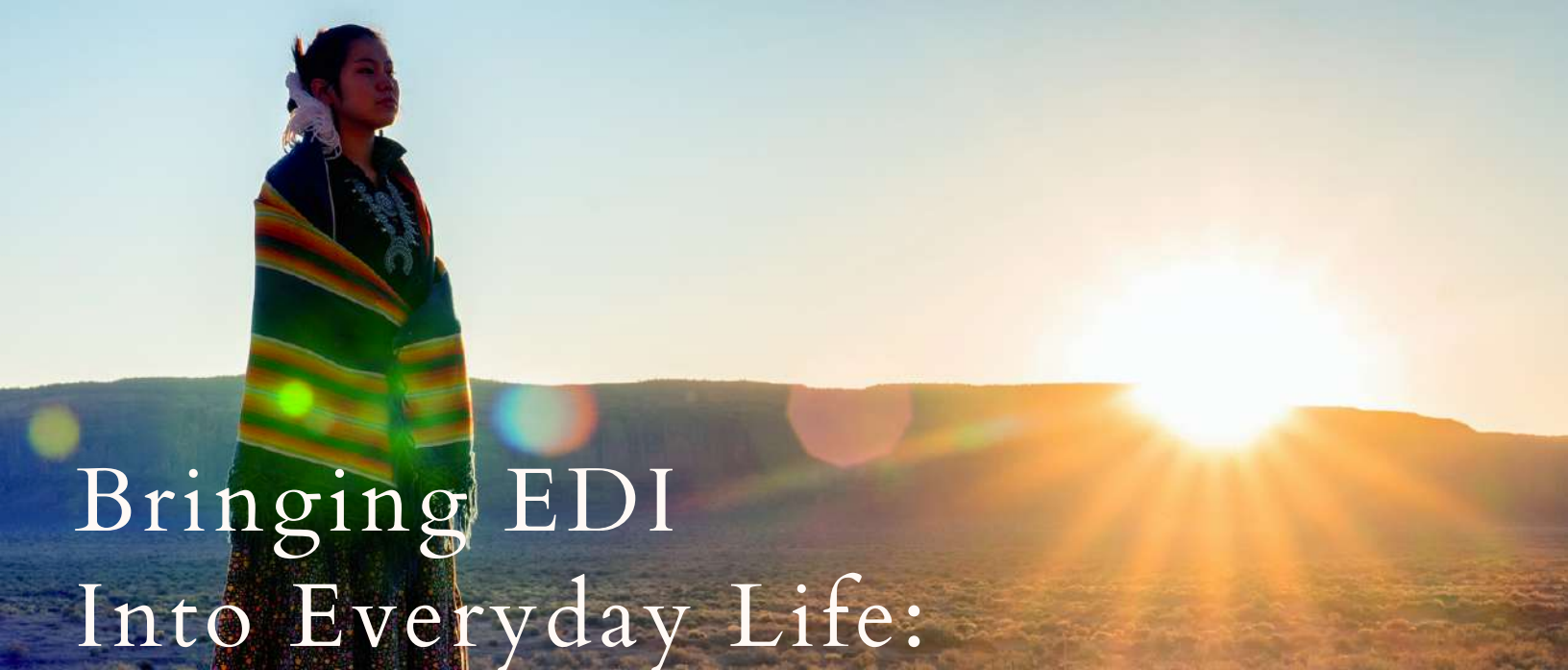
OK, yes, that’s true—we would have said that it is completely impossible!
Like some crazy idea of outer space! Hmmm.... Well, yes, let's imagine...!

“The land didn't allow anyone to force it into something else than what it really is — wilderness, nature, free of any kind of dominance.”

— Bettina Holdrich - German Tara Mandala Sangha



Sundische Wiesen National Park, Germany

A woman stands in a field at sunset, wearing a vibrant poncho with horizontal stripes in shades of green, yellow, orange, and red. She is looking towards the right, where the sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow and lens flare effects. The background shows rolling hills under a clear sky.

Bringing EDI Into Everyday Life:

Reflections from Tara Mandala's EDI Council

One of the defining qualities of our EDI Council members is a heartfelt curiosity about culture, community, and the many ways we can learn and grow together. In honor of Native American Heritage Month this November, we turn our attention to the wisdom and traditions of indigenous peoples of North America, highlighting resources that touch on connections with the people, their practice of generosity and reciprocity, and the spirit of cultural openness in creating community. Our history is rooted with the Ute and Pueblo people on the sacred land of Tara Mandala, and we want to honor and share this connection.

We want to invite our Sangha to walk alongside us in this learning, embodying curiosity and respect as we deepen our understanding together.



From the Archives: Lama Tsultrim with Dave and young Tulku Ösel Dorje on horseback by the teepee — Kapala Meadow, Tara Mandala

Call to Action from Lopön Karla Jackson-Brewer

While recently listening to NPR, Lopön Karla heard a story about Native American author Angeline Boulley. She is a #1 New York Times best-selling author of riveting stories written for young adult readers. Her novel *Firekeeper's Daughter* was an instant success, sharing perspectives and weaving stories from her Ojibwe lineage, following a teen who unearths corruption in her community. This novel will soon be adapted for TV on Netflix, produced by Barack and Michelle Obama's studio, Higher Ground.

This blossomed into further reflection on the rich culture and activism that exists in Native American communities. They offer teachings regarding the meaning and importance of offering our gratitude and acknowledgement of the ground we walk upon, call home, or refer to as "mine".

This land, regardless of where you are on the earth, has been tended, stewarded, and cared for by generations of people before us. When we weave together appreciation of these people and the earth, we are acknowledging their contributions and our interconnection with the earth herself.

With our daily prayers, as Buddhists, intentions, and generation of our bodhicitta, our awakened heartmind, we can link together an authentic presence with an evolving awareness and appreciation for our shared earth.



The Big, Big Tent in Kapala Meadow (Tara Mandala, 2008)

Land acknowledgement is just the beginning. Buying and reading Native American authors provides informed support for further action. We need to speak out about missing Native American women, learn and speak out about the atrocities of the theft of Native American children who were sent to boarding schools and never returned home again. Moving beyond Aspirational Bodhicitta to the bodhicitta of action creates the transformation that American society so desperately needs.

Reflection from Pamela Ambrose

"I leaf through the pages of *Earth Medicines*, by Felicia Cocotzin Ruiz, looking for the recipe for making cone incense. My friend recently gave me a bouquet of Black Sage and I want to preserve the now dried plant and offer it as a part of the protector practice when I sit for Guru Yoga. I love this book for the crafty concoctions that are so simple and can easily be a part of everyday life. I see her as a key Ratna ally, helping me to refine and polish the elements into lip balm, rose beads, cone incense, alkaline waters (and much more), that I can have on hand and offer as gifts."

Felicia Cocotin Ruiz identifies as Mexican and is an initiated Curandera. Her book emphasizes that "the spiritual and physical are interwoven". She organizes it around the elemental families which are key building blocks for healing and spiritual deepening, "acknowledging the elements playfully and more deeply... can help keep harmony in your life". I appreciate her perspective and practical guidance and am grateful to her for offering these recipes. Her work compliments the psychological transmutation of the mandala work by offering guidance for integrating the elements into self-care resources that uplift and delight.

EDI in Action

Our Executive Director, Cady Allione, led an Equity-Centered Community Design (ECCD) initiative in Pagosa Springs, bringing together people of all ages, races, genders, ethnicities, and abilities to share meals, ideas, and vision. The result: Playground for the People — a grant funded ADA-accessible park that celebrates all ages and abilities, uplifts the cultural and Indigenous heritage of the land, and transforms a stretch of the uptown wetlands bike path into a beautiful community space for generations to come.



Executive Director Cady Allione with her sons at Playground for the People, Pagosa Springs, CO, USA

BOOKS ON THE SHELF:

Thanku: Poems of Gratitude by Carole Lindstrom (1st–4th grade); **A Girl Called Echo** by Katharena Vermette (8th–12th grade); **Race to the Sun** by Rebecca Roanhorse (Middle School); **Firekeeper's Daughter** by Angeline Boulley (YA); **Braiding Sweetgrass** by Robin Wall Kimmerer (adult); **The Antelope Wife** by Louise Edrich (adult); **Almanac of the Dead** by Leslie Harjo (adult).



SUSTAINING SANGHA

Become a Member of Tara Mandala: Join Sustaining Sangha

Membership at Tara Mandala means becoming the **heartbeat** that keeps the **flame of wisdom and compassion** alive in our world.

As you nurture Tara Mandala, you receive nurturing in return.

- Connect intimately with **Lama Tsultrim** at monthly **Lama Lounge!** gatherings.
- Deepen your practice with **members' only teachings** and our **Virtual Vajrayana Guide**.
- Enjoy **meaningful discounts** on retreats, programs, and the **Dakini Store**.

Already a member?

Consider upgrading your monthly gift. As your generosity grows, so do your benefits—and your support opens doors for others through **scholarships**, ensuring these precious teachings flourish for generations.

Lama Lounge!

For Our Sustaining Sangha on

yana

TARA MANDALA DIGITAL DHARMA HUB



This is the sacred cycle of giving and receiving, where together we become the living pulse of Tara Mandala.

"Sustaining Sangha membership was something that opened another door of understanding, in one way reciprocity, in a way balancing all of what we receive, all the blessings, all the teachings, all the stream of wisdom that is always pouring from Tara Mandala."

— *Esteban, Sustaining Sangha member*



Become a member
Upgrade your impact. Join Sustaining Sangha today.



Why I Give

by Drimé

I was broken when I met Lama Tsultrim. After twenty years of silence, I had just gained enough courage to report a serial abuser to the authorities. Facing that truth was my full-time work—a heavy, lonely pursuit that swallowed everything else. I couldn't hold a regular job. I was living on scraped-together savings.

In that first retreat with Lama-la in Warsaw, I learned about Magyu: The Mother Lineage. It undoubtedly called to me, but the tuition cost made it clear: I couldn't afford to join. Still, I was encouraged to apply. Tara Mandala welcomed me in. I realized it was thanks to its members' generosity. I immediately became a Sustaining Sangha member myself at the level that was possible for me.

In that moment, I understood something—becoming a member is a way of saying: **I will help carry this with you.**

There is reciprocity in this. The temple roof repaired before winter. Prayer flags replaced when they've frayed to threads. The water system maintained so there is always tea to pour and bowls to fill. A practice text translated that keeps this lineage alive. The staff able to focus on their work instead of scrambling for what they need to survive.

I see these things and I know: **my care is in them.** It moves me to see the truth of it. Not pride. Just the fact: what I give makes something possible.

Ten dollars a month does this. So does thirty. So does a hundred. It's simply the recognition that the place which nourishes you is sustained by you. That your companions on the path are never turned away for lack of funds. You never know whose life your care and kindness will touch.



Sangha members at Tara Mandala

Every month when I give, I remember how Tara Mandala held me up when I had nothing left to stand on. I think of the vulnerable girl I was—timid, exposed, alone. If my monthly contribution helps another like her take a retreat, receive a transmission, or join Magyu, then I am there for her.

I give because caring for what has cared for me
is the most natural thing in the world.

If you care, be a Member, too. .

The Warsaw Mermaid and the Song of Dharma

A Polish Legend with a Tibetan Buddhist Heart

Celebrating Polish American Heritage Month

If you have been to Tara Mandala, or attended a program online that is live streamed from the Tara Temple, you may have noticed on Lama Tsultrim Allione's throne there are two women with fish tails (in Himalayan art their tails are sometimes fishlike, sometimes serpentlike).

These are Naginis—female water guardians who protect the teachings, hidden spiritual treasures, the teacher, and sacred places of power, including the teacher's throne itself. They uphold the flow of blessings and embody the feminine energy of wisdom.

In honor of **Polish American Heritage Month**, the founding Sangha Leader of Tara Mandala Poland and EDI Council Advisor, **Iwona Khandro**, has a Polish legend to share, one that is both beautiful and deeply symbolic and carries the spirit of bodhicitta and timeless wisdom across cultures.



Naginis from the throne at Tara Mandala. In the center of Lama Tsultrim's throne rests the Dharma Wheel (Dharmachakra) with the Gankyil, the whirling symbol of bliss—signifying the Buddha's teaching and the perfect turning of the Wheel of Dharma.



The Warsaw Mermaid – emblem of the city.

The Mermaid of My Birthplace

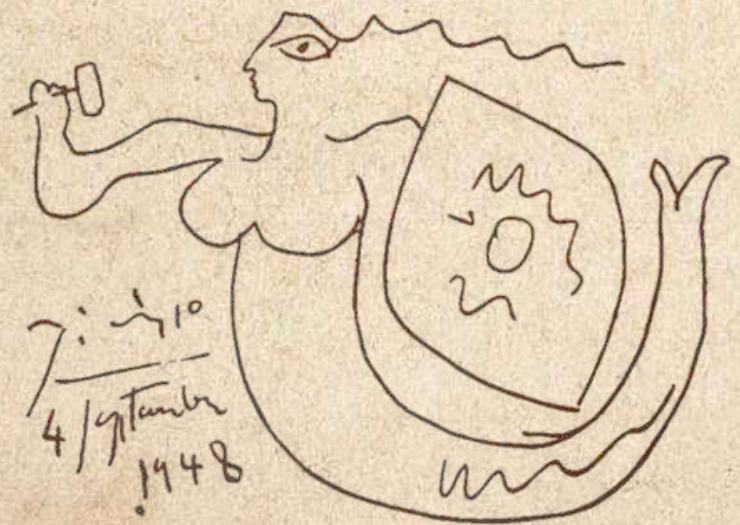
I was born in Warsaw, the capital of Poland. The city's emblem is a half-woman, half-fish figure—the **Warsaw Mermaid (Sirenka)**—who is strikingly similar to the Nagini. The first mentions of the mermaid and her depictions in Poland date back to the year 1300!

Her image appears throughout the city and even on the coat of arms of the Polish Parliament. Isn't it extraordinary that the same feminine, aquatic protector shows up in both Polish and Himalayan symbolism?

The Legend of the Warsaw Mermaid

The legend of the Warsaw Mermaid reaches far back into the past and even contains a hand-drawn image by **Pablo Picasso** himself!

The story begins with two mermaid sisters who set out into the world. One, longing for warmer waters, swam all the way to Copenhagen, Denmark, where she still adorns the harbor, gazing eternally into the distance.



Drawing by Picasso himself on the wall of a Warsaw townhouse

The other sister, intrigued by the charm of unknown lands and curious about people, swam into the Vistula River to the area of today's Warsaw. There, the golden-haired mermaid, enchanted by nature and the sight of the growing town, decided to stay. The townspeople told each other that a mermaid lived in the river's depths, though no one had yet seen her. Only fishermen returning from their catch sometimes heard her beautiful song.

One day, three of them met on the shore. "If we catch the mermaid and take her to the prince, we'll get a fortune in gold," said one. The others nodded and agreed to set out in a few days, when the moon would be full.



At night, under the full moon, they lay in wait in their boat, holding a strong net. They didn't wait long. The mermaid emerged from the waves, sat on a riverside rock, and began to sing. The fishermen, entranced by her voice, were unable to move. At last, the oldest of them shook himself, pulled wax from his pocket, and they all plugged their ears. No longer hearing the mermaid's song, they cast their net over her. Terrified, they pulled her to shore and carried her to one of their huts. They left the youngest fisherman to guard her while they prepared a cart to take her to the prince.

The young man watched her with curiosity. When he saw her open her mouth, he removed the wax from his ears to hear her song. "Release me and come with me, please!" begged the mermaid, humming softly.

Enchanted by her voice, the fisherman took her in his arms and carried her back to the river. When the others saw that the mermaid was gone, they rushed in pursuit, but it was too late. The mermaid was already swimming away.

The mermaid stopped for a moment and called out to those on the shore:

“I sang for you because I loved you! Yet you caught me like an ordinary fish and wanted to sell me! But since one of you saved me, I will return with a sword and shield to protect the inhabitants of this beautiful city from danger, because I have experienced protection from it myself.”

The Mermaid promised to defend Warsaw from external danger, but a secret version of the legend says that she also vowed to guard the hearts of its people, so they would remain free from evil and always good.

Symbols and Hidden Meanings

This legend is full of hidden symbols and inspires us to explore their meaning. The values it carries are, in essence, common to every spiritual tradition — the most important of which is the goodness of the human heart.

The mermaid's song holds particular significance because of its magnetic quality, which can be compared to the Speech of Dharma. The Buddha's speech is described as a pure vibration of wisdom and compassion, expressed through teachings, mantras, and melodies. It can appear as words that awaken understanding or as sounds in nature — a flute, the wind, or a bird — perceived as Dharma by those who can hear it that way.



This is a sculpture of the Warsaw Mermaid, the symbol of the city of Warsaw in Poland. The monument is located in the Łazienki Królewskie Park.



Lama Tsultrim Allione at the Warsaw Mermaid monument in the Old Town, 2014

In many legends, the mermaid's song is said to draw listeners inward, calling them to face what lies hidden beneath the surface of the mind and to uncover the truth and sensitivity that reside there.

This song has also been associated with **eros and the longing for complete union**, known in Tibetan as *zung 'jug chenpo*, "the great oneness".

It may be understood as the voice of the Absolute, calling beings to the "other shore," as described in the Heart Sutra:

gate gate pāragate pārasamgate bodhi svāhā — total transcendence.

In this sense, the mermaid's song functions like a mantra, a vibration that bypasses the intellect and opens the heart to awareness. In the Warsaw Mermaid legend, when fishermen blocked their ears to her voice, they turned away from their own inner guidance and committed harm. When one fisherman finally listened, he acted with clarity and compassion, freeing the mermaid and restoring harmony.

A Blessing from Warsaw

"I hope you enjoyed this Polish legend of the Warsaw Mermaid – the Nagini. I wish to end this beautiful story with the aspiration that all beings may hear the sacred song from the depths – the call to awaken the heart – so that the world and its inhabitants may become better with each passing day."



Dorje Lopön Charlotte and Lopön Pieter with the Polish Sangha leaders at the Mermaid Monument in Warsaw, 2023



Mermaid in my Garden

The Mermaid has been my favorite inspiration since childhood. I love the saying,

“I must be a mermaid. I have no fear of depth, but a great fear of shallow water.”

Dharma also encourages us to go deep, to be mindful, to discover our inner potential—our Buddha nature. In my forest garden, under a tree, I have my own Mermaid—she’s green like my garden and is a reminder of the song of the Dharma flowing through my heart.

with love from Warsaw,
Iwona Khandro - Tara Mandala Poland

Explore The Dakini Store

BOOKS • PRACTICE TEXT • STATUES • RITUAL ITEMS • MEDITATION

Consider Tara Mandala for your holiday gifts

- Gift an artisanal rug for someone's home
- Cashmere or Linen handcrafted scarf to warm and enrich
- Incense and Brass Offering Bowls to create a home shrine
- Exquisite thangkas to ground and inspire special spaces
- Books that heal, uplift, and encourage
- Prayer flags to carry our wish to liberate beings
- Statuary to remind us of our inherent nature

**Treasures await inside the Dakini Store.
Members receive a special discount.**





FALL
SALE
30% Savings
on select items



Citrus, Hibiscus, Rosehips Tea Recipe

Ingredients:

1 tbsp dried rosehips

1 tbsp dried hibiscus flowers

1 tbsp fresh lemongrass, bruised and roughly chopped, or 1 tsp dried lemongrass

2 cups water

Honey or agave, to taste (optional)

Instructions:

- Prepare the lemongrass: If using fresh lemongrass, use the back of a knife to bruise the stalk. This will release its essential oils and fragrant citrus flavor.
- Boil the water: Bring 2 cups of water to a boil in a small saucepan.
- Steep the herbs: Remove the pot from the heat and add the dried hibiscus flowers, dried rosehips, and prepared lemongrass.
- Cover and infuse: Cover the pot and let the tea steep for 10 to 15 minutes. Steeping for longer will result in a stronger, more robust flavor.

Strain:

Pour the tea through a fine-mesh sieve or strainer to remove the solids.

Sweeten and serve: Stir in your desired amount of honey or agave while the tea is still warm. You can enjoy the tea hot or let it cool and serve it over ice for a refreshing iced tea.

Through the revival of our herbal apothecary and establishing Tara's Healing Gardens, Tara Mandala will be embarking on small batch tea production. Coming soon!

