

Tsegyalgar East Community Meeting Minutes 4/28/24

Gakyil members present (online): Alex Daggett, Marsha Ellison, Martha Tack, Ellen Halbert

Community members present: In person were Dominik Niceva, Helena Bankovic, Paula Barry, Vern Harrington, Jim Smith, Efrem Marder, Marit Cranmer, Lynn Newdome, David Hayes. Online were Nancy Paris, Caroline Hotaling, Cindy Thibeau, Ruben Eduardo, Adriane Boscardin, Nick Boutros, John LaFrance, Janet Janka, Mark Alton-Follansbee, David Bishop, Gabriel Marder, Naomi Zeitz, Susan Hall.

Guru yoga

Agenda:

Red Report:

- The report was sent to members prior to the meeting and was summarized, including projects underway, planned, or needed at the schoolhouse and at Khandroling. Particularly noted were the road work soon to begin at Khandroling, necessitating road closure, and the need for significant structural repairs at the schoolhouse, including the roof.
- Dark retreat questionnaire results were summarized. Those who volunteered to help assess the needs, expenses, and feasibility of rehabilitating the cabin have been contacted, and two local members will organize a visit to the cabin for all interested, to assess. Their findings and subsequent research will be presented to the community for decision making.
- Members asked about how to decide priorities, offered suggestions about funding and obtaining contractors' estimates.
- Red gakyil asked for volunteers to help with tech support at retreats, programs and practices. Tech support has been provided by a skeleton crew of dedicated individuals, but these few cannot meet the needs long term without help, especially for summer retreats. Volunteers will have retreat fees waived for programs they assist with.

Blue Report:

- The report was sent to members prior to the meeting and was summarized. It was noted that of last year's retreats, Dance Dance Dance brought in the most donations and had the largest in person attendance, while Elias Capriles' Dakini Upadesha retreat had the largest online attendance. Upcoming retreats planned for this year were listed. Yellow answered a question about the overall profitability of last year's retreats: retreat income was about twice the amount of expenses. In response to a question about inviting international teachers this year blue said they are featuring local teachers this year but have international teachers planned for 2025.
- Lynn Newdome presented her vision for her upcoming Introduction to Dzogchen. Her focus is on welcoming new members and offering them resources, and on attracting newcomers to the community. Newcomers will be encouraged to receive transmission

from Yeshe Namkhai in June. Lynn mentioned the possibility of ongoing practices for new members and offering opportunities for new members to learn practices after Yeshe's retreat. Members asked for and received clarification that Yeshe will give transmission in June.

- Nick was asked to discuss the Death and Dying group. He reported the screening and discussion of the Tukdam documentary was well attended and generated interest to continue activities, but the group has since been inactive due to personal circumstances. It was suggested that the Summer Sangha Retreat could provide a chance to meet and attract new group members.

Yellow Report:

- The report was sent to members prior to the meeting and was summarized. First quarter numbers are in line with last year's first quarter. Budget projections for 2024 are based on 2023, and focusing on large expenses. An unexpected cost increase was 30% rise in insurance for properties, which hopefully can be reduced for future payments.
- Unrestricted donations can be used for unexpected expenses; we received a recent \$10,000 donation from a charity. Reserves (currently about \$100,000) can be used to fund the 2 main projects (road paving and schoolhouse painting) with plenty leftover. Fundraising will be used for other large projects. Main checking account at Greenfield Coop has \$54,000; B of A savings account has \$3600 from rent of Tsegylgar House in Dzamlingar; Greenfield Coop money market fund has \$88,000.
- Dominik was asked to report on membership. She noted that first quarter membership income is more than subsequent quarters because most people renew at the beginning of the year. As of March we have 170 members, including 131 ordinary, 21 sustaining and 2 global meritorious. Member total is down 38 from last year. Dominik noted that we need to increase membership to make up the \$75,000 projected income from member dues. Community members discussed pros and cons of offering incentives to scale up to the next membership level. A suggestion was made to facilitate and encourage the giving of added donations when members pay dues. Dominik noted our member dues are higher than other gars and more members renew at sustaining levels.
- Yellow asked for official approval of the budget and members voted to approve.

Questions and answers:

- A member asked about the possibility of creating a garden at Khandroling in honor of a recently deceased member, and also of creating a self-funded platform for practice and/or camping, between Mandarava and Togyal cabins. Other members asked to have dead trees cut down that threaten the road and structures on the land, and to remove the deteriorating platform by the pond cabin. The gakyil expressed support for these proposals.
- A question about the status of Tsegylgar's payments to Dzamlingar was clarified by yellow: our debt for Tsegylgar House was paid in full from rents, but we were asked by Dzamlingar to contribute to help pay their debt to Spanish authorities. The debt arose as a result of misunderstanding the local tax regulations. Thanks to a recent donation these

payments have been completed early, until 2026. Therefore, all rent income until then will be ours.

- Members discussed the pros and cons of creating glamping structures at Khandroling.
- Members who recently examined the defects in the universal mandala reported that they are minor, but need to be addressed.

Dedication of merit