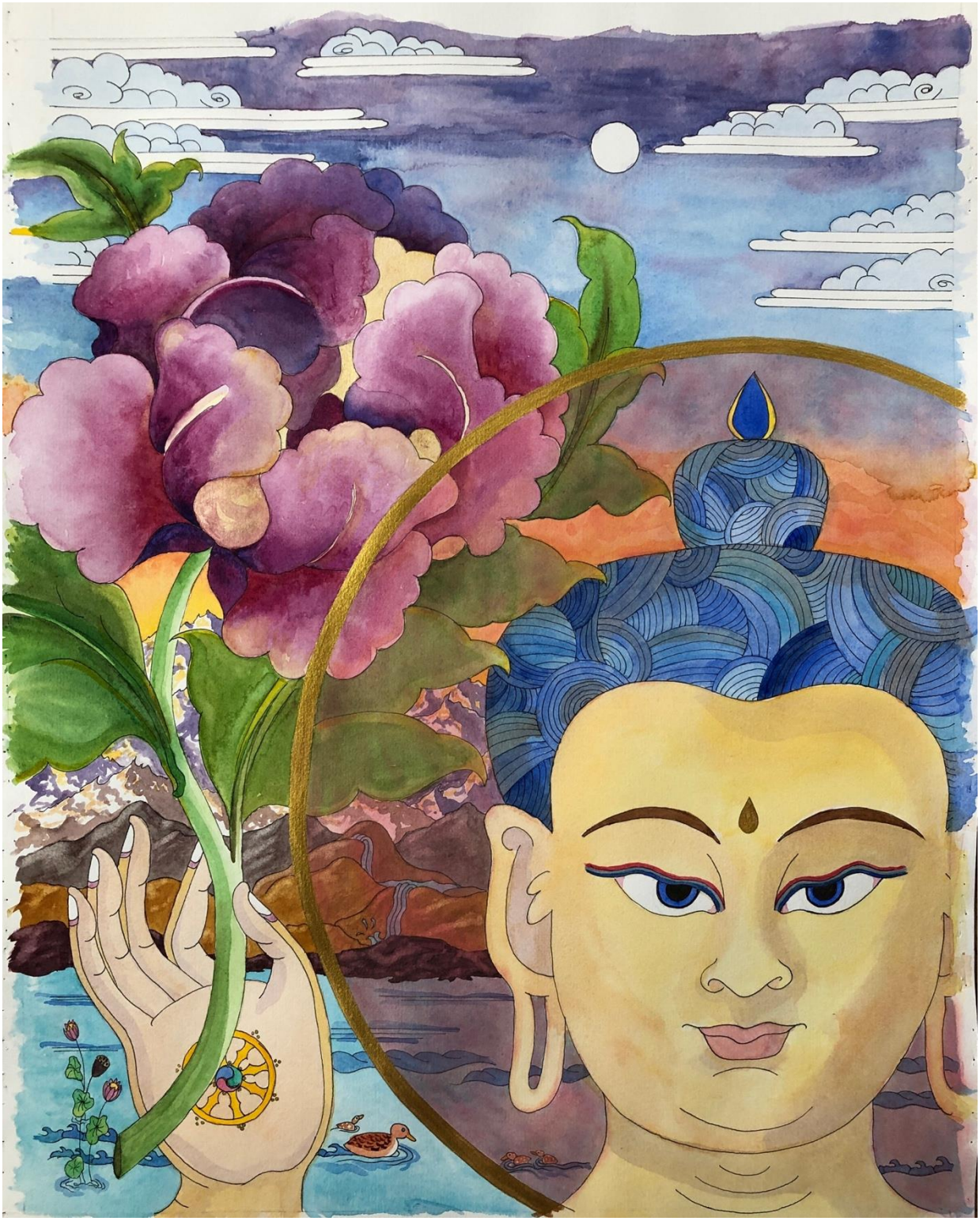
Sea to Sky Retreat Centre (SSRC)
2025 Newsletter



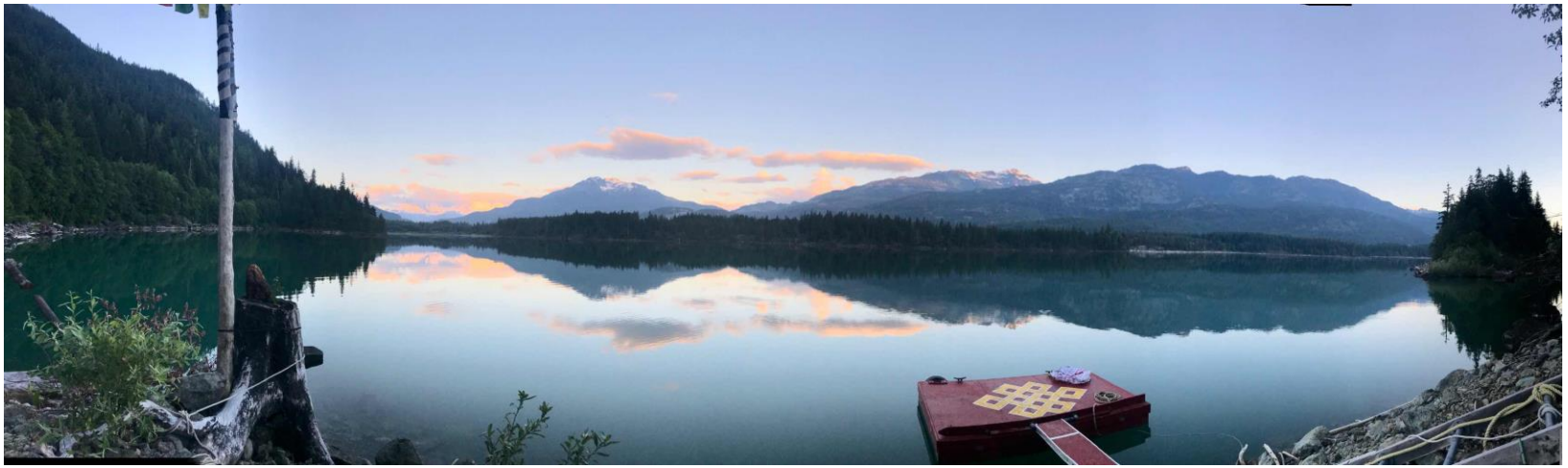
Painted by Tonya Pepper during SSRC Retreat in 2025

Select Photos Of SSRC Activities (2025)

Following is a photo essay based on activities in the Year 2025 at Sea to Sky Retreat Centre (SSRC). It might be little noticed that we observed quietly the 30th anniversary of SSRC after its opening in July 1995.

These photos are supplements to the photos and videos already posted on the SSRC Facebook page :
https://www.facebook.com/SeatoSkyRC?mibextid=LQQJ4d

2025: The 30th Anniversary of SSRC



The first few years of SSRC's operation were documented in the *made-for-TV production of an episode of Quiet Places in 1997 by Gabrielle Schonbach*, the director and producer at Omnifilm Entertainment.

The continuity of this magical place can also be seen in a virtual tour of SSRC made in 2022 by the very talented Kunchuk (Ma Nan), a cinematographer, while he was on retreat at SSRC. Click below to celebrate the ongoing auspicious activity of Sea to Sky Retreat Centre: *https://youtu.be/VIfOWPIrX9I*

Rinpoche's visit in July

The highlight of Year 2025 at SSRC certainly was the visit by Rinpoche. This most relaxing and enjoyable event which was marked by a Gesar Puja, along with Sur and dharma burn pujas. These three are the pujas that Rinpoche often conducts at each of his visits to SSRC. Included in this visit was a unique puja which he had not done at SSRC previously, something akin to the Asian, and in particular the Japanese Ucchusma (Ususama Myoo, Toilet God) puja. We wondered if it might have been to inaugurate the new washroom, designed and installed, by Sacha Dufresne, a visiting and alumni resident volunteer and friend.

Rinpoche's visit to SSRC was relaxed and intimate. Still so much seemed to happen.

Gesar Puja, July 2025

Vajrayana Practice led by SI Instructors

Chime Phagma Nyinthig Practice

Gesar Guru Yoga Practice

For Year 2025 we also include in this photo essay some of the more specific programs, activities and events that highlight what Karma Yoga Fund makes possible by its support of a resident volunteer team. In May a retreat lead by Florence Koh and in September a retreat lead by Chris Jay highlight the Vajrayana practices that took place in Mandarin language and English language respectively. Florence's group retreat focused on CPN practice, as well as daily Riwo Sang and Tara whereas Chris' group retreat focused on Gesar Guru Yoga practice. We're always pleased when the dharma instructors who are very busy with their vast activities including travel and teaching, can commit a certain time to lead retreats at SSRC. While the instructor schedules are in major part, dependent upon Rinpoche's events around the world, we hope that in future that the local SI Vajrayana dharma instructors continue to provide in-person retreats at SSRC.

CPN Retreat for Mandarin Speakers

Tsa Tsa Placement in SSRC Cave

Introduction to Meditation

We've also had the good fortune of having both Bruce Ashton and Cydney Kawamura leading meditation retreats to the greater sangha of Vancouver Lower Mainland, Canada, and US. The autumn Touch and Go Retreat extended into three extra weekdays with more practice and dharma talks, as well as a session of Sadhana of Mahamudra practice for those who stayed beyond the Weekend Warrior phase.

Work as Practice

Work As Practice (WAP) Weekends

SSRC opens the doors to welcome the folks in the local communities who wish to come help us with the outdoor facilities tasks which are overwhelming when done by the resident team alone. With many hands making light work, it appears that these weekends are by far the most popular program, if based upon the waitlist of attendees. We have to limit the size to respect the work of the retreat cooks and kitchen staff, SSRC's accommodation limitations as well as the number of dining tables the space can squeeze in. Each year a Spring Forest Clean-up and Autumn Winter Prep WAP weekends are scheduled with additional mini-work-as-practice weekends as needed and by request. The beauty of these free programs are that they build community where community might be lacking and at the same time they become a gateway for those interested in joining the optional brief morning and late afternoon meditation sessions.

We notice that nearly all WAP participants want to attend the meditation sessions. We rejoice that such an occasion becomes a win-win experience and brings enormous benefits to the centre as well as to many sentient beings involved in some close or distant manner to such good intentions and motivations.

Click here to visit a Facebook post with more Work as Practice photos

The Greater Sangha and SSRC

- Numerous local Buddhist sanghas have been conducting group retreats at SSRC. The dynamic relations created by being their container to hold dharma practice here and the friendships developed over the years, sometimes decades long, are a vital aspect of the experience by KYF recipients.
- The building of connections with other Buddhist lineages and practitioners has opened the view of the SSRC team and has helped us to further understand the interdependence of things as they are.
- We are dharma sisters and brothers here receiving sangha from so many other local communities including Tergar Meditation Community, Insight Meditation Society, Thich Nhat Hanh, TriRatna Buddhists, Zen and several others.
- SSRC serves those from all traditions through Work as Practice to build the greater Buddhist community.

Namgyal Rinpoche Sangha

The following photo is one of many that could be presented to represent the connection of SSRC with the greater Buddhist sangha. SSRC retreats are regularly scheduled by the second generation of students of the late Namgyal Rinpoche, a Canadian-born Buddhist monk originally ordained as Ananda Bodhi and later recognized and enthroned in 1968 by the 16th Karmapa as Namgyal Rinpoche. We are grateful that Mala Sikka and Terry Hogan, who was a personal attendant of Namgyal Rinpoche, have oversight and care for The Dharma Centre of Canada which will observe its 60th year in 2026, making it one of Canada's older retreat centres.

Although these students did not necessarily attend teachings directly from the late Namgyal Rinpoche, nor attend his retreats at the Dharma Centre of Canada in Ontario, as students of Bonni Ross of Wangapeka Study and Retreat Centre in New Zealand, they followed their teacher Bonni and attend the first of Rinpoche teachings and empowerments in Wanaka 2023. As several of the members are now also students of Rinpoche they are our closest vajra brothers and sisters.

In the photo are some of the 2025 KYF recipients with the local Namgyal Rinpoche sangha at the conclusion of one of their regularly scheduled SSRC retreats.

Ringing in New Year with Birthday Celebration

Celebrating the 2025 New Year with alumni Karma Yogis and their families was a treat in early January. Visiting volunteers Judy Liu and Ellen He wanted to make a special visit as it was Ellen's son Kyle's 14th birthday wish to return back to SSRC for a visit. They were having a visit to Whistler Village as it was during their holiday and school break and came for a day long visit. Kyle had just arrived the previous summer for the first time to Canada. He came with his younger brother Oscar (now 12) and Ellen's mother Zhou Kailong. Because of attending the ***Buddhist Family Camp event in 2024 at SSRC*** they met Judy Liu. Judy helped them to re-locate to the right part of town much more convenient to other children, schools, shops, and to Judy's family. We Karma Yogis here at SSRC congratulate the family getting settled in Canada. May their devotion to the dharma and to Rinpoche provide them with a vast sangha of continuous friendship, companionship and support.

Buddhist Family Camp 2025 *(click for FB post)*

SSRC Karma Yoga Alumni 2025 (cont.)

The heart of SSRC are the resident volunteers and here we pay tribute to those who offered service by a period of residence at SSRC in 2025. *(Michiko, Juan, and Evan in top photo & Yani, Ya, and Penny in bottom photo).*

The resident volunteers in 2025 continued in the footsteps of the previous Karma Yogis in serving the centre in accomplishing the activities needed to make dharma programs and teachings manifest at SSRC. Without such service and commitment, nothing could be accomplished to make the dharma happen at SSRC. This has been true from the beginning of the purchase of the land in 1992, through the centre opening as a retreat in 1995, 30 years ago, and will pertain in 2026 and any future years of its operation.

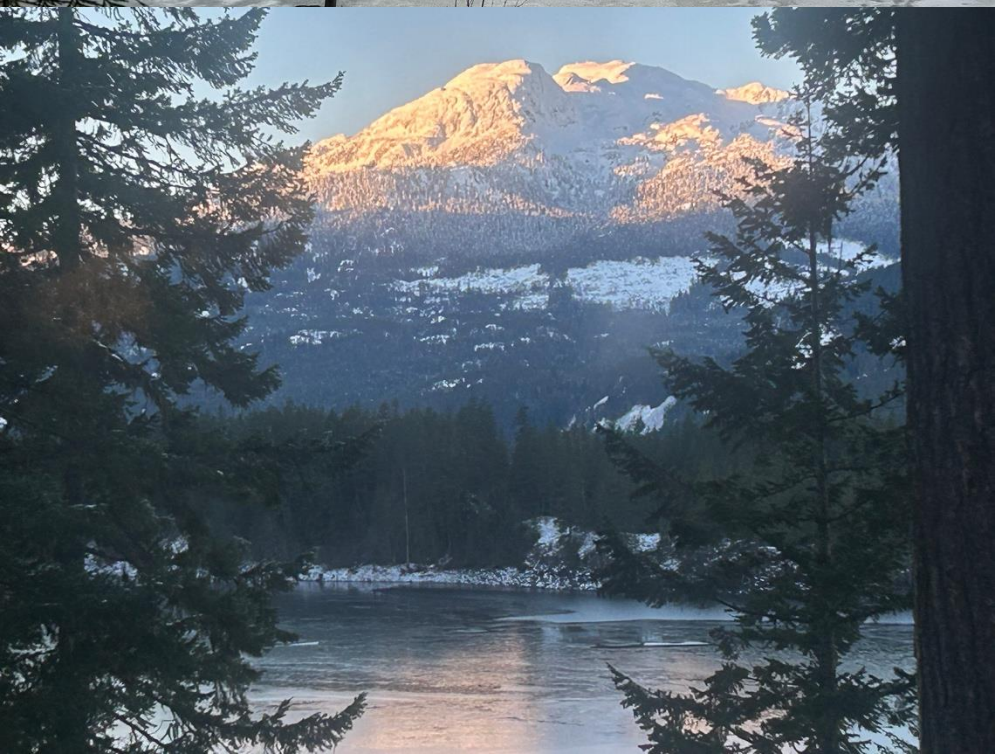
Gratitude must also be expressed for the small monthly stipend offered to the long-term resident volunteers by the wonderful sponsors and administrators of Khyentse Foundation (KF), who's devotion and dedication to Rinpoche continue to replenish the SSRC Karma Yogi Fund (KYF). Thus since 2011,the SSRC Karma Yogis of past, present and future owe an enormous debt of gratitude for the patronage and generosity to the noble KYF project which can only be made possible through KF. Good fortune! Good fortune! Good fortune!

SSRC Karma Yoga Alumni 2025 (cont.)

SSRC Karma Yoga Alumni 2025 (cont.)

Yani

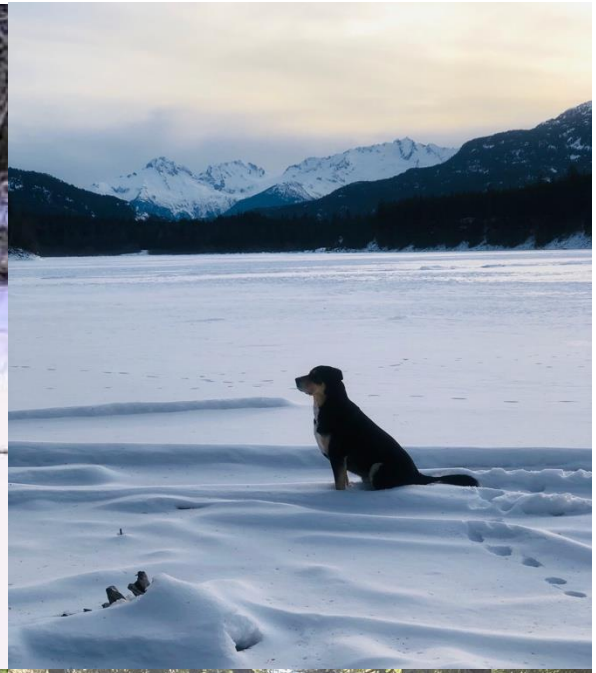
SSRC Karma Yoga Alumni 2025 (cont.)



Mountain Retreat

SSRC is located in the forest wilderness at the base of Black Tusk Mountain on the shores of Daisy Lake. The land is at the meeting point of the traditional territories of the Lil'wat people to the north and the Squamish people to the south. Black Tusk peak, the landing place of the Thunderbird, is sacred to both the Lil'wat and Squamish peoples.

The forest surrounding SSRC has been recognized as a unique ecosystem by the province of B.C. and thereby is protected from logging "in perpetuity " Also, Daisy Lake is protected by a prohibition of commercial recreation. Adjacent to these protection zones around SSRC, there is a huge wilderness park. By virtue of these protections, an exceptionally unique quiet space has been established that is uniquely suited for retreat practice. The Karma Yogis thrive in this environment except for the few who might get cabin-fever, or who otherwise might feel the need to go to the metropolises. There are opportunities for doing just that as town trips are regularly needed for grocery and maintenance supplies. It is s only a short drive north from this unique wilderness setting to Whistler, a world class ski resort, or south to Squamish, a thriving, shopper-friendly town on the shores of a fjord named Howe Sound.



Locals

Powered by Water and Sunshine

SSRC is off-grid and thus the Karma Yogis learn to understand how to work with the elements including the sustainable use of power and other resources. ***Click here to visit the web page with the SSRC Sustainability Plan*****.** Since we are remote from the convenience of towns, we learn to make do with whatever we might have on site on any given day and minimize the need and habit of going to town. We live with the local conditions and adapt to the limitations of living remotely.

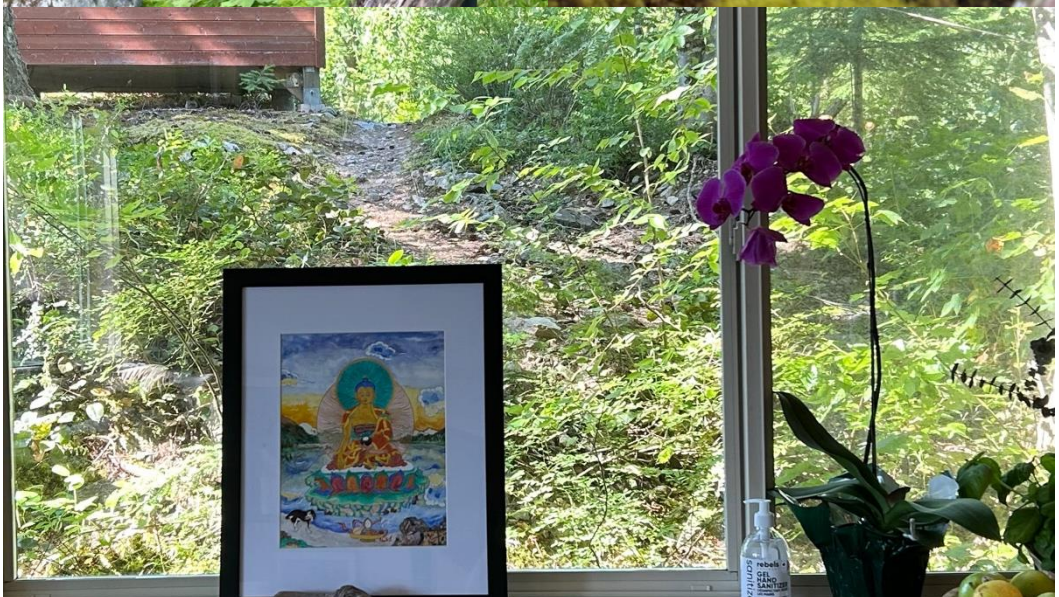
The micro-hydro power sustains most of the power needs and since 2023 we have supplemented it with solar energy **(*see Facebook post showing one of the Solar Panel work parties*).** One of the aims in future is to make better use of the extra solar power that needs to get shut off when the batteries are full. We will need to find a way to connect this intermittent surge of surplus power with the hot water heating systems to reduce propane consumption. Because we live in a dense forested environment there is sufficient fire wood generated by careful forest management and grooming. Often availing themselves are the already dead and seasoned treefalls right onto the SSRC 2.6 gravel road. Two of the buildings are presently being heated by such gifts of pre-seasoned firewood.

Gardening in a rocky land

Gardening is challenging without the purchase of amending soil as this area has very little top soil
Young trees are often seen growing on nurse trees.
Over time the perennials which survived the long cold winters have produced the main features of the small flower garden in front of the Main Lodge and the gardens by the Tea House and Retreat House.

Ongoing Care and Enhancement of SSRC Grounds

Inner and Outer Worlds



Karma Yogis enjoy being in a remote location in the forest wilderness and yet also manage to live in a great deal of comfort at the same time. We see the wildness of nature from our windows or if brave/foolish enough step out to the front porch to take a quick photo; alternatively, we can bring nature inside. One of the individual retreatants who is an art therapist made a lovely water painting thankgha as a gift for SSRC. The Buddha is surrounded by the nearby mountains of Cloudburst and Tantalus Range, with Daisy Lake nearby, replete with our pet dog Ralph. It is as if she recognizes the Buddha Nature here in the hearts of all of the resident Karma Yogis and the visiting guests

We honour the Karma Yogis for contributing, each in their one way, to the noble work of cooking healthy vegetarian meals, food that is nourishing the guest retreatants, as well as

food offering to the kitchen shrine, at group tsoks and pujas, or at times, a spontaneous make-shift shrine such as the small shrine of Ushnisha Vijaya in the Rain Forest Cinema wherein we attended the entire puja event that occurred in Taipei last autumn.

This is the conclusion of the SSRC stories in words and images and videos dedicated to all of the sponsors and well-wishers behind the scenes. We cannot express enough our immense gratitude that you have helped to support a lifestyle of Karma Yoga practice under the auspices of Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse. We pray that this activity propagates the Buddhadharma and that, as Rinpoche once said to us: “we hope it brings some benefit, to some people, for some time”.