

# BIG LOVE

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*The Life and Teachings of Lama Yeshe*

Adele Hulse

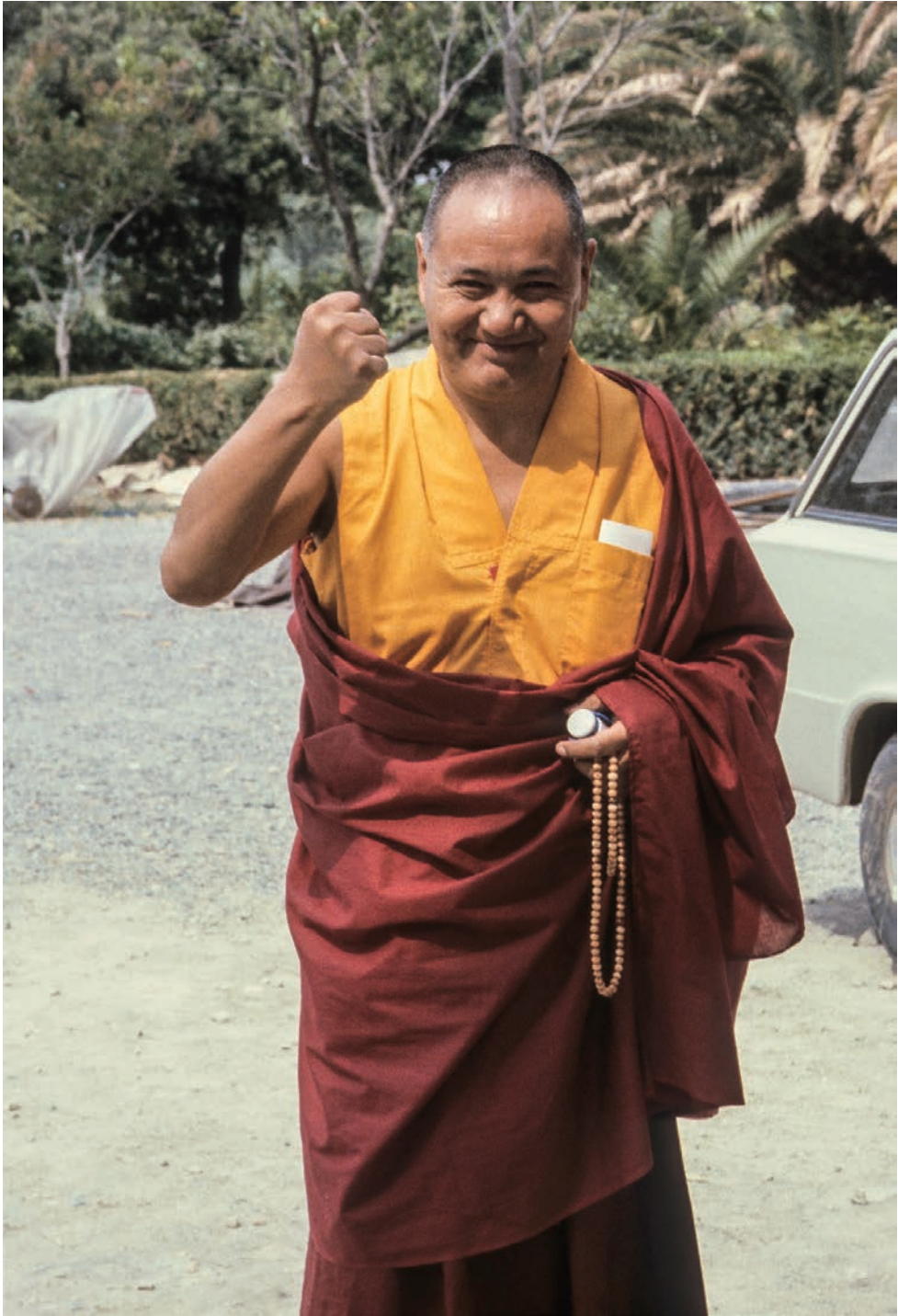
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## 18. 1980: THE TEACHINGS ARE ALL ABOUT YOU

### THE SECOND CPMT MEETING

THE SECOND international meeting of the Council for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition ran at Kopan from January 4 to January 15. In addition to the meetings, the event also included a retreat. Lama Yeshe told the directors he wanted to get the geshe in the centers thinking about new ways of teaching the Dharma, such as to specific age groups or special interest groups.

During this meeting a maturing CPMT drew up the following mission statement:

Without Dharma, sentient beings lack the true means to happiness. The Mahayana tradition of Lama Tsongkhapa faces the danger of dying with the present lineage holders. The Dharma needs to be translated into Western languages and cultures in a similar way to when Buddhism moved from India to Tibet, for preservation's sake. It needs to find a medium that will carry it beyond this present generation and out into many generations in the future.

To actualize this, participation at all levels of the organization is vital, each link working in conjunction with the next, sharing the bond of a common vision.

As times become darker and degeneration more apparent, the mind will

find it increasingly difficult to turn toward virtue. A self-sufficient community on the scale of a town or village would provide the environment and cultural protection necessary for the propagation of the Mahayana tradition.

The basis of the community would be families. The focus of Dharma activity would be the monastery or college of Buddhist studies, open to all.

On January 4 Lama gave a four-hour address to the CPMT. He began by talking about the purpose of these meetings of center directors and by describing some of the more important aspects of center directors' responsibilities.

*It is a good idea for us to meet together because we are all working and putting energy toward the same goal. So it is important that there is harmony and good mutual understanding between us and that we respect each other. Then we can have one mandala, one harmonious whole.*

*Our aim is to spread good vibrations through giving our body, speech and mind to others. This is our only reason for establishing centers. It is really important that center directors see each other as brothers and sisters and help each other. If one center becomes a*



Manjushri, 1979

*disaster, the other centers should help. We share and learn from each other. Until we open our hearts to each other we are not learning anything. The center director has such a huge responsibility. It is not easy, not a part-time job directing and fulfilling people's needs. It is not enough just to have a good heart.*

*It is good if each director communicates with all the other centers, making sure they are happy. Why? Because we are all one mandala. You shouldn't just make sure that your cup has tea and not care about anyone else's. You should be open to each other and say, "OK, if you make a mistake, then tell me." That is the purpose of meeting—to see others' perspectives rather than only your own view. We all have different notions but in the Dharma we are completely unified. We don't need to think we are special or beautiful—we show what we are by our actions.*

*The center director is responsible for harmony in the center. When trouble comes, you*

*should point it out—it doesn't matter where or what it is. Wherever there is disunity it is as if all the potential of a place has been burned so that it cannot progress. It is possible that people may come to your center just to take advantage. Harmony is number one—only then can we build up our centers. You should nurture the attitudes that give the center energy, not those that take from it. If you're working just to have possessions, that's garbage. You center directors should have the attitude that you're getting nothing for this lifetime except energy for your enlightenment. I feel grateful for your incredible dedication. Anyone who is not happy should dedicate this way: "This time I cannot do but I hope to be able to do in the future," and dedicate. Don't worry about whether Lama Yeshe will be disappointed. My concern is that everybody should be happy and make their own dedication. I don't like other people telling me what to do either—I have my own way of dedicating.*

*Eventually, we want to place two geshe in each center: one as the program director who keeps our family in the center happy and looks after visitors and the other who more strictly gives teachings, such as geshe training. But many of my centers are not yet professional, not yet stable. Gypsy centers are not responsible enough to take on having a geshe. First the foundation needs to be stable.*

*Center directors should be like the sun and moon—without discrimination or favorites, embracing all people. No matter who is at the center, you should pay equal attention to them. Whether a person is ugly or beautiful, you should think, "This is my child, my mother sentient being." If you think like that, it is very good. This doesn't mean you cannot have friends. That is a personal thing. When you are unhappy, your friend gives you cheesecake.*

*Also, the center director should not be hippie looking, childish looking. But this does not*

mean that when childish people come you do not give them time. We should be sympathetic to young people who are difficult or mentally disturbed. These people are human beings, with power like Buddha. You give these people time, love them, give them a house and a job. They understand what you are doing; they know you are making special consideration for them. From being broken-hearted they transform; then they are successful. Centers should include hippies, professional people, unprofessional people, married people, unmarried people, everybody. So the center director's attitude should be to expect anything.

I always say that centers should have job creation. I think we should be creative. Our twentieth-century people are so creative, but they are also dangerous with aggression and frustration. My opinion is that this is a difficult time. It would be very good if at each of our centers we can do something for those young people who are lost on drug trips or angry at society and so on, providing them with activities and tasks that they can enjoy. Our program for them can also include counseling by a psychologist, short meditations and other appropriate things that can slowly, slowly lead them to a healthy mind.

When we can afford it we should have places for families and single people as well as for monks and nuns. You can say, "We put you here; this is your place. You stay here; you do your business and lay people do their business. You do not come down this other place." Whether lay or ordained, each person can choose a different lifestyle to live.

Lama Yeshe also addressed the ongoing issue of center finances and how each center was to sustain itself financially.

Concerning our economy, that is difficult one. I think it is very difficult if our centers are supported solely by donations. I feel we

should be doing some type of business in order to improve our economy. It is difficult in the West without money. You cannot fix anything. We should do business according to the environment and to different needs. Some people can sell things.

Sometimes people get irritated because we don't have facilities. So you see, if we don't have a healthy economy then everything is in trouble. For example, if the geshe senses that the center is in financial trouble, then he is shaking. When the center is in trouble, even the geshe cannot be happy. I don't think it is my responsibility to tell you to make your economy healthy. Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa won't tell you what to do in this regard. It is completely your baby. That is not my department. OK?

Lama spoke at length about education in the centers—programs and teachers, philosophy, outreach and integration.

In our centers we offer the Prajnaparamita teachings of Lama Tsongkhapa. We also invite other teachers for the purpose of integration. We know that integrating Western philosophies is good. We do not, however, invite rubbish teachers with cynical vibrations who just create contradictions. Some people are ridiculous, fighting and being political. The director must know these things and decide. We do not have time for disharmony. If some people want to negate what we have in our community then we simply don't invite those people. But at the same time we do not put other teachers down. They do their trip, we do our trip. The director can say, "You go study that trip somewhere else. Don't pull that trip here!"

For example, I have invited teachers of Jungian psychology to our centers, but it is not because Buddhism doesn't have psychology. Buddhist psychology is super profound. But sometimes students can see that some things

are helpful while other things are not. Jungian psychology helps them to integrate these things in their life.

When certain students become fanatical and narrow with their spiritual trip, that is not good. We are not asking our Western students to follow some kind of Tibetan trip. Being a fanatic is not a healthy way to become a Buddhist. You people can see who becomes that kind of student. I am very concerned about this. These students do not last. For these reasons it is good to bring Jungian teachers to show their methods.

When geshes come you cannot require that every geshe should teach the lamrim in Lama Zopa's or Lama Yeshe's way. Each geshe has a different personality, so they cannot teach in the same style. After Guru Shakyamuni died, eighteen new traditions arose. That was just fine. Sometimes a new geshe comes to the West, popping up like a mushroom and knowing nothing about Western minds and Western culture. You may blow their minds, but maybe the geshe blows your mind, too. It is possible; you should expect this. I'm not criticizing, not at all. Sometimes presenting the teachings entails problems, so don't freak out. It is normal.

Our education program has a clear direction but we do not follow blindly. First, we present introductory lamrim teachings. To anyone who wants higher teachings you first introduce the lamrim. The reason for this is that intellectual Buddhism is already existent in the West. Our aim, however, is not intellectual; our aim is to establish communities. When real transformation happens in a student, dedication also comes. Many people know blah, blah, blah in Tibetan but they are not Buddhist; their hearts are empty. Knowing the Tibetan language does not make a person precious. If he does not integrate something

positive into his life, then what is his purpose? It would be better for him to eat cheesecake! You people know all this already; I'm just telling you again. The main teaching in our centers is the practice of lamrim—whether in the sutra aspect or tantra aspect—in accordance with the Prajnaparamita, from the beginning right up until enlightenment.

The first thing we do is take refuge. The subject of taking refuge is incredible vast, big. Normally the tradition is that we take refuge 100,000 times, but at the beginning this is difficult for the Inji mind. We should practice the proper way of taking refuge in lamrim. It is so useful. Then we do 100,000 mandala offerings, then 100,000 water bowl offerings. It seems easy, but for most Injis this is difficult. Then 100,000 prostrations. It is good if one can do these in a retreat, but if the situation is too difficult for that then you accept the situation. If you can only do a hundred in the morning and in the evening, that is fantastic. There is a constructive way to do these things. Then we do 100,000 guru yogas, then 100,000 Vajrasattva mantras.<sup>312</sup>

Chenrezig initiation is very good for developing loving kindness-compassion. Then we do Manjushri initiation, which wakes up the comprehensive intensive wisdom. Next it is good to do Vajrapani, to increase power. These three initiations are one person's path of development to enlightenment.

Each year our directors and old students should do a short retreat in order to keep their hearts warm and to progress in the practice. Retreat is super useful. If you do not do retreat, something is missing. You become sort of distant from the Dharma, unless you have learned to become super skillful and make every action a Dharma action. Otherwise, in this twentieth century we all need an injection to keep the Dharma alive in our hearts.

312. These are six of the nine preliminary practices in the Gelug tradition. The others are reciting 100,000 Samayavajra (Damtsig Dorje) mantras, offering 100,000 Dorje Khadro fire pujas and making 100,000 tsa tsas.

*I cannot always say to students: "You do this; you do that." I am only one person. How can I guide a couple of thousand people? Each center director and spiritual director can give that advice if they understand. I know that it can be very difficult for people to organize a retreat but I think retreat is very important, especially when people do retreat together as a group. It doesn't matter if it is short or long.*

*It is wrong for monks and nuns to think that they are better or that they should have a better education than lay people. We cannot be jealous. Lay people are equal with monks and nuns who say they want to give their body, speech and mind to all sentient beings. That's what they have said. But lay people did not say like that; they say they are not ready. They say, "I want to give my body a little bit for my wife, my husband, and it is good I give for them." Lay people say, "I do the best I can." The purpose of education for monks and nuns and lay people is completely equal.*

*Also, we do not distinguish between men and women with regard to who should receive a good education. You cannot judge who should be educated; it is completely individual. All centers should provide equal education to all and each person can participate to the extent that they have time. The center is for everybody. If people do not take advantage that is their problem, but from the director's side we provide for people equally.*

Lama Yeshe held a special concern for the children of his students and their care and education. He specifically addressed this issue with his center directors.

*Concerning families and children, if we have the resources we should make a school. The center directors should have a plan for this. If you do not express that this is what you*

*would like to do, no one will know, so you should write it down in big huge letters: THIS IS WHAT WE WANT TO DO! And as much as possible you should do it. But energy is like dreams—sometimes it comes suddenly and then suddenly disappears. You never know who will give you energy and who will not. I truly believe that lay people love their children and that they want a Buddhist-style education for them. It is a pity if we do not put that together for them. So far, we have tried but what we have done is not really sufficient. Sorry! We should put this into reality.*

*In Buddhism we have such material for children's education. It is a pity that no one has developed it, because we have the potential and the methods for making books and other things for children. There is so much material, so much information, but instead of using it we are wasting so much energy. It is especially good if our center directors take an interest in this. I'm not criticizing, I understand that energy builds up slowly, slowly. First, we have to take care of our urgent fundamental needs. Then, when we have extra energy, we can spread out into other endeavors. But even now we should have a broad view of what we want to accomplish when we have sufficient energy. Center directors should have a broad view rather than a limitation mind, which can keep the center from growing. Also, you shouldn't keep this total view inside your mind. You should put it out there. Write it down and let people know.<sup>313</sup>*

Max Redlich paraphrased Lama's speech for the first edition of a magazine published by Tara House in Melbourne.<sup>314</sup>

The very day after Lama had given specific rules for the establishment of new centers he broke them, cutting right across his own guidelines to give someone permission

313. Edited from a typewritten transcript of Lama Yeshe's talk to the CPMT at Kopan on 4 January 1980.

314. Fourteen issues of *Tara Magazine* were produced over the next four years before it folded.



to start a new center. Everyone was a little bewildered by that but knew Lama's mind was without bounds. The CPMT also issued a formal invitation to His Holiness the Dalai Lama to tour Europe later in 1980 and give ten-day courses at each of the FPMT centers there. The invitation was extended to include a similar tour of Australian centers in 1981.

"At the CPMT meeting Lama drew a square diagram of what the ideal center should look like," Peter Kedge recalled. "It should be away from town but not too distant, and on elevated land with a view, which is important for the mind. The gompa, monastic and teaching areas should be in the middle with the lay community at the periphery. Lama was very specific that communities should grow in this way.

"In the early days when centers were being established and people became residents, it frequently happened that their initial gratitude at having this opportunity changed to claiming 'rights' as tenants. Lama was very clear. The reason centers were established was to serve. As soon as they turned into what he called 'clubs for people who have been to India' or private homes where people forgot about giving service, he preferred to have those people gone and the centers

empty. Sometimes people in centers formed cliques, which Lama put a stop to very quickly."

Peter continued, "Lama's whole being was about service. When he spoke to new monks and nuns he explained to them that their purpose was to serve. It wasn't to become a yogi or a retreator or to escape from anything—it was to serve others. And you could see that's exactly what Lama and Rinpoche did themselves. I found a tremendous difference in the vibration at Kopon to the great monasteries in the south or even in Dharamsala. People would go to those places to become monks and study, but Kopon was different. And what made it different was this huge, underlying emphasis on the lam-rim and the practice of bodhicitta, on going out to serve. Of course, there were wonderful monks in the big monasteries, but the overriding feeling was that those places were centers of academia rather than service."

Connie Miller had returned to Kopon to attend the CPMT meeting in her role as Mount Everest Centre director. She had prepared a brochure outlining the Tibetan four-point learning method:

The first step consists of memorization by repeated reading. Depending on his skill, a student can memorize between four and twenty-five lines each day. The second step is testing the student's retention of the material. The third is testing the student's understanding of the material. And the fourth is debate, which ensures that the student has mastered the material and can integrate his knowledge with practical applications.

Connie stayed on at Kopon. While living at Manjushri Institute she had seen how the children living there weren't really included in community life. Adequate plans weren't





With Connie, Kopan, 1979

being made for the community's children as the center would grow and develop in

the future, especially regarding their education. Before leaving Manjushri Connie had drawn up a kind of basic proposal for starting a Dharma school there. She expressed to Lama her interest in this area and shared her preliminary proposal with him. As a result, Lama began talking with her occasionally about how to develop children's education. "You centralize office," Lama told her. "Have one good writer—the material is there in the teachings. Your writer puts that material in a form with a visual presentation. To produce books and materials is number one. With these you can then make a school. If you are working in the school you will never get time for education because there will only be worrying this boy is sick, this and that. You will have nothing to do with the education, you understand?"

## TARA CITTAMANI INITIATION

Before everyone left for His Holiness the Dalai Lama's January teachings in Bodhgaya, Lama Yeshe gave another Tara Cittamani initiation at Kopan. This time he required a commitment from participants to do retreat on their return from Bodhgaya.

With a few days to spare, Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche went down to Mundgod in south India to attend Kyabje Trijang

Rinpoche's teachings. On his way back to Bodhgaya, Lama Yeshe called on another geshe he wanted to invite to teach in the West. While Lama was in Varanasi he also visited one of his traveling companions on the escape from Tibet, Chombey's brother, Thubten Dorje. It was a joyful reunion but it was to be their last.

## BODHGAYA

Eléa Redel returned to Bodhgaya, angry and unhappy. "Bodhgaya is a place where karma ripens fast," she said. "I felt so very negative that I went to see Lama Yeshe. 'What is negative?' he asked me. 'In this negative you have to find the positive—and that is tantra.' Then he stood up on his bed, swept his arms in huge circles and continued, 'And then you

become completely Dharma!' I suddenly realized that to change one's attitude you have to look at your own reality and my own anger was the base I had to work from. Attitude is just energy and I could switch it. I knew then that I had to find out how my mind functioned. That's when I decided I really had to study Dharma."

## TUSHITA MAHAYANA MEDITATION CENTRE

In Delhi, Lama Yeshe stayed in the lovely new center in Shantiniketan, which did not please his sister. However, they saw each other often and he dined regularly at her restaurants. Whenever she visited him at the center Lama told her to put some money in the donation box before she left—he knew she was a wealthy woman—but she refused. Achela loved money. “No, no, no! I’m not giving you any,” she would say. Then Lama would grab her hands and pull her back inside, saying, “Come on. Give money! Give, give!” “No, no, no!” The students loved watching this performance.

Trisha asked Lama to be her guru. “Actually, I really wanted Lama Zopa Rinpoche to be my guru but thought I should ask Lama first. ‘All right, dear, anything. OK,’ he told me. Later I became confused about whom I should visualize.” Lama advised her, “If Rinpoche is more comfortable for you, then visualize him, dear.”

From Delhi Lama Yeshe wrote to Jacie Keeley at Kopan. He had asked her to become his main secretary because he wanted



With Jacie, 1982

Peter Kedge to go into business. “All I ever did was take Lama to the airport and pour occasional cups of tea,” said Jacie. From a long-haired flower child in granny dresses, Jacie was now super-straight, with short hair, make-up, diamond earrings (which Nick was always trying to get her to sell), stockings and neat Western clothes she had dry-cleaned. Her house was clean and lovely. “I like your style,” Lama told her. It was really Lama’s style. Jacie did it because Lama liked it. Then it became Jacie’s style.



Tushita-Delhi, 1979

## KOPAN

The three-month-long Tara Cittamani retreat began in a newly built row of rooms called Thabsheling.<sup>315</sup> Situated at the northern part of the Kopan property, the rooms faced Mount Shivapuri and were made out of rush matting tied to a brick framework. Lama Yeshe blessed the group with a poem:

I missed you last night, I missed you  
this morning.  
I meditated on the wisdom mother  
Tara.  
I no longer miss you—I love you.

“Don’t forget, the best protection is shunyata!” he added before leaving them. A short time later, with his words still resonating, a terrifying storm arose and lifted their new roof right off. A young woman addicted to heroin promptly left for Kathmandu. “If she comes back, please tell her I love her,” Lama told the French girl sharing her room.

Shasta Wallace wasn’t enjoying her retreat, couldn’t visualize Lama Yeshe as buddha as the sadhana required and spent much of her time trying to keep the flower garden alive. “If he’s buddha, how come he doesn’t just manifest water?” she said to herself. During the dry season graywater was often used on the vegetable garden, which resulted in an outbreak of giardia, an intestinal parasite, among Kopan’s residents.

While Shasta was walking around the garden feeling sick and depressed one day, Lama approached her. He was wearing his huge sunhat and thick, rainbow-colored, rubber flip-flops. “How are you, dear?” Bravely, Shasta said she was fine. “I’m so glad, dear! Everyone else I meet has problems.” On the last day of the Tara Cittamani retreat Lama sent Shasta to Lawudo to be the cook, instructing her to say mantras while chopping vegetables.



Thabsheling, Kopan, 1979

315. See #17 on the map of Kopan, p. 320.

## JAN WILLIS

By this time Jan Willis was a professor of Buddhist studies, had published two books and was working on some oral histories of living sages. At Lama Yeshe's request she was also working on a translation of the life stories of the Gelug mahasiddhas.<sup>316</sup>

As Jan described in *Dreaming Me*, "Lama called me daughter. His mission was to make me feel that specialness and to teach me to trust my own power." One evening at Kopan Jan gave a group of Westerners a lecture in which she mentioned that some texts say that the mother of one of the great Indian pandits, Asanga, had been cursed to be born a woman. Quite a few of the women attending the talk protested strongly, saying they had also heard that some other Buddhist texts say it isn't even possible to attain enlightenment in a woman's form. At the time, Jan had replied, "Oh, come on, now. Just look at Lama Yeshe, look at your own experience. Have you ever experienced that?" "Some days after that," Jan wrote, "Lama Yeshe and I were having lunch together and discussing

the set of life stories I was then translating. At some point we walked out together onto the upper deck of the monastery. . . . There were a number of Western students milling about in the courtyard, on a break from the day's activities. Suddenly, Lama Yeshe grabbed my arm and began calling out to all of them below. In a booming voice, he called, 'Look, all of you! Look! Look! You want to see women's liberation? *This is*'—pointing at me and patting me on the shoulders—'this *is* women's liberation! *This is* women's liberation!' Now, for me, this was both a very wonderful moment and a very awkward and humbling one."<sup>317</sup>

Jan later recalled from the same period, "Then I got a letter saying I had been granted a year's fellowship worth \$20,000, which is a lot in Nepal. 'That's wonderful, dear. Fantastic!' said Lama. I had two days to reply and rushed off to Kathmandu to send a telegram.

"Lama was leaning toward not going on tour that year, though many were asking him to. Very early one morning I stood out in the courtyard in the mist while Lama came down from the gompa, wearing his huge sunhat. I watched him cross the courtyard and go into the kitchen and up to the monks' dining room. I don't think he saw me. I followed and watched him laughing and joking with the young monks, when just days before I had seen him smack them for not studying. The boys were lapping it up as he went from one to the next, tapping them on the head. I thought how rare and fortunate it is for us to have such a glorious teacher like Lama Yeshe, so wise, so smart, so compassionate that he can make joy wherever he is when it is needed.

"I bowed to him, handed him a check for



Jan Willis

316. Published by Wisdom Publications in 1995 as *Enlightened Beings*.

317. *Dreaming Me*, p. 327.

\$1,000 and asked him to please accept it and go on tour. And he cried. He just cried. Tears fell down his face as he said, ‘No, no, I can’t accept this.’ I said, ‘Lama, please, I’ve come into all this money.’ ‘No no,’ he said, still crying. He was so tender and so incredibly humble. Finally, he did accept it and he did go on tour.”

Jan continued. “I rented a house in Maharaj Ganj in Kathmandu. Lama loved to come and visit, so I arranged a large guest room for him there. I also employed a cook, Kanchi, whom Lama flattered no end. She adored him. All he had to say was, ‘Kanchi, I want you to cook *kala dal* for me today,’ and she’d get hysterical and rush out into the market to buy black dal. I had a watchman too and the house was very peaceful. I was pleased that my house could be a haven for Lama.

“One day Lama turned up with a Jeep full of Kopan boys and took them on a tour of the house, pointing out his room, the living room, bathrooms, my room and so on. Then he told me he was to give a talk at Kopan that night and asked me to write the lecture for him. My knees buckled and I asked if he really thought I could do that. ‘Oh yes, daughter. I want you to do it with all the Sanskrit equivalents to the Tibetan terms. I’ll be back in two hours. Have it ready.’ He strode off before I could blurt out my fears. It was a talk on the Medicine Buddha. I put together as much as I could in the time, gave him the notes and he hurried back to Kopan with them.”



Thubten Sherab debating; lamas look on, Kopan, 1979

During another visit to Maharaj Ganj, this time with Jacie, Lama Yeshe described how the Dharma would transfer into Western culture. He said pujas would endure because Westerners were learning the value of group prayer. Deities and the auspicious colors used in meditation and paintings, as well as the dorje and bell, would also last. He said the red Tibetan robes, however, were just a cultural phenomenon.

## MORE TEACHERS AT KOPAN

Kopan was getting busier. In February a daily schedule was drawn up for all the Westerners, starting with meditation at 6:00 followed by a teaching from Geshe Lobsang

Doga, another friend of Lama’s who was getting ready to teach in the West. There were beginners’ classes in Tibetan and a Tibetan art course taught by Jampa Chökyi and Peter

Iseli. In March Australian psychologist and nun Wendy Finster led a month-long lamrim course.

Geshe Jampa Gyatso was also at Kopan and preparing to teach in Italy. Lama Yeshe's view was that while teaching the Mount Everest Centre boys, the geshees would have ample opportunity to observe diverse groups of Westerners. It also anchored them to Kopan, the nucleus of the international network in which they were about to take part.

Geshe Doga had been lured from Sera, where he had become unwell. "I have one hundred monks you can teach," Lama Yeshe told him. In Geshe Doga's words: "I stayed at Kopan three years. Dinner time, lunch time, Lama always telling me, 'You go West!' I say, 'No, no!'" Geshe Doga was shy, his English was not good. "Doesn't matter," Lama told him. "You just teach with mudra!" Geshe Doga would become the much-loved resident geshe at Tara House in Melbourne, Australia. He has taught there for several decades, but never learned to speak English very well and has always depended on translators.

Karuna and Pam established a special English class at Kopan just for the geshees, into which they integrated aspects of Western culture. "They liked to use it as a forum for debate," said Karuna. "This was somewhat comical, given their attempts to express extremely complex concepts in such limited English."

Pam and Karuna continued to reside at Kopan, though Karuna frequently considered leaving. Lama Yeshe was tough on



Geshe Doga, Kopan, 1980



Pam Philip's class, Kopan, 1980 (Geshe Doga, left)

this rich young American man who was so accustomed to a comfortable life. He teased and insulted him, mimicking his walk and posture. "Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche said that the guru is there to insult you," reflected Karuna. "Taken out of context it sounds rude and arrogant, but with Lama it was a case of no games, no hidden agendas. 'I don't babysit,' Lama often told us. 'I don't give people what they want but what they need.' He ran a tight ship at Kopan, with no waste. He knew absolutely everything that was going on and walked around for hours inspecting every room, the stores, the office, the accounts. There was no privacy with Lama, he was always right in your face—everybody's face."

## TUSHITA RETREAT CENTRE

Lama sent letters to a number of his students advising them to attend the Dalai Lama's post-Losar teachings in Dharamsala. Coming from England with other students was journalist Vicki Mackenzie. She had not received a letter and so told Lama, "I hope it's all right that I'm here." Lama Yeshe touched her forehead with his and said, "Never mind, dear. You and me have special communication!"

Feeling decidedly uncomfortable in his new robes, Jimi Neal followed the lamas to Dharamsala. "I was thinking how the zen was stupid and fussy when Lama Yeshe suddenly came up to me and said, 'I hate them, too.' He stood in front of me grinning, hands thrust into the slash pockets of the red jacket he favored. He wore a zen on formal occasions but his attitude to the traditional robes was unusual. Given the conservatism of most other monks it was fairly outra-

geous. Personally, I found his modern outlook a great relief."

Geshe Rabten was visiting Dharamsala from his home in Switzerland and stayed at Tushita-Delhi, where on April 11 he gave a teaching on the twelve links of dependent origination, translated by his closest disciple, Gonsar Rinpoche.<sup>318</sup> While in Dharamsala Lama Yeshe offered Geshe Rabten a long-life puja. Once again the students observed the incredible respect Lama showed his teachers. His every gesture was an offering.



Above: With Vicki Mackenzie, Manjushri, 1979

Above right: With Geshe Rabten, Tushita-Dharamsala, 1980

Right: Jimi Neal, Nalanda, 1982



318. This talk was originally published in *Teachings at Tushita* and is now in *Teachings from Tibet* and at [LamaYeshe.com](http://LamaYeshe.com).

Tushita looked beautiful because Lama had filled it with flowers. Every year, a few days after he arrived at Tushita, Lama visited a flower farm an hour's drive from McLeod Ganj on the road to Manali. Lama Yeshe could never have enough flowers.

As a builder and jack-of-all-trades, Gabriel Forrer was a valuable asset, spending half the year at Kopan and half at Tushita Retreat Centre. He also got along well with Lama Pasang, who could be tough. "Lama Pasang was a doer," Gabriel explained. "If he needed a piece of wood, he'd cut down a tree. I knew I couldn't argue with him so I got Lama to plant more trees, many of which died because water was still a big problem. At Kopan I built a huge septic tank, the second floor of Thabsheling and a couple of smaller houses.

"When I first came to Tushita, there was just the main house and a row of rooms Lama had insisted Stefano Piovella build in order to purify his karma. But Stefano was no builder and the structure was very

unsound and damp. Lama also said the rooms were too big—he wanted everything as small and simple as possible. Lama and I only ever talked about building. In early 1980 he grabbed me by the hand and we walked around to where a huge boulder lay. He told me he wanted a house built right there for himself and Lama Zopa."

Removing the boulder was a project in itself. As the area was earthquake prone Gabriel reinforced the foundation with steel, though Lama Yeshe said that was too expensive. Peter Baker, an old student who had just come out of retreat, helped Gabriel. One day they walked onto the site of the half-built house and found Lama sitting up against the wall in meditation posture.

Peter Baker: "We worked really hard. One night Lama appeared and invited us into his room for dinner. I told him I thought I should be cooking dinner for him, but he looked at me very sternly and said, 'I only do what I want, dear.' He always called us 'my Milarepas.'<sup>319</sup>



With Tenpa Chöden, Charok Lama, Thubten Jamyang. Flower shopping, Dharamsala, 1982

319. One of the tasks demanded of the great Tibetan yogi Milarepa by his guru Marpa was the repeated building and then dismantling of a nine-story stone tower.



“While we worked, Gabriel and I often talked about what to do next. Meeting the lamas had changed my life and I wanted to be of benefit to people. When I finally got back to the United States I bought a property in Vermont at a very good price and offered it to Lama. Pelgye told me later Lama did pirouettes around his room for half an hour after he got my letter. Then he sent Pelgye out to help me, with a sketch map of how the new center should be laid out and its name—Milarepa.”

“Now you have something to do,” Lama told Pelgye. “You can go and build this Milarepa Center and get Mahayana teaching started there.” Pelgye pointed out that there might not be any buildings there. Lama replied, “Put up tents and go into retreat. You get lamrim teachings started, then you can come back.” Pelgye said he didn’t have any money and might have to get a job. “Please, don’t ever work just to feed your mouth. Don’t waste your life. You’ll always have enough food to eat,” Lama told him.

After receiving instructions from Lama Yeshe, Piero Cerri and Claudio Cipullo began a ten-day retreat at Tushita with orders to stay away from females. “After a few days people appeared to us as mere bundles of bones and meat with vibrations com-



Pelgye and Peter Baker, Milarepa, 1981

ing out of their mouths,” said Piero. “We did not imagine this with our minds but saw it with our own eyes. As for Lama Yeshe, his appearance was different from that of any other human being. There was no doubt about it. Claudio and I did not make this up. After we finished the retreat we went to see him and I got a strong impression of him as one of those card-playing mavericks on a Mississippi riverboat. He was such a totally self-assured, solid person with no bullshit, no timidity and no fear.”

## PETER KEDGE MOVES TO HONG KONG

Financial support for the growing organization was becoming increasingly urgent. In March 1980 Peter Kedge moved to Hong Kong to begin a new life as a businessman.

Peter: “One time I asked Lama what I could do for him. He told me, ‘I want Kopan this much deep in dollars,’ holding his hand a meter from the ground. One time, while on tour, he sent me a giant joke \$10 note on

which he had written, *Dear Peter. Big love, Lama Yeshe. 1980 need 10,000,000.*

“I knew that if you made yourself available to Lama he would give you some task that really stretched you. If you completed it, you felt wonderful, because you had grown. Then he’d give you something else to do. Eventually, you felt that if Lama asked, you could handle anything.

“The original idea I discussed with Lama was that with borrowed Mount Everest Centre funds as seed capital, we would try to develop a business that would involve all the centers. I spent a little time looking around Hong Kong and noted that artificial flowers were quite rare. Perhaps this was something we could source from Asia and trade with the centers. In turn, they would be able to supply them locally. I sent samples with a concept letter to quite a few centers

but received no interest. One center was even annoyed because my samples had incurred customs charges.

“So then we tried electronics, with the help of Mark Frewen and Jacie Keeley. I worked with Dennis Heslop at Manjushri Institute, who opened a retail outlet



Peter Kedge, FPMT business development meeting, London, 1980

on Oxford Street in London. Max Redlich opened a similar shop in Melbourne. We traded for some months in a variety of electronic toys, calculators and watches and supplied a major client in the Middle East, but we couldn't compete with the big operators who bought in huge volumes,” said Peter.

## HOLIDAY IN CHINA

While the weather was still not too hot, Mummy Max took Lama on a short holiday, during which he told her she should say fifty million Tara mantras. They went on several holidays together, once to Japan and another time to China accompanied by Marcel. “We visited Guangzhou (Canton at that time) for a few days and wore lay clothes,” said Marcel. “Lama acted the tourist, taking photos of children, people crossing the street, the people sitting at the next table—things like that. There was a disco in the hotel, really just an empty space with a couple of strings of Christmas lights strung about, loud music and some rudimentary tables and chairs. Lama pushed me to dance, but I didn't.

“Lama did not usually go to movies, but



Max and Marcel, China, 1982



China, 1982

one day we went to see this propaganda movie about a struggle between the young Chiang Kai-shek and Mao and the villain was a monk dressed in Tibetan robes. It was in a very cold, big theater with bare wooden seats and cigarette butts all over the filthy floor. The Chinese people in the audience were all dressed in Mao jackets. We sat through the entire movie. I never quite understood why we went. Lama never gave any reason for doing this.”

## MOUNT EVEREST CENTRE, KOPAN

Back at Kopan Lama Yeshe assumed one of his favorite positions—standing at the top of the gompa stairs or in the middle of the courtyard. Both were vantage points from where he could keep tabs on everything. The beads on his mala clicked incessantly. “Have you got something to do?” he asked anyone loitering there. “Are you sure? I can always give you something to do!” It was enough to keep some people out of Lama’s way, while others wanted to ask advice at every opportunity.

At other times Lama went on patrol. “Quick, quick, Lama’s coming,” the boys warned each other. Lama had an intercom installed in his room. Hearing the boys playing drums in the gompa one afternoon he came charging down, leaping here and there trying to catch them as they ran away.

The boys knew all about Lama’s surveillance. When debates went on long into the night leaving the younger ones more asleep than awake, one boy was always posted as a lookout. “Lama’s coming!” he’d call and



Above: Kopan, 1980

Right: Kopan, 1978



by the time Lama appeared the boys were all on their feet, shouting and clapping energetically.

When some boys asked permission to go into town he gave them each a maroon apron to protect their robes and told them to make full-length prostrations around Boudha stupa. “He also gave us one rupee each—not enough to buy anything,” said Tenpa Chöden. The boys went straight to Kathmandu instead. When two monks returned to Kopan after going to a movie, which was not allowed, Lama asked them where they had been. “Don’t you lie to me,” he told them.

“I saw you going into the movie!” The punishment was always either carrying water or picking up rubbish on holidays.

Lama Yeshe was not afraid to be tough. Stern-faced and with eyes bulging, he paced up and down the rows of seated boys during pujas, delivering a well-aimed blow from his heavy mala upon any chosen unfortunate who happened to have a pack of cards hidden in his robes. He also thrashed one of the two huge mastiffs that guarded Kopan because it had a habit of killing goats and biting Nepalis and Injis. Strangely, that dog never bit monks or Tibetans.

### AMALA ARRIVES AT KOPAN

Judith Hunt, an American woman with grown children, had been living in Santa Cruz, California, and working as a counselor. One evening she went to a slide show at the local community center about trekking in Nepal. The presenters had stopped at a monastery in Nepal where the resident Westerners said they were sorely in need of

English teachers for the little monks. “On hearing this, a bell went off for me!” Judith later recalled. “I knew nothing about Tibetan Buddhism, lamas or monasteries.” Nevertheless, wanting to spread her wings, she followed up and was told to contact someone named Karuna Cayton. He replied, warning her that things there were a little



Amala Judith Hunt and charges, Kopan, 1981

primitive. She would also be charged \$60 a month living expenses and receive no wages.

Everyone at Kopan who was involved with Mount Everest Centre—Maureen O'Malley, Karuna and Pam, Karuna's sister Lori and Connie Miller—was quite enthusiastic about Judith's arrival. On the day she came, April 6, Easter Sunday, someone wrote on the blackboard in the MEC kitchen, "Jetsun Judith is here!"<sup>320</sup> When she arrived at Kopan from the airport, Lori Cayton led her to the little brick cell with a concrete floor that was to be her home.

Judith Hunt: "I went outside and sat on the hill overlooking the airport and thought maybe I had gone just a little too far in search of adventure. Three weeks later Lama Yeshe returned to Kopan from wherever he'd been and asked to see me. I was feeling thoroughly homesick and confused. As I walked around to the gumpa I decided I would go into Kathmandu to buy myself some potted plants for my doorway, to cheer myself up.

"Lama Yeshe bowed low and offered me tea on his garden balcony while Jacie sat nearby, making notes of our conversation. 'I would like to ask a favor of you,' he said.

'I would like you to be the mother of these monks.' I said, 'Heavens, no! I've been a mother, I'm ready to rest. This is my time of life now.' But he persisted. 'They really need a mother, they need feminine influence. We're all men up here. Please, can you help them brush their teeth, teach them to wash and eat properly? We need this so much. Please help me. I never expected to have so many monks here.' I told him I'd do it for a month then re-evaluate.

"When I agreed to help, Lama suddenly said, 'Would you like some plants?' That really caught my attention. That same evening Lama Yeshe stood with me in front of all the monks in that dark, smoky dining room. It was the first time I had been in there. He gave them a long talk in Tibetan then turned to me and said, 'Now you are their mother. I have told them to call you "mother."' "

"So that's how I became Amala. Later that night a little line of monks came by my room bearing potted plants for my door. A year later I was still there, though I only paid rent once." The boys loved her and they all called her Amala. Thirty-five years later, they still call her Amala.

## HARD LESSONS

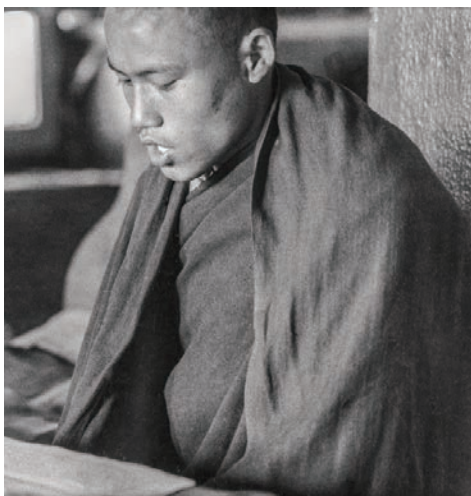
One of Kopan's teenage monks, Tsultrim Gyaltsen, began to show signs of serious mental illness. A quiet young man who spoke very good English, he had been one of the most intelligent and studious of the older monks at Kopan and one of the top debaters in his class. He started spending hours in the toilet, beating people up and acting generally manic. Over a period of some months, Tsultrim Gyaltsen's condition became worse and worse. His sister, Tsultrim Dolma, was a

Sherpa nun. She too was living at Kopan and working as the cook for the Western Sangha. She was becoming more and more worried about her brother.

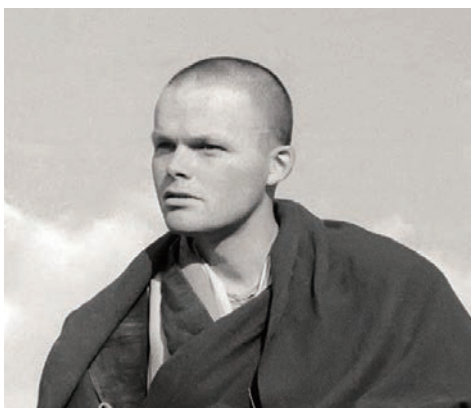
The Westerners at Kopan were deeply concerned. Amala Judith, who had a masters degree in mental health, wanted to bring in a Western doctor to prescribe anti-psychotic medicine for him. Lama Zopa Rinpoche told her no, as this would not help him.

Tsultrim Gyaltsen spent days sitting and

320. *Jetsun* is a Tibetan term of respect that is commonly translated as "venerable." More literally it means "perfect and pure."



Tsultrim Gyaltsen, Kopan, 1978



Harry Sutton, 1980

sleeping by the spring at the base of Kopan hill, reading English storybooks, which he loved, and becoming sick from the damp. He got violent when people tried to get him to move. The Western teachers at Kopan would snatch his storybooks in order to get him to follow them up the hill so he could be cared for. They had to be fast and careful he didn't catch them, as his fingernails were very long. If he caught them he would beat and scratch them in anger.

Harry Sutton, now ordained, was also told nothing could be done to help this Sherpa monk. Independently, Harry consulted a

Nepali lama known for his healing abilities, who said he could cure the boy if he came to live with him in Boudhanath. Harry confidently organized a house nearby so he could help look after him. Not long after this, as Harry was walking up to Kopan, the Jeep stopped beside him. Lama made a sign for him to get in. "How are you, Harry? What are you doing?" asked Lama. So Harry told him about his plans for Tsultrim Gyaltsen. "Forget it!" Lama said. Harry was shocked, but Lama had spoken with authority. Tsultrim Dolma took her brother to live in Boudha but his condition deteriorated and he died soon afterward.

Confused, Harry went to see Lama Lhundrup, who told him that in his last life Tsultrim Gyaltsen had been a great scholar at Sera. However, ego problems in relation to his guru resulted in his again being born a scholar but doomed to go crazy in order to purify his actions. He would be fine in his next life, but if treated in this one he would have to experience insanity again. Rinpoche confirmed it all.

That spring, Carol Corona arrived at Kopan, sobbing. Her marriage was falling apart. Not long afterward an equally distressed Massimo turned up. "I found Lama wearing his huge sunhat and leaning on a ski pole behind the gompa, where the boys were doing some gardening. He said, 'Come here, my son,' and hugged me with his whole body, which had become swollen and huge. I will never forget the feeling of being completely absorbed into his body as he embraced me so strongly. 'I saw you from far, dear. I know you are suffering a lot. Don't worry, all this is going to disappear,' he told me. He spoke with such love and told me to meet him in France later that year," said Massimo.

In early May, Lama departed for California and Rinpoche left for Lawudo. On the night

before Rinpoche's departure, the Kopan office was broken into and passports and money stolen. Jacie wrote to Lama in California telling him what had happened, adding that Lama Zopa had said that the cause was "spirit interference," a topic with which the lamas were much more familiar than their Western students.

## CALIFORNIA VIA HONG KONG

Lama Yeshe flew to California alone, stopping in Hong Kong on the way. "We took that opportunity to formalize a will for Lama with one of the leading law firms in Hong Kong," said Peter Kedge. "Lama didn't really have any major assets in his name, apart from an account dedicated solely for Mount Everest Centre.

"Lama encouraged me to buy an apartment in Hong Kong to serve as both accommodation and space for an office," Peter recounted. "After looking around and being shocked by the prices, I did buy an apartment in the name of the business. This was at a time when property was on the ascent in Hong Kong and everyone felt it was an infallible investment. About a year later I was back in Nepal and mentioned to Lama that prices seemed to be softening in Hong Kong. He immediately said, 'Sell the apartment!' I

Around this same time, Kopan's first course on Tibetan medicine began. Lasting four weeks it covered nutrition, the pathology of disease, especially cancer, as well as the effects of certain behaviors on a person's health.

went back and sold it. Within a year prices had slumped. Lama's intuition was spot on."

Lama Yeshe planned to spend four months in California with John Schwartz as his attendant. In reply to Jacie's letter about the burglary, Lama wrote:

Thank you for your letters. We surprised Kopan is caught out of money. Now you realize money is evil. We are healthy, hope you are healthy too. Place of meditation course here so beautiful—lake, beaver, hills, pine trees, temperature is right. John Feuille is excellent cook—I don't tell him anything to do, so I eat well, sleep well, enjoy my teachings. Wonderful students communicate by heart. Eighty people show up for my course, even though short announcement. Jon Landaw's course thirty people. He gives wonderful course and everybody is transformation.

Concerning organization, Chris [Vautier] wants to resign but I don't know who is replacement. And not yet anything built on Vajrapani land. My feeling is we cannot do anything with that land this year. Either we have to do something or sell. Not yet decision. Going to have meeting end of course and we'll see.

No one understand our aim and



With John Schwartz, Manjushri, 1979

direction, how quick we develop potential of Vajrapani. Even though they sincere and good practitioners, we need good energy director to centralize their energy. If anything cannot come out in America maybe I have to call you to become Vajrapani director. How you think? Are you freaking out or no? But of course then I lose you, Kopan is going suffer. If you leave who is going to do your job? Do you have some idea? Anyway we will see.

How is Kopan eating food without money? Now I'm not going to send any money for them. They have to learn themselves. I guess Lama Zopa coming down soon. Make sure Lama Zopa is gone on time to receive teachings in Mysore and perhaps you write letters to Piero to be responsible for Lama Zopa trip. Monsoon start, I'm very happy because concern fruit trees dry.

Could you give me detail? How thief come—through window or door?

Big love,  
Lama Yeshe

When Jacie collected Rinpoche on his return from Lawudo he was unwell and asked her to take him directly to the Hotel Shangri-La, the newest, cleanest, nicest hotel in town. Jacie was even more startled when Rinpoche got into the bed and stretched out his legs. This was extremely rare, but after a day or two he was back at Kopan sitting cross-legged on his bed in meditation.

Many years later Peter Kedge noted, "In all the time I have known Rinpoche, which is over forty years during which I traveled around the world with him several times, I have never seen Rinpoche lie down or use a bed other than to sit on it. Whether Rinpoche was in an airplane, a car, a hotel, a private home or his cave in Lawudo, when not seeing people or teaching, he was always doing prayers and meditating. Once, when we arrived in either Australia or New Zealand after a very long flight from Hong Kong, I saw Rinpoche sitting in meditation posture on his bed but fallen over backward asleep. But I never saw him lie down. Even when he had an intense fever one time in Bodhgaya Rinpoche was still sitting up meditating, covered in blankets."



Grizzly Lodge group, 1980



## THE GRIZZLY LODGE COURSE, CALIFORNIA

In May, Lama Yeshe taught the weeklong course mentioned in his letter to Jacie. It was held at Grizzly Lodge in Portola, a beautiful spot in the California Sierra Nevada Mountains north of Lake Tahoe, and was preceded

by Jon Landaw's course on *The Thirty-Seven Practices of Bodhisattvas*. On the way, in the interests of furthering Lama's knowledge of America, John Schwartz, Anila Ann and John Feuille took him to Reno.

## RENO, NEVADA

Lama Yeshe had told John Feuille to only wear his robes when it felt beneficial. "So don't ever wear them in front of your father," he added. As usual, Lama wore his in Reno and no one appeared to even notice. For many years afterward a kaleidoscopic photo of Lama Yeshe standing on the mirror-

walled stairs of the Grand Casino was displayed on Rinpoche's altar.

"Down on the gaming floor Lama would say, "This looks like a good machine," John Schwartz recalled. "He'd win a pile of money, then give it to Ann and me to lose on the next slot machine. I tried to get him to play craps.



Above left: Driving to Reno, 1980

Above right: Playing the slots with John Feuille, Nevada, 1980

Left: Casino mirrors, Reno, 1980

I told him, ‘See the green tables with the dice, Lama? If you know what numbers are on the dice before they come up, that’s a lot of water buffaloes for the children at Kopan.’ But he wouldn’t play.”

They also took him to a shop selling Stetson ten-gallon hats where Lama posed happily for photos.

Whenever Lama Yeshe referred to John Schwartz, he always called him “John Shore.” It was Lama’s habit to take people’s unusual surnames and substitute words more familiar to him in their place: “refuge” for Ribush, “relics” for Redlich, “shore” for Schwartz, “pagoda” for Paco and so forth. His students thoroughly enjoyed these little nicknames Lama had for them.

Seventy-five people took the great initiation of Thousand-arm Chenrezig. Lama also gave two lectures on tantra:

*We mean well; we want to practice Mahayana. We’d like to be as open as possible. We want to go that way, even with hardship. But the narrow mind is overwhelming. It keeps on coming all the time. Maybe intellectually we try to be as open as possible but the narrow mind overwhelms us yet again. Therefore, it is not easy to be a Mahayanist. Both Atisha and Lama Tsongkhapa said that it is not enough for a person’s religion to be Mahayana; the person himself or herself must become Mahayana. . . .*

*So the business at hand is that both Hinayana and Mahayana practitioners are seeking liberation by understanding the nature of samsara, but one of them is making tremendous effort on the basis of, “I am the suffering one; I cannot stay there in this way. I want to liberate myself.” The emphasis is on liberating*



The hat store, Reno, 1980

*me. Great vehicle practitioners, Mahayanists, don’t cry so much. Even though they have problems, they are more concerned about other people’s problems than their own. That’s the difference.*

*That’s why we say that bodhicitta is the door to enter the Mahayana vehicle. That’s why bodhicitta is the principal, most essential need for stopping the problem of the self-pitying, self-cherishing thought. Therefore, if you are a Mahayanist, you have bodhicitta. What makes you a bodhisattva is having the realization of bodhicitta. . . .*

*There are two things. A bodhisattva has two goals, two destinations: to help other people and to become self-sufficient by receiving enlightenment, by becoming totality. If we grab that—“It is more important that I become enlightened”—it’s partial. But still we have to do it. It’s not the principal thing, it’s partial, but we still have to get enlightened in order to solve problems and help other sentient beings. . . .*

*Normally, Western people say, “I need so much love; nobody loves me.” They say that kind of thing, don’t they? Use that expression in the reverse way: we need the totally opened attitude. It takes care of all the problems that the narrow attitude brings. If you have this attitude you make yourself a complete human being—that’s a better way of putting*

it—because you have complete comprehension. Otherwise, you're in the dark shadow of ignorance. You can see one thing but the rest is in the dark. You know that. . . . When we don't see totality we can't see how everything is interrelated—when we move one thing, everything else moves too. We have to know that. . . .

The enlightened attitude of bodhicitta allows your energy to expand universally. You develop a broad view. Now, one who has bodhicitta can follow one of two vehicles, the Paramitayana and the Tantrayana. The Paramitayana is like the lamrim, where you understand karmic causation and recognize your own profound ability, or potential, to solve completely all levels of ego problem, not just those on the human level. The Paramitayana takes you through the three principal paths to enlightenment and your job is to actualize the six paramitas. Practicing in that way leads you to enlightenment. But don't think that the enlightenment the Paramitayana path leads you to is a small enlightenment, whereas Tantrayana leads you to a great enlightenment. The enlightened experience that results from following both these yantras is the same; the way they function is where they differ.

Paramitayana and Tantrayana differ in that Tantrayana has the skillful wisdom by which you put totality together. Tantrayana has that kind of key. The Paramitayana also has a key, but its path is slow. The Paramitayana practitioner cannot put two things together simultaneously and keep going. To do that is difficult. Like my cook, Babaji—he can't be in the kitchen and here listening to teachings at the same time! That's his problem. The practitioner of Tantrayana has the skill and intelligence to both see reality clean clear in a penetrative way and simultaneously keep going in a unified way. There's a great difference between the two. . . .

The difference between Paramitayana and Tantrayana is that the Tantrayana has the skillful methods whereby you can use desire objects that usually bring reactions of confusion and dissatisfaction in the path to enlightenment; by practicing tantric yoga, you can transform the energy of desire into the path to enlightenment. We call it taking desire as the path to enlightenment, but it is dangerous if you do not understand what these words mean; it takes some research to understand them correctly. . . .

The person practicing tantra has to have the skill to transform daily pleasures into the



Grizzly Lodge, 1980

path to enlightenment. Let's take our body as an example. As a matter of fact, our body comes from the functioning of desire, doesn't it? Desire made this body; ego made this body. Our grabbing ego made this body manifest, come out. However, instead of looking at it negatively, we should regard it as precious. We know that our body is complicated, but from the Dharma point of view, instead of putting ourselves down with self-pity—"My body is a heavy burden; I wish it would disappear"—we should appreciate and take advantage of it. We should use it in a good way.

So . . . despite where the body comes from, the way it manifests, despite the fact that it's not so easygoing, that it's complicated, this body has great ability; it can do so much. With this body, not only can we take care of our food and clothing, but we can also reach beyond that; we have the opportunity to gain the eternal goals of liberation and enlightenment. That's why our human body is precious; that's the point. We can use it in a good way, even though it is potentially poisonous in that it can create more complications, confusion, suffering, loneliness, dissatisfaction and samsaric rebirths for us. If we can change in a positive way, we can feel grateful for having this body and make it worthwhile. . . .

When you practice tantra, instead of thinking, "I'm a problem; my ego's a problem; I'm a weak person; I need . . .," instead of thinking of yourself with self-pity, think, "I am the Buddha; I am Chenrezig; I am universal compassion." The difference is unbelievable. . . . Somehow you become transcendental; you bring the enlightenment expe-

rience into the now. That is the beauty of Tantrayana. . . .

So, by using a skillful method, it's possible for your life to become a transcendental experience. Your life can perhaps become an enlightened experience. Maybe I shouldn't use those words, but I do think it can become an enlightened experience.<sup>321</sup>

Carol Royce-Wilder and Doren Harper videotaped the teachings at Grizzly Lodge. "Now in my next lifetime I can watch myself and see how I was," said Lama. From then on Doren began purchasing the right equipment. Some years later he built a temperature-controlled vault in his company's office, where over one thousand tapes were stored. He also added an editing studio, where John Schwartz could work on them. Many of the recordings were amateur productions with poor sound and image quality and John was able to improve them enormously.

Jon Landaw had become Lama's right arm. "Although I edited his teachings for publication I always wondered what people would get out of them, because when Lama



With Jon Landaw, Grizzly Lodge, 1980

321. Edited from *The Essence of Tibetan Buddhism*, pp. 61–70. The videos of these teachings are on the LYWA YouTube channel as *Thousand-arm Chenrezig Commentary*.

taught it was not just with words. He also communicated the meaning of the teachings through every facet of his being. For example, sometimes he would repeat a word several times in succession. He'd say something like, 'And then dear, you feel so guilty, guilty, guilty, guilty . . .' Each time he said this word he did so in a different tone of voice, with a different facial expression and a different bodily posture. It was as if a psychic drama was being played out in front of you. The development of the particular state of mind he was referring to was communicated in a way that mere words could not duplicate. It was an extraordinary performance and tremendously funny as well.

"Lama always began his teachings by sitting quietly, totally impassive, his presence encompassing the whole room. It was so silent you could hear a pin drop. Then he recited Shakyamuni Buddha's mantra three times—slowly and deeply, in a voice that brought his students into a deep state of concentration. Then after sitting silently for a while, he slowly came out of that state of meditative absorption. I often saw him rub his face quite vigorously then, as if he was climbing out of some deep place. But while he was in that silent state it was something so peaceful, concentrated and deep that everyone in the room seemed to have a part in it.

"I never had the impression he had his talks planned out. He just seemed to be speaking to whatever was in the air. Often people would say later, 'Oh, Lama was speaking straight to me!' Even when he had a text to teach from he always related it to the

present situation of the people in the room. It all came alive with Lama—you never felt you were getting a 'discourse' from him. He did use texts, in that he would say this line means this and this line means that, but he used them as a jumping off point for talking about people's actual situations. 'The teachings are all about you!' he always said."

In his teachings Lama Yeshe cut through culture, right to the heart of the matter:

*From the cultural point of view, when you people look at me, I'm mumbling mantras with this mala, I'm wearing these strange clothes, I'm surrounded by strange art and so forth. You get culture shock. And sometimes you're in conflict: "Why do I need these things? Why do we have these things? I don't want this Tibetan trip." And when it comes to mantra: "Why do mantras? I'd be better off saying 'coffee, coffee, coffee, coffee!'"<sup>322</sup>*

To those complaining they couldn't possibly visualize Chenrezig with eleven heads and a thousand arms, Lama said, "What if I said to visualize an ice cream cone of thirty-one flavors. You can do that, can't you?" He added that while Americans have a view of space as black and empty, Tibetans think of it as full of light.

While speaking at a university once, Lama was asked how to visualize colors. He said, "Oh easy, just rub your eyes and look!" To a student who was depressed because he realized he would not get enlightened in this lifetime, Lama said, "Just don't worry about it. I don't worry about it."

## VAJRAPANI INSTITUTE

On May 25 Lama met with the Vajrapani directors. He was not happy about the lack

of progress at the center, telling Vajrapani's board that there was a great need for

322. *The Essence of Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 69.



With Vajrapani directors, Grizzly Lodge, 1980

Dharma in America, which was being suffocated by material wealth.

Lois Greenwood: “He said that Dharma was like an airplane and he was like the pilot. The airplane was the teachings and he knew where to take them, but our job as old students and board members was to build stairs for people to get into the plane. He said that when we all got high on dope and went to Nepal, we had pole-vaulted ourselves into the plane and thrown ropes down for our friends, and in those days that worked. But that was not the way to make the teachings available in the West. Now we needed to provide proper access. ‘You know how they bring the stairs directly to the plane, how you don’t even have to walk to them?

Mechanical means brings the stairs to the height of the door. We need like that,’ he told us.

“Lama also said that retreat centers might not be the best place for people to start, as retreats presuppose knowledge of the teachings. We needed to make it easier for people to grasp what Dharma was all about so that they could see how it would fulfill their needs. Lama said we needed a place where people could connect easily—relax, do yoga, dance, meditate.

“He said we should not be ‘bushie people’ at Vajrapani, nor force people to come up to our level. Rather, we should go to their level because that’s what compassion is all about.”

## JOHN SCHWARTZ

John Schwartz was a confident, successful man and fair game for Lama’s teasing, some of which came in the form of his nickname of “John Shore.” As Lama Yeshe’s new attendant, John decided the students were overly protective of the lamas, especially with regard to Lama Yeshe’s heart ailment. “How I look?” Lama would ask people who

worried about him, sticking his face out for inspection and turning to display his upper arms as if the diagnosis lay there. “What you think? I tell you, Western science, they don’t understand the power of mantra, the power of mind!”

John Schwartz: “I discovered that protection was the last thing Lama wanted. People

worried about whether he was up too late or talking too much with one person or whether the interviews were tiring him out—but he never got tired of doing stuff like that. I'd tell people they had just five or ten minutes with him. When that was up I'd walk in on them and stand there. Lama would look at me, say, 'Thank you, dear,' dismiss me, and just keep on going. He didn't want someone to chaperone him, he wanted someone to clear the path, to make it easy for him. He knew when to stop talking. If he's with someone for a long time it's because they need it.

"Teaching was no problem for Lama. He could teach twelve hours a day. What sapped his energy were people's problems, their sob stories ad infinitum. Before doing interviews he'd say to me, 'Time to go to work.' Then there were meetings with center people. He went over the land with them, inspected everything and gave them pep talks. Lama worked absolutely all the time, he never stopped.

"I never saw anyone work a mala like Lama either—he used one all the time, no matter what he was doing. He wasn't secret or invisible about it either, you could see his lips moving, too." Lama Yeshe had a wide selection of malas, including a kind of "global" one with a crucifix and several other religious emblems on it.

Some time later, a Dorje Khadro fire puja was held at Jacksons' Kitchen on the Vajrapani land. But despite their reputation as resourceful "bushie people," they could not seem to get a fire going. Lama Yeshe took over, rebuilt it and lit it just fine. "We made fires all the time," said Åge Delbanco, one of the Vajrapani pioneers, "but we just couldn't get that fire to start."

A picnic on the high ridge followed. Tom Waggoner's little truck

was the best of a sorry lot of vehicles and he was given the job of driving Lama Yeshe back down to the gomba. "He got in and I warmed the engine before taking off, because it's tricky to get off the ridge—it's steep, with a lot of loose gravel. Lama wanted to drive but I couldn't let him because you really had to know what you were doing up there," said Tom. "On the way down he asked me to stop so he could take a pee. 'These students,' he told me, 'you sit up there on the throne and they offer tea and don't ever think Lama has to go pipi!'"

After the Grizzly Lodge course Lama Yeshe spent the next few days at a house on Lake Tahoe, resting and hunting out local antique shops with Anila Ann. He loved buying pretty things, most of which ended up in Marcel's shop. Spotting a red vase in one shop, he distracted the owner with half an hour of amicable chit-chat before casually asking the price. "He became very charming and the owner was so taken with him the price just plummeted," said Ann. "Then he **bought it.**"



Dorje Khadro fire puja, Vajrapani, 1980

## PYRAMID LAKE

Carol Fields and Paula Chichester wanted to take Lama out to Pyramid Lake in the Nevada desert. The local Native American Indian tribes there were in an uproar because irrigation had caused the water level to subside, giving coyotes access to the eggs of a colony of special white pelicans nesting on a pyramid-shaped rock in the middle of the lake. Lama agreed to do a puja there to help them.

Carol: “We met with two people from the tribal offices. They had a great time with Lama, talking about politics and ritual and medicine belts, which protected warriors from the white man’s bullets. Lama told them monks in Tibet had similar protections.

“The puja was to be held on the pier. Lama had us make a burning offering of sage and said prayers while we sat around him. The weather was overcast when he began, then



Puja at Pyramid Lake, 1980



With Paula Chichester and Warjack, Pyramid Lake, 1980



the clouds parted and it became very hot. Just as he finished the puja the clouds closed over and a cool breeze sprang up. A flock of white pelicans rose up, flew right down and circled Lama before taking off to the south. Next thing we all burst out laughing and couldn't

stop for twenty minutes. Lama told the Indians the lake and its environment should be always kept peaceful, with no motorboats. It should be a place where people could refresh themselves."

### IN THE BERKELEY HILLS

Lama drove all the way from Lake Tahoe to Berkeley. Mummy Max had rented a beautiful house for him way up in the Berkeley hills, where he would be based for the next two months. A few nights after arriving, Lama and John Schwartz went to Lois and Gabriel's home for dinner. Also invited were

Robby and Randa Solick, Jan Willis and John Jackson. "That night Lama paid me so much attention and kept it up throughout the meal," said John Jackson. "At the time I had no idea what was going on, but he was working on me—putting his head on my shoulder, leaning on me and hugging me."

### BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

From Berkeley Lama Yeshe wrote a letter to Gyatso, who was now at Tara House in Melbourne awaiting the arrival of Geshe Thubten Dawa, who was to become the center's first resident geshe.

Vietnamese refugees were still arriving in Melbourne. As there were no other temples in Melbourne at the time, they had made Tara House their spiritual home and turned up every full moon to perform rituals and cook marvelous vegetarian banquets.

To Gyatso, Lama wrote:

Regarding cooperation with the Vietnamese, very important. Way to cooperate is to make one with Buddhist temple. When I was in Hong Kong I met venerable Vietnamese monk, wonderful person. Seems to have talent to unify feeling and bring people together. I expressed to him to go there and I told him to teach Westerners and Vietnamese both. Becoming so important East and West come together for Buddhism

to be successful. Also you are spiritual director under him. So you take advice from him how to organize his lessons, how to pray. Give him my best wishes, long time staying there.

Good time in Vajrapani meditation course and my students very kind and have good experience. I have magnificent house which is so quiet and peaceful, much more peaceful than Kopan or Tushita.

Anyway, Lama Zopa coming soon and please take care of him. We should have universal bodhicitta to teach ninety percent of world people to be Buddhist. Not my power but profound wisdom and depth of Buddha is our tool. With this tool we can conquer all the mire of all sentient beings. So we should be brave.

Big love,  
Lama Yeshe

While this was being dictated John Schwartz stopped at the word “mire.” “Lama, where did you get that word!” he asked.

“Is good word or no?” asked Lama.

“Good word,” said John.

“‘Mire’ will blow Adrian’s mind!” laughed Lama.

## VEN. THICH PHUOC HUEY

In a remarkable coincidence, a Vietnamese girl who had been coming to Tara House for some time asked Gyatso to please get her teacher from Hong Kong, where he was in a transit camp for boat people. This was the very same Vietnamese monk that Lama Yeshe had written about.

In his travels, Lama stopped in Hong Kong reasonably often and naturally spent time with Peter Kedge. There were many Vietnamese refugees arriving on boats, and Hong Kong, as a territory built by refugees, accepted them—even though they put them in camps. Somehow, Lama had got hold of this monk’s name.

“I went to the Vietnamese refugee camp at Kai Tak with Lama and we found this

monk,” said Peter. “At the time the Vietnamese were allowed to move freely in and out of these camps and they could find work. The monk was in the camp with several family members. Lama offered to help him get to Australia, which is what he wanted. There was also a young girl still at school, a relative of his, who came to work for me for three months during the school holidays. She was extremely helpful as I was trying to establish a business and needed someone who spoke Cantonese and could run here and there. After the monk left for Australia I heard that some of the direct family members were later able to follow him.”

Gyatso sent the monk’s name to his uncle, who had influence in Canberra, the political capital of Australia.

Two weeks later an official from the Department of Immigration phoned Gyatso in Melbourne, saying, “Your monk is here. Come and get him.” Gyatso was in retreat at the time, so Uldis Balodis and Max Redlich collected Venerable Thich Phuoc Huey and brought him back to Tara House. “We didn’t know anything about Vietnamese monks,” said Gyatso. “It turned out he was equal in local status with the Dalai Lama. He stayed with us a few months then set up a wonderful temple in Sydney. He was just beautiful.”



Thich Phuoc Huey with Rinpoche, Queensland, 1980

## LETTERS FROM LAMA

While Rinpoche, attended by Piero, was taking teachings in Mundgod, Lama wrote the following to them in English:

Dear Lama Zopa and Piero,  
Received letter from Lama Zopa. Seems you're all doing well. I'm very pleased you are receiving much teachings and hope during them you follow by reading and have discussions with learned monks. Don't let people talk nonsense to you. Time is very little. Also at nighttime you should rest so you are fresh in the day to listen to the teachings, rather than sleeping. I hope after His Holiness finish teaching program then Geshe Legden can soon go to Australia.

If there is no time to go to Dharamsala after the teachings, then for ten days you can stay Delhi center. However I highly suggest that better you go Dharamsala if you have ten days or two weeks. That is more beneficial than staying in Delhi.

Keep your health good. I heard you were sick. What reason is? Don't be extreme and don't be hard on yourself. I hope Piero and Zia give you healthy food rather than just sucking energy. Piero should write to me about Potala Tours. If Helly is there tell her she should write to me about Lawudo. Give my love to Thinley.

I am healthy. We are presently in Berkeley on a hill. Very isolated place. Large house. John Shore and me lost in the house. And all surrounded by the flower. Present time living situation in my house better than American middle class. Have two cooks each week coming—one day Ira come, one day Judy. They clean all dishes and cook for me and John Shore. Because I have such

comfortable place, fortunate enough to invite Geshe Sopa five days. We have many long discussion on the subject of our early life and some Dharma.

Potala Tours was a Dharma tour company Piero had set up in Italy. Lama added some instructions for Rinpoche's forthcoming Australian and New Zealand tours, telling him to give the great initiation of Thousand-arm Chenrezig and to take the American nun Thubten Yeshe as his attendant on the tour so Zia could have a rest. Lama continued:

If donation comes, don't throw it in the ocean, need of hungry eighty children in your mind. But I'm happy if you're practicing. If someone criticize you or give you million dollars, for you same thing, I understand.

Now you going to meet Lama Pasang's teacher, Tashi-la. If you can easily give question to him that I'm interested to buy coffee field, which is purpose for income Kopan children. Around 120,000 rupees worth. Tashi-la can write me details and maybe he can also be in charge of farm, if he likes.

Is there anyone who wants to go to West to teach Dharma? I'm sure people asking you. Let me know who is interested, we still need ten geshes, but energetic geshes to be able to influence other people in Dharma.

Please don't worry for my health. I try to take care as much as I could. So far weather is very good. Not too much pushing. Many American students send you much love and regards. Anything I can do, tell me.

Big love,  
Lama Yeshe

Letters from students piled up in front of Lama Yeshe every day—about their abortions, wild dreams, sexual behavior. Many arrived from miserable Sangha. One monk sent a ninety-two-page letter about his practice.

To someone with family problems Lama replied, “About your sister and brother-in-law: that is only normal. What happened is that when your strong love for these people developed a long time ago, at that same time a conviction for hatred also developed. Love hate always come together. Do not think it is permanent. It is like the cloud of Los Angeles.”

To a student who wrote country music and wanted to sing her prayers: “It is best if a Western person sings music Western way Buddhist prayers. It is a good idea. It should symbolize reality and truth. Putting it into Western symbolism is essential to become Western archetype image. You should meditate on Manjushri.”

At Kopan, it was one of Jacie’s duties to reply to the piles of mail that always accumulated for Lama. Emulating the respectful style of writing employed by the Tibetans themselves, she avoided using personal pronouns such as “he” and “his” when referring to Lama, as in the following example: “Lama is now going through Lama’s correspondence over the last few months. Today Lama read your card of Feb 18. Lama was happy to hear from you but surprised to hear that you and your husband are no longer together. Anyway Lama says Lama will see you soon enough.”

Besides teaching at the Vajrapani North center in Berkeley over six Sundays, Lama Yeshe’s main focus over the next two months was to improve his English. He took formal

classes and had private home tutoring every day. Nevertheless, his language remained highly individual. For example, he once said, “I read this in the *Reader’s Digest*.”

Lama also presided over a puja in honor of his guest, Geshe Sopa. “Naturally we talked about teaching Dharma to Westerners, which requires different techniques because of their attitude, manner and culture. For example, Tibetans already believe in reincarnation,” recalled Geshe Sopa. “We both cooked. When the lamas came to my house we’d always make momos together. Thubten Yeshe had a car and one day we went for a drive. Lama asked me if he could drive, but I told him no.” Lama Yeshe would never argue with Geshe Sopa.



Geshe Sopa

## FRIDAYS WITH JUDY WEITZNER

While Lama was in Berkeley Judy Weitzner spent Fridays with him, during which she helped John Schwartz with the cleaning and did some cooking. She also thought up interesting outings for Lama while he practiced driving.

Judy Weitzner: “He drove John and me to an antique fair. My partner, Don, really wanted to come but had a terrible earache. Lama blew in his ear and said mantras and in a few minutes the ache was completely gone. John had also given him aspirin. Afterward Don said, ‘Hey, those aspirins really worked!’ Lama just cracked up. ‘You Americans, you’d rather believe in aspirin than in universal atomic energy!’ he said.

“He loved buying little tea sets and all kinds of kitsch, like an exquisite Chinese cloisonné bowl in which water magically disappeared. Lama took such delight in silly things—like comparing the click in my camera with the click in his, how his sounded more ‘professional.’ We laughed and laughed about these things.

“I could hardly stand being in the car with him when he drove, though. I just held on and prayed. One night I organized for him to go to an observatory and look through the big telescopes. I imagined I would drive through the hilly, winding Oakland road at night and was shocked when he announced that he was driving. ‘Don’t worry, dear.’ he said. ‘Visualize yourself as Tara.’ Well, I tried. Robbie Solick was in the back seat and he was just petrified. ‘Don’t worry, Robbie,’ I told him, ‘we’re visualizing ourselves as Tara, remember? I don’t know what Lama is visualizing himself as!’ Lama then bared his teeth, popped his eyes, gripped the wheel and said, ‘Mahakala!’ It was a wonderful night.”

When Judy told Lama she’d just seen the movie *The Shining* and been scared stiff, Lama Yeshe announced, “John Shore, I want to be scared. We’ll go to that movie!” Afterward, Lama wasn’t impressed, declaring it a “waste of talent.” “Weren’t you scared?” John asked him. “Nah!” Lama replied.

John Schwartz: “We drove home and I



With Judy Weitzner, Berkeley, 1980

pulled into the garage and the whole house was dark. I opened the door from the garage that led to the kitchen via a laundry. Lama went in first. It was pitch black. Suddenly he turns to me and says, 'There's someone in the house!' I go, 'Yiiiiiii!' My hair went straight up, I was so scared! Then Lama started laughing hysterically.

"He did everything one hundred percent, even watching TV. A lot of nights I couldn't watch with him. I had to get away sometimes. I simply couldn't spend twenty-four hours a day with him because he was just too pure, too beautiful, too intense. Sometimes I wouldn't even eat dinner with him. I'd just say I wasn't hungry. You can't do chit-chat with Lama, you can't gossip. When you think he's gossiping it always turns out to be something Dharmic. Not being that pure myself and not being a monk, I sometimes had to run away and let my hair down.

"One night he comes running into my room and says, 'John Shore, come on! You've got to see the television! The dakinis are on!' So I go in and he's watching an American beauty pageant and pointing to all the 'dakinis' in bikinis. He interpreted everything on TV as Dharma. Of Western desert scenes he'd say, 'See that? That's a realm, a hot hell.' He especially loved nature shows but watched a lot of sitcoms too, even in the

morning. I'd ask how he could watch that stuff, but he'd say, 'No, no, it's good,' and give me an incredible Dharma teaching on what was taking place on the screen."

Watching TV was not something Judy Weitzner enjoyed, but Lama watched every newscast and always wanted her there beside him to explain what was happening. "He was a real night owl, too," said Judy. "Almost every time I got up to leave he'd say, 'Why? Watch another show.' When I told him I was tired and wanted to sleep he just looked stunned. Maybe he stayed up all night, maybe he'd forgotten about sleep. People said all sorts of things about Lama's sleeping habits, but that summer he just forced me to watch TV. There was something in my relationship with Lama, with his tiring me out and not seeming to understand that—especially around a television set—which was difficult."

Peter Kedge was another who watched a lot of television with Lama: "Unlike today, TV was only widely available in the West at that time. Lama liked to just sit and surf channels, which for someone like me was really difficult. If ever I got hold of the remote and was able to lock onto something interesting, Lama would immediately grab it and change the channel. I felt sure Lama sensed when my concentration intensified and changed the channel just to keep me renounced."

## LAMA'S CUISINE

To allow Lama Yeshe some privacy the address of the Berkeley house was kept secret, but he still found plenty of time to address his students' problems.

John Schwartz: "He was always trying to get couples back together after they broke up. He'd spend all this time with them but I just told him he was wasting his time. After all, he knew karma better than anybody and when something was over, it was just over.

And he'd say, 'You really think so, John Shore?' And I'd say, 'Yeah, I've been married twice and I know these things.' But he tried so hard. First, he'd invite the man to dinner, then the woman another night. Then he'd have them both in together. He never had any success."

John continued. "I was always amazed at the amount of food Lama could eat, with all his physical problems. He'd often hold



Hong Kong, 1982

the palm of his open hand on a spot down near his waist and say, ‘Oh my heart!’ I’d say ‘Lama, your heart isn’t down there.’ But he said it was. I don’t know what he meant by that.<sup>323</sup>

“He always had breakfast and I’d lay out a whole spread for lunch. He called it his ‘California lunch,’ with salads and lots of pastrami, salami, cheeses—all the fatty foods. He just loved it. Then he’d have his nap and two hours later he was calling out, ‘John Shore, where’s my snack!’ He loved cold cuts, even with tea, and at night he’d eat a big dinner.

“One day we’d just finished one of these ‘California lunches’ when he gets a call from this married Mongolian lama who lived nearby. This guy constantly did pujas and Lama always attended them when invited. So this lama called to say that his wife had

just made momos. Well, that was the magic word! We go over there and Lama starts putting away these momos, looking up at me with sheepish eyes, like a kid caught with his hand in the cookie jar, as they brought him plate after plate of them.

“Most of the time Lama ate good food. He was one of the few Tibetan lamas to understand about salads and fresh vegetables. He made a garden out back of the house as soon as he got there, to maximize the growing time. He really had the touch—you never saw vegetables grow so big in just two months. People would come over and say, ‘I’ve lived in Berkeley all my life and I’ve never seen anyone grow stuff like this.’ He gave it away, a lettuce here, tomatoes there, supplying his students all summer. Lama knew about good food, but he ate junk, too.

“While we were in Berkeley he discovered

323. Lama was most likely referring to the fact that over the years his heart had become greatly enlarged, outgrowing the space that a healthy heart would normally occupy.

kimchi, the Korean national dish of very salty, highly seasoned cabbage. It is so bad for you. So Lama says, ‘John Shore, I can make this stuff myself.’ So I bought him a bunch of spices and stuff, and he got these jars, filled them up, put them in the refrigerator and checked them every day. I didn’t try it. He also liked mixing his own teas.”

“John Schwartz was a junk food fiend and no gourmet, whereas Lama really was a gourmet and very open and experimental,” said Judy.

Lama loved having his own kitchen and was an excellent cook, but the way he pre-

pared food often created a special challenge, as John Schwartz reported. “Every time he cooked he turned the gas way up high and I’d say, ‘Why is it so high, Lama?’ But he’d say, ‘No, dear, it’s all right, it’s going to taste really good.’ And it was good, but after we’d eaten I’d go back into the kitchen and find all these pans stacked high and all burnt black, with an inch of crust on them I had to scrub off.” Fortunately for John there were a number of devoted students in the area only too happy to come to the house when summoned and help with the cleaning up.

### IRA ZUNIN AND LAMA

Ira Zunin spent several hours with Lama every day: “That summer, Lama Yeshe came to live in Berkeley, where I was at school. He needed a cook so I spent a lot of time at his house. John Schwartz was also living there at the time, for which I was very happy as we had become quite close. Dinner preparation would start with Lama deciding what we would eat. I would go into the kitchen, prep and start cooking. Lama would usually show up in the kitchen a short time later, turn all the gas flames up to full, and we would both run helter-skelter around the kitchen, cooking at a furious pace. Once in a while things would burn, but it usually worked out. Sometimes it was but a blur and then dinner was just done. When we were finished, the kitchen always looked like there had been a small explosion.

“One time a raw egg slipped out of my wet hand as we were hustling around the kitchen. He saw the egg as it fell, saw my upset face, instantly told me to ‘let go’ and I totally did, all in a microsecond before the egg hit the floor. Amazing.

“When we ate together, I would always try to finish first so that Lama would never need



With Ira Zunin, Berkeley, 1980

to wait for me. One time I spaced out and, looking up, noticed Lama eyeing me, done with his food. The idea that I might be wasting his time felt terrible to me.

“Another time, we were in the middle of a meal and I noticed Lama gazing at his forearms. ‘Not bad for dead lama,’ he said.

“‘What?’ I asked. ‘What do you mean, ‘dead lama?’”

“‘Oh yes,’ he responded. ‘I’ve died maybe one hundred, two hundred times.’

“‘In this life Lama?’ I asked.

“‘Yes. Of course. In this life dear,’ he said.



“Lama, when do you die in this life?”

“Oh, when I go from sleeping to waking.”

“How do you come back Lama?”

“I just shake,” he tells me, as he makes his whole body quiver.

“Sure enough, Lama would always tell me to wake him at 8:00. I would go to his bedroom door and knock softly. No answer. Then knock a little harder. Nothing. Light bang. ‘Lama, time to wake up.’ Nothing. I was petrified to open the door. Finally, bang, bang, bang: ‘Lama!!! Lama!!!’ And then eventually, a faint ‘yeah.’ Ten minutes later he would fly out of the bedroom dressed in his robes and run into the dining room ready for his morning tea.

“His most animated time was usually between morning tea and lunch: meetings, correspondence, English lessons. Then lunch. Lunch was usually a fairly heavy meal. Often momos.

“After lunch Lama liked to go outside for a little exercise or ‘gardening.’ He liked to water, but more importantly he would ruffle up certain plants with his hands. They would always grow amazingly when he would ‘inject them with energy.’ He also liked to play catch with a little ball. At this hour, he would sometimes grow faint. Lama had had rheumatic fever as a child and it had affected the valves of his heart such that it had become very enlarged. You could see the



Berkeley, 1980



vessels in his neck pulsating all the time. The first time he passed out was after lunch in the heat of the day. He slumped over while we were in the garden. The side of the house broke his fall. I ran over just as he came to. 'Are you OK Lama?' 'I'm OK dear,' he said. 'Just let go.'

"When we got back inside, I asked him if I should call an ambulance if he ever lost consciousness. 'No dear. Just let go.' I am glad it never happened.

"Sometimes he would play dead. We would be driving in the car and he would tell me to pull over to get some tiny item in a convenience store. I would go in and then when I came back out his head would be rolled back in the seat, his mouth wide open, completely still. At first, I would think he was joking. 'Lama, come on,' I would say. But he would persist looking like a corpse until I would freak out and then he would start cracking up.

"Lama Yeshe also liked to watch TV, especially the news, to learn more about the Western culture and improve his English. He would often ask me to explain what was going on. At this point, Carter was president and we were in the middle of the US hostage crisis in Iran. He asked me a number of questions until he had a grasp of the situation. He felt President Carter was too soft. He said, 'If I was president, I would make a strong force and just take [the hostages out]!'"

Lama Yeshe loved gardening so much that Paula Chichester enrolled him in a horticulture course at a local institution, Merritt College. He attended classes for several weeks—three hours a day, three days a week, with homework assignments. It was quite a commitment. He had the idea that Kopan could grow bulbs commercially. Judy Weitzner and Carol Fields shared the driving with John Schwartz. Sometimes Lama drove, but always with someone. Instead of

robes he wore a maroon shift to class that came to just below his knees. By the end of the course everyone in his class was giving him presents.

Judy asked Lama for some teachings and he told her to come to his room the very day he was leaving California. Naturally, the house was in chaos and filled with people. "I knew I needed to have a calm mind but I was a raging lunatic, obsessed with getting Lama to the airport on time," said Judy. "Then at one point I looked at Lama and he looked at me and I felt this beam of energy. All that worrying stuff just fell away and I felt like I'd been in meditation for weeks. 'OK, dear?' he said. Then he gave me a teaching and a short mantra to say twenty-one times a day.

"At the airport he grabbed my hand, pressed something into it and told me not to look until after he had left. He had his hooks into me from the first time we met and he knew it. He used to say, 'You're always asking questions, questions!' I thought he was criticizing but he said, 'Shows a very good mind, dear. You never take anything I say at face value.' After he left I opened my hand and there was this little dorje. I felt he had handed me some power and promptly burst into tears."

Continuing, Judy said, "A day or so after Lama left Berkeley someone went out to the house to pick something up and checked the vegetable garden. They found that everything had completely shriveled up and collapsed.

"Some time later I ran into the English teacher who used to come to the house. She told me she had been deeply troubled that summer and Lama sometimes gave her advice during their lessons. She said the way he treated her then had saved her life and changed it forever, though she never took him as a teacher."

## VANCOUVER

Toward the end of Lama's stay in Berkeley, Lama and Max went on another short holiday, this time to Alaska. On the way he gave a weekend course and an empowerment of the Twenty-One Taras to forty people in Vancouver. For many it was their first encounter with Green Tara and tantric practice:

*We say we are transforming ourselves into the deity. How? Do my bones become green? Does my blood transform into green light? No! You have two bodies. One is physical and the other is the psychic, or consciousness, body. If you don't understand this, you're missing the point of practicing yoga tantra. When, in your everyday life, you change your inner attitude, you are a different manifestation. When you are angry, you're a different manifestation from when you're peaceful, aren't you? But your head hasn't changed, your hand hasn't changed. This is what I am referring to, the transformation of consciousness. The consciousness body transforms into the green radiating light body, so you eradicate the ordinary conceptions of ego, the limited*

*self-pitying one with which you usually identify yourself.*

*The difference between Buddhist and Western psychology is that in Buddhism the ego doesn't have a good reputation. The ego shouldn't receive any encouragement. However, we do speak of divine pride, recognizing your divine quality, your dignity. But you should not have ego. From the Buddhist philosophical viewpoint, the human ego is a hallucinated projection.*

*The tantric viewpoint is that any time you experience pleasure and bliss the tendency should be to increase wisdom, tranquility and satisfaction. That's why tantra emphasizes having pleasure and bliss. If you are dissatisfied, the result is more dissatisfaction and misery. That is the interdependent characteristic of psychological phenomena.*

*Many people feel guilty when they have pleasure. Unbelievable! Completely stupid! I know many religious people who go on holiday and say, "I feel guilty. I had a good time but others are suffering so much." I never think that! Be grateful! Then you are able to*



With Ann, Max, Deborah Simpson, Mary-Jane Nehring, Vancouver, 1980

*give pleasure to others and you feel worthwhile. It's important to understand that if you have a good time, a quiet and peaceful time and enjoy yourself, that is the result of your*

*good karma, your good attitude, good thinking. So, you recognize and appreciate, instead of feeling guilty.<sup>324</sup>*

## AN ALASKAN HOLIDAY WITH MAX

The Alaskan trip on a Norwegian luxury cruiser was Lama's idea. "Lama was so excited," said Mummy Max. "He wanted to see hunks of ice falling into the sea and just glowed when he talked about glaciers. He wore lay clothes and I wore a white duffel coat. He had his mala in his hand the whole time. Of course, everyone on board fell in love with him and started telling him all their problems.

"We went all the way up the fjords and spent a couple of days in Anchorage, where Lama was so sad to see the native people drunk and hanging out on street corners. At one point we left the big boat and got into a smaller one and went through all these pale, light-blue icebergs. There were polar bears and black bears. Lama loved it, though he got a bit seasick. But we were never alone, as a lit-

tle group of people had attached themselves to him. He sat and meditated on the ice and I took photos of everything."

After his holiday Lama Yeshe returned briefly to Berkeley, where he described his trip to his California students:

*From Vancouver, we went on the Holland American Line. It was so beautiful, so magnificent. Most of the people on that trip were retired. Everybody had white hair, including myself! Not so many young people. The ship was very smooth. I could not believe! I think I could travel the whole world by boat!*

*It was unbelievable, like going to the Mount Everest area. It was the most fantastic I have ever seen in my life. There were birds that I'd never seen before and a hundred thousand seals sitting on the icebergs. The icebergs were*



With Max, Alaska, 1980

324. Edited from archive #457.



like snow mountains, so high, but the boat went right through the ice! Unbelievable! The boat pushed right through. And when we came near, the seals dove right into the water. I took so many pictures. We also saw grizzly bears . . . very scary! We were very close. Really, it was a totally new world.

Alaska is the largest state, bigger than Texas, than California. I think America has very good fortune, no? Mostly their industry is fish in Alaska, fishing. If you enjoy fish, you're all set, but if you don't, you're out of luck.

The birds are unbelievable, birds that you

never see anywhere else in the world. And then there were the glaciers . . . fantastic! And when they fall down, it is like a thunderstorm . . . boom!! But not only did the icebergs fall down; sometimes huge pieces would pop up from under the sea, pop up from the bottom! Everybody was scared and waiting, because you never knew when or where these things would happen. There was some sense of danger because a huge iceberg could also pop up just under the ship, and whether falling down or popping up, they caused big waves in the water.<sup>325</sup>

## OVERNIGHT IN NEW YORK CITY

From California, Lama Yeshe flew to New York, where he and John Schwartz booked into an airport hotel before their flight early the next morning to Iceland. But first Lama wanted to go shopping.

John Schwartz: "Lama Yeshe was a professional shopper. He just loved it. He told me he wanted some trousers, so we went to this nice store where he headed for the women's department. He thought the colors there were nicer than in the menswear. He bought

a pair of light maroon jersey slacks with an elastic waist and some other maroon clothes.

"That night I went to his room to bring him down for dinner and he's wearing a polo shirt with these tight jersey pants and this leather bag looped over his wrist. It was the first time I had ever seen him in Western clothes. He strikes this pose, arms out like a model, hips forward and says, 'How do I look?' He looked so gay it was unbelievable. Then I noticed his private parts showing

prominently through his tight jersey trousers. He looks down and says, ‘Oh, excuse me!’ and comes back with his underwear on. When we got to the dining room and

the waiter came over and poured us each a glass of water, Lama looks at him and says, ‘Is this water boiled?’ The guy gave him such a look!”

## ICELAND

Icelandic social worker, Thorhalla Bjornsdottir, had been living at Tushita Retreat Centre for some years. “The day I left, in May 1979, Lama told me he wanted to visit Iceland,” said Thorhalla. “I thought he was just saying it to make me feel good. However, a year later my situation at home was such that I felt I could receive him and sent a very small card with an invitation. Not long after that I got a letter asking me to send a ticket, which I did.”

On August 25, Lama Yeshe gave a public talk to one hundred people in Reykjavik, but his short visit was really a holiday. “It

was August and the weather was fantastic,” Thorhalla continued. “Iceland is a magical and beautiful country and Lama saw it at its best. We went to the countryside and saw many different things. Wherever we went Lama always found time to take a nap—he just disappeared into nature to sleep or rest for a while.

“In 1980 there was no hierarchy or upper and lower classes in Iceland. Everyone went to the same schools and it was like a family. Lama really liked that and wanted to come back again. He said it reminded him of Tibet.

He wore his robes, which drew a lot of attention, and walked down the main street with me, holding my hand. I was so embarrassed. At one point he stopped outside a lingerie shop and looked at everything in the window. I tried to pull him away but he was completely relaxed.

“We went into a tourist shop where they sold stuffed puffins. Lama began bargaining for one. Bargaining was unknown in Iceland. All the puffins looked the same to me, but Lama kept thinking about this particular one. The next day he went back and bought it. He asked me to bring it to India for him and have a cage made for it. I brought it but did not have the cage made. Then Lama installed it in an empty glass aquarium he had in his big room at Tushita and there it stayed.”

From Iceland Lama Yeshe sent Bea Ribush a postcard written by



With Thorhalla and her parents, Reykjavik, 1980

John Schwartz that read, "Please tell Max [Redlich] take care Lama Zopa and check Lama Zopa's health and take him to dentist

and clean his teeth. But don't let them take out any teeth." Rinpoche was teaching in Melbourne at the time.

### THE TRIALS OF A LAMA'S ATTENDANT

John Schwartz was finding traveling with Lama hard work. As John later explained, "Lama understood my need to relax, so whenever we got to a duty-free store he'd buy us what he called 'a bottle of wine.' (He called all liquor 'wine.')

He'd say, 'I want a bottle of wine, half for my altar and half for John Shore!' Sure enough, he'd bring me the half-bottle of whatever it was. Needless to say, being as deluded as I was, I didn't put the half he gave me on my altar but instead enjoyed it quietly in my room.

"If we ever had any spare time at an airport Lama would go to the magazine section. One time he called me over and showed me pictures of wonderful-looking naked ladies with enormous breasts in *Playboy* and asked me, 'John Shore, do you think that is attractive?' I'd say, 'Yeah.' 'But look at those breasts, they're so big!' I'd say, 'Yeah, Lama, that's attractive.' But he'd kind of shake his head. Obviously, he didn't see it that way and he was learning something, too.

"Lama always had a good look around airports. Once he spied a Muslim woman sitting in a corner of a very busy airport doing her prayers and said, 'Look how beautiful that is!' And it was, too, to see someone so quietly into herself, doing her practice in all that tumult."

A visit to Manjushri Institute was included in this year's tour. On the train up to Ulverston Lama and John had an argument about money.

John Schwartz: "All the centers we visited were in such financial trouble but when he arrived everyone gave him all this money. And he'd leave with it. I suggested he give

some back to the centers. 'No,' he said. 'First, I work to do this and they're giving me the money. Also, I have a lot to take care of besides the centers. I have gurus too, you know.' And of course, I knew he took care of everyone at Kopan and never kept any money for himself. Then he added, 'Westerners know how to make money!' It was like he was debating me, slapping his hands together as he said, 'OK, what else is bothering you, John Shore? What's next?' Whatever I brought up, he just nailed me to the wall with it. But about the money, he said, 'Just wait until we get to Italy if you want to see piles of offerings. There aren't many religious countries in this world—America is not a religious country, but Italy and Spain are.' And it was true. When we got to Italy there were mounds of white envelopes two feet high.

"I was pretty sulky by the time we got to Manjushri and said maybe it was better if he continued without me. 'I don't need you!' he says. 'You do, too,' I said. 'You can't even lift a suitcase.' 'I don't need you. I can get my suitcase on and off planes!' I didn't leave him, of course. Then he said, 'I like Americans. They tell you exactly what's on their minds. They just say it.'

"Traveling with Lama was very confronting for me," John admitted. "He always told me to book him on Pan Am because at that time they were often half-empty and he could put the armrests up and grab some sleep. But Lama pushed my buttons mercilessly. I would have the whole schedule worked out, really planned, but we always got to airports just as the plane was about to leave. He simply would not leave earlier and it just drove

me nuts. I'd say, 'Lama, come on! We're going to miss it!' And he'd say, 'Don't worry dear, don't worry!' As we rushed to the departure gate he'd say, 'What time does the plane leave?' and I'd say, 'You know, Lama.' Then

he'd go over to the airline counter, like there was all the time in the world, and ask them what time the plane left and I'd say, 'I just told you!' He was just doing stuff he knew would irritate me and he did it all the time."

## PUBLICATIONS FOR WISDOM CULTURE

Among the challenges facing Wisdom's new director Hugh Clift was the often-strained working relationship that existed between various members of the publishing staff. Just after Hugh had fired Robina Courtin, John

Schwartz suddenly appeared in her office. He told her she was to attend a meeting of departmental directors to be held that night. She was surprised, as she was not a director and never attended such meetings. "Lama

sat me right opposite him and directed all his questions about publishing directly at me," said Robina. "It was clear he was demonstrating that I would continue to work in publishing."

There was discontent in the kitchens as well. "At the end of 1979 the new managers at the Priory asked me to fill in time sheets," said Ronnie King. "I tore them up, completely offended. I worked twenty-four hours a day for the kitchen and took the food and everyone's



With Hugh Clift, London, 1980



Fire puja, Manjushri, 1980





general health so seriously.” Ronnie was also very concerned about environmental issues but found that many people there were very ignorant of them. Although she loved the teachings being given at Manjushri and characterized them as “perfect,” after Lama’s visit she left Manjushri and went to India.

Lama Yeshe’s teachings at Manjushri included three days, September 4–6, on chapter four of Maitreya’s *Discriminating*

*between the Middle and the Extremes*. He also conferred empowerments of Vajrasattva and Four-arm Mahakala and led a Tara puja, a Tara fire puja and a protector puja.

Many students reported that it was becoming harder and harder to get an interview with Lama Yeshe, yet Lama often managed to run into those who really needed to see him in unexpected moments and do a great deal for them in just a few minutes’ conversation.

## BUSINESS MATTERS

The Priory was now on the registry of historic buildings and received public money for its upkeep, but one of the conditions was that it had to be kept open to the public for a certain period of time. Ondy Willson and her husband, Lee Bray, had not only been the first couple to move into Manjushri but were also both teachers with good salaries. One day Lama asked Ondy if she would get involved in making a business to capitalize on opportunities to serve the wider public. In response to this suggestion Ondy and another student created what became known as “The Café.” Ondy explained, “Although it never did much more than break even, it was a very successful venture. Lama was delighted that the crockery matched, the tablecloths were clean and things were just as they should be. We made a video of the history of the place to show tourists and gave them a little meditation. They could also buy something in the gift shop and sit down for tea and freshly baked scones. I was really happy to make contact with the local community and get the public in there.”

Most of Lama Yeshe’s centers struggled for money while trying

to purchase buildings and support Kopan as well. Several centers got involved in selling fashion garments manufactured by Marcel in Kathmandu and Trisha in Delhi. This proved mildly successful in some countries, but in England the venture ran at a loss. This caused some at Manjushri to complain that they had been pressured into business against their higher instincts. Some thought business mundane and “un-spiritual” but Lama always emphasized that his centers should strive to become financially self-sufficient.



With Ondy, Brenda, Harvey and kids, Chapel Café, 1980

## THE PRIORY GROUP

Since Lama Yeshe's last visit to Manjushri, quite a few new students of various nationalities had joined the community. Apparently, some of them had become very frustrated with how the center was run by the director, Harvey Horrocks, and the existing management, calling loudly for "democracy." In response to the complaints, Harvey organized a brainstorming weekend, involving all the members of the existing management committee, together with quite a few community residents and a few non-residents, people with a strong connection to the center. Garth Spiers ran the weekend, which included a number of sessions to explore finding a management system better than what was in place at the time. As a result of these sessions, Harvey set up a new struc-

ture, replacing the management committee with the Priory Group, which included some of the more vocal complainants.

Robina had been at the center for nearly two years: "During a teaching in the chapel Lama suddenly became very heavy. 'You people!' he said. 'You people and your democracy!' He just spat the words out. 'Look where your democracy has got you! If you really want to help Manjushri Institute, then go to Harvey and ask him what you can do to help.'" He told everyone that he had appointed Harvey as director and that people should respect that and support him in that position.

"Lama was very wrathful," said Malcolm Frow. "It was a scary speech and some of the Sangha were in tears afterward."

## THE CONISHEAD PRIORY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

As the head of a large and growing international organization, Lama Yeshe had to deal with a range of executive issues. A draft constitution containing twenty-nine articles, all approved by Lama Yeshe, was distributed to all the FPMT centers with the aim of establishing governance of the Foundation by a General Council and Executive Board.

At a meeting of Manjushri Institute's new management committee, the Priory Group, Harvey presented Lama Yeshe with another document. Entitled the *Manjushri Institute Report*, it was a glowing account brimming with confidence and complimenting the center on its internal harmony.

Speaking about the importance of Manjushri finding ways to raise funds, Lama said the center should be able to offer accommodation to professionals, not just hippies and young people. For this they needed good facilities, which in turn required financial

security. "Big building, big money and no spiritual—that is wrong," Lama told them. "Big building, big money, big facilities, big benefit—then all right." He added that he thought the idea to offer the place as a conference facility was a good one as it would bring business right into the center rather than looking outside for it. He also told them that it was fine to serve alcohol at conferences if the clients expected it. "Christian priests drink and that's all right," Lama pointed out. "But to be intoxicated is no good, no matter who it is. So check up." He also added, "Don't worry about failure. You should understand that behind us there are thousands of sympathetic students who will support the center."

Lama pointed out how lucky they had been to secure government funds to develop the historic Priory building. "Other centers are not so lucky. Manjushri Institute most

lucky center in the world!” Lama exclaimed. He also stressed that the business priorities should be clear and accounting for the government funding kept quite separate. These government funds were tied to the Conishead Priority Development Plan.

I just give proposal to keep my family happy, unified. It is like a normal family, where the father goes outside to make business to take care of the family. That’s what the management does, what Lama Pasang does at Kopan. It is very important that we all work harmoniously. That is the nucleus of Dharma propagation. We are all vajra brothers and sisters and are capable of solving our problems, even though we have relative difficulties with each other from time to time. Harmony comes from a vision of one destination. If we don’t have one destination we are in conflict with each other, because our aims are different. All things much improved since I was here last time. I am so proud, thank you so much for everything.<sup>326</sup>

Unfortunately, the glowing report presented to Lama at this meeting with the management committee did not give the complete picture of the situation at Manjushri. There were disagreements and elements of disharmony that came out into the open over the next several days. To begin with, some residents did not approve of the institute’s business orientation. They felt that Dharma centers should have nothing to do with business, that this was somehow “impure.” This led them to reject certain proposals that Lama thought could provide financial support for Manjushri. Lama spoke about this at a trustees’ meeting on the following day, and later commented on this rejection as follows:

I am so unhappy they suddenly say “reject.” They should check up. To say “no” directly to a proposal is quite dangerous unless they have another proposal to replace it. Even though the proposed plan could fail, it is really not such a huge risk because our worldwide organization is sympathetic to Manjushri Institute. So if at a certain point a business disaster happens, you can call all the centers in the Foundation and say you need help right now. Manjushri’s problem is all our problem. It is my problem. That’s true.

Maybe some people can criticize our organization this way: “At Lama Yeshe’s center, Manjushri Institute, everyone is always working, working, with no time for meditation. The emphasis is always on money.” People could say that kind of criticism. But on the other hand, look at the Western world realistically. Who is not working? For example, Harvey. If he was not involved here, he would be working as an engineer. Can they just stay here without working? I feel working for the Dharma is something natural. It also doesn’t leave people much time to just space out.

To study is also natural in the Western world, but we cannot say we are Tibetan Buddhists therefore we should follow the way of life of a Tibetan monastery and not work. We cannot say that we should get up in the morning and just have puja all day. It is unrealistic to think we can survive without working, unless this organization has a millionaire, or if someone gives us £125,000 every year. But who is going to do that? So I think it is obvious that we should be economic and work to be healthy. Western working people cannot live in

326. From handwritten notes of this meeting taken by Jacie Keeley.

poor Eastern monastic conditions. It is unnecessary to live this way.<sup>327</sup>

Although Lama Yeshe generally encouraged the idea of running businesses, he was quite happy to see that the management commit-

tee had given up on a plan to open a restaurant in Ulverston, away from the institute. "I feel it is wise that too much outside activity is eliminated," he told them. "So I have no problem at all if you abandon this Ulverston restaurant idea."

### ED GREEN'S GREAT OFFER

More practical matters awaited Lama in the form of a letter from Ian Green. The students in Melbourne had been searching for another country property ever since Lama Yeshe had declared Noojee unsuitable. Ian became involved in the search, which ended in his own family's backyard. His father, Ed Green, was a successful businessman. He found the Buddhist people he met to be straight and true and devoted to good practices. He suggested to Ian that they might like to use part of an 850-acre tract of bushland his family owned just outside Bendigo, the third largest town in the state of Victoria and two hours' drive from Melbourne.

Seventy acres of the place were occupied by Sandhurst Town, a historical town tourist venture with its own small railway, a eucalyptus oil distillery and many pioneer-style attractions, including a restaurant. Ed Green proposed that the Buddhists take control of this business and the whole property on a nominal long-term or permanent lease, with a trial period of two years. Ed offered to pay for the necessary water reservoirs himself but did not want the land subdivided. The land was not conventionally pretty. The virgin bush had been brutally decimated for eucalyptus oil production and the topsoil had washed away, leaving hard, red, ant-loving dirt in which the trees were in early regrowth.

Now Lama Yeshe replied, "Thank you for

your letters and thank your father for his kindness offering land for Tara Institute. I sent cable to Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche asking if land is beneficial for future of Dharma. Kyabje Rinpoche says not. Here is reply. So no use to put energy in now if not beneficial for the future. But greatly appreciate your motivation."

John Schwartz continued. "Lama is very healthy. One hundred and eighty are attending his weekend course. Lama sends his Big Love and I send a proportionate amount from my deluded mind. Lama Yeshe and John."

Naturally, the Greens were most surprised. One didn't offer a large piece of land every day. A few months later Ian received another letter: "When first I heard about your land I sent a letter to Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche but couldn't give much details so I'm sorry I create confusion. But in seeing your letters and understanding you and your father's kind action for growth of Dharma community, so therefore as you give this opportunity, I would like you to reconsider your kind offer and give us the opportunity to accept. I feel it is stupid of us not to accept. Please give us the price of land after two-year trial period."

Lama Yeshe said he would ask Bonnie to be spiritual program coordinator. He would also send students and Sangha to work there and, if all went well, a geshe and translator.

327. Ibid.



Atisha land, 1980

“If Australian people don’t want to work, I send Tibetans!” he added.

Ed Green drew up a perpetual lease of the Bendigo land, which Lama Yeshe named Atisha Centre. He planned to give a ten-day course there in August 1981. Meanwhile,

monk Scott Brusso, who had been in Australia for some time, could teach. Harry Sutton would come as well, which was a great boon because he was an excellent worker. By March 1981, Ian Green and three others were living on the land.

## RINPOCHE IN AUSTRALIA WITH GESHE LEGDEN

Lama Zopa Rinpoche had arrived in Australia toward the end of August, around the same time that Lama Yeshe had arrived in England. After giving teachings in Melbourne, he flew to Chenrezig, where Geshe Legden, the abbot of Sera Je, was severely hampered by the fact that there was no translator. “I was sad, devastated,” Geshe Legden said. “I couldn’t communicate even basic things, let alone give Dharma teachings.” Finally, a translator arrived and things improved for him. Geshe Legden was in Australia as a guest of Lama Yeshe, who had invited him to visit any center he wished in order to raise funds for the vast assembly hall he had already built at Sera Je.

Geshe Legden: “When His Holiness the Dalai Lama appointed me abbot I decided we needed this assembly hall as there was no place for the monks to gather and pray together. Then I went to Kopan to ask Lama Yeshe if he could help me. He thought it was a very good idea and said we could discuss the matter in detail when he and Zopa Rinpoche came down to Mundgod for Trijang Rinpoche’s teachings. After that, I made another very quick trip to Kopan. Lama Yeshe returned from traveling the day before I had to leave. He ended up becoming the main benefactor of the Sera Je assembly hall. He collected funds from all over the world and arranged a fundraising tour for me as



Rinpoche and Geshe Legden, Chenrezig, 1980

well. I told Thubten Yeshe I had no experience of the West, so that time I had to ask him for his advice, not give him mine. I also

asked him what I should teach at Chenrezig, in terms of Buddhist philosophy.”

## FIRE AT INSTITUT VAJRA YOGINI

Lama Yeshe left Manjushri on September 10 and spent a couple of days in London, attended by a delighted Robin Bath. He then flew to France, where the course he was to teach had been canceled due to a fire in the new center.

After the Viviers course the previous year Lama had sent Elisabeth Drukier around France to look for a suitable place for a center. He said it should be situated a little high on a hill in a beautiful landscape, have plenty of room for expansion and have access to an international airport. After spending eight months looking at a hundred houses, Elisabeth settled on the fifty-room Château d'en Clausade in Marzens, situated only about twenty-five miles east of Toulouse.

“I was inspired by Manjushri Institute and had long talks with Harvey and Massimo Corona about how they found their places,” said Elisabeth. “Finally, I got in con-

tact with a government association buying big properties from old noble families who could no longer afford to pay the taxes on them. We didn't have to pay sales tax on the château because it was government property. The conditions were very good. Denis Huet sold his land at Montélimar in southeast France and gave me a budget.” Denis Huet had become France's Pino Corona, the primary material benefactor.

Located near the town of Lavaur, Château d'en Clausade dated back to the nineteenth century and had belonged to a relative of the painter Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, who was born in the nearby town of Albi. The accompanying property had its own park and orchards covering several gently rolling hills.

During the twelfth and thirteenth century, when the heretical Cathar religion was spreading in southern France, the town

of Lavaur was considered the center of the Cathar movement. The Cathars, a Gnostic Christian sect, had propounded a number of unorthodox beliefs, including reincarnation, which were deemed heretical by the Catholic Church. A crusade was launched from the north to uproot this heresy and Lavaur was besieged several times. During these sieges some of Lavaur's citizens acted courageously to defend their town and their faith. As a result, it is a kind of local tradition among the people there to stand up for freedom of belief whatever the cost. When the first students moved into the château and found out about the local history, they thought it was quite serendipitous!

Once Elisabeth had acquired the building, eight students moved in almost immediately and a residential community soon established itself. Serkong Tsenshab Rinpoche taught the first course at Institut Vajra Yogini (IVY) in April 1980.

Then came the fire. "It started in the

roof of the western wing after workmen left something burning when they came down for lunch one hot day," said Elisabeth. "Suddenly, the whole roof was in flames because it was such a very old building.

"I called Lama in England and cried on the phone but he said, 'Very good, very good! What a good purification! Beautiful, beautiful!' I was absolutely speechless. I told Lama we had to cancel his course because we had too much to deal with—the mess, the firemen, the insurance. 'Yes, of course, but I'm coming anyway,' he said. It was his first visit to Institut Vajra Yogini.

"When they arrived," Elisabeth continued, "John Schwartz took me aside and said, 'Elisabeth, I told you not to smoke!' We cracked up, enjoying our crazy Jewish humor!

"Lama inspected the damage and said, 'Don't worry. You will get a lot of money from this. I will go with you to look at other places for sale around here and we will buy



Château d'en Clausade, Marzens, 1979

one for the monks and nuns to live in.' The insurance payout was indeed enough to buy another building.

"Lama was primarily interested in finding something for his Western monks and nuns similar to the situation they had previously had in Kopan. The situation for the IMI Sangha at Kopan had been hopeless ever since the Nepalese government had changed the visa laws. We looked at a few places. Lama told me to keep in touch and said he was sure I was going to find the right place."

Fifty students turned up at Institut Vajra Yogini, despite the fact that Lama Yeshe's course had been canceled. Lama and John stayed in a nice flat arranged for them in one of the château's outbuildings because the main house stank of smoke. Lama gave two discourses and asked the resident teacher, Geshe Lobsang Tengye, to give a short lam-rim course, at the end of which the students received a Dorje Khadro empowerment. Before coming to IVY, Geshe Tengye had lived in Paris for some time, ministering to the Vietnamese Buddhist community. As a result, he had no immigration issues. Prior to that he had spent seven years as His Holiness the Dalai Lama's representative in

Thailand, where Lama and Rinpoche had met him in 1975.

Geshe Tengye's translator, Thubten Sherab, was the first Kopan monk to be sent to the West. He spoke excellent English but also liked to wear lay clothes and "act Western." "Lama zeroed in on that immediately," said John Schwartz. "I came into his room and found Thubten Sherab on his knees, cutting Lama's toenails. It was beautiful! Lama just looked up at me and laughed. After that Thubten Sherab wore monk's robes all the time."

Nicole Couture had left her job as spiritual program coordinator at Manjushri to perform the same role in Italy. When Frau Kalff asked Lama if he could send someone to be her personal assistant, Lama arranged for Nicole to go to Zurich. During that year Nicole lived in the Kalff family home in Zollikon. She came to see Lama Yeshe in France to offer her services and he asked her to go to Hong Kong to help Peter Kedge. "The electronic business had been closed down," said Peter. "Eventually, with the help of Stephen Frewen, I established a different business in storage and materials handling, which was more in line with my engineering background. Nicole arrived in December 1980 and that business went on to generate significant funds that were then applied to a number of FPMT projects."



Geshe Tengye and Thubten Sherab, IVY, 1982

In every country and at every course people brought their marital problems to Lama Yeshe. Massimo Corona arrived on one of the days that Lama was giving a discourse. "By then I was divorcing Carol and having such a heavy time. John Schwartz told me later



that Lama had said, ‘Today I’m going to teach for Massimo.’ So that day he taught only on the relationship between husband and wife—the whole audience had to get it so he could give me a message”:

*You Westerners, you get married for suffering. You get married with this idea: “You make me happy so let’s get married.” So when the person you’re married to starts to change, as they always do, it’s, “Oh, you don’t give me chocolate anymore. I don’t love you. You don’t make me happy!” This is putting blame for your own inner state of mind on someone else. It can’t work. So you really get back the suffering. You’re programmed for suffering. If, however, you get married with the understanding that “I’m responsible for my happiness; you’re responsible for your happiness. So what can I do to help you?” then you will always be happy. You will always have peace of mind. Then you will have a basis for happiness.*

Massimo continued: “That night I had dinner with Lama and he said, ‘Well, Massimo, you offered to take her back, you offered everything you could. Now you let go. Finish!’ On the flight back to Pomaia I felt something leave my mind forever. It was jealousy.”

Another visitor was Margery Cross, from Ireland: “I wanted Lama to name the small group that had started up over there, but I sat in front of him and just started crying. I didn’t know why. I just knew there was a deep, deep sense within myself of having



Stephen, Peter and Nicole, Hong Kong, 1982



With Massimo, ILTK, 1982

come to the end of a very long journey. I looked up at him and his eyes seemed to go a dark red. It was amazing. He leaned forward and touched my head, throat and heart. I felt a great calm and stopped crying. Afterward, we went for a walk together. The name he gave us was such a mouthful: Asanga Institute for Advanced Buddhist Studies. Later someone told me it was an arrogant name but I just said, ‘Well, Lama chose it.’”

The grounds of Château d’en Clausade included a large garden and the property was surrounded by fields and rolling hills. Lama told the gardener, Tony Wengoborsky, who became a monk some years later, that he wanted him to grow enough vegetables to feed fifty people. “He knew I was a German

who lived in Switzerland, where working hard is the highest virtue,” said Tony. “But I rushed too much. I wanted everything to happen at once. There was never any money and no real support from the directors because all I had was Lama’s word. I worked ten hours a day, seven days a week, and I did get those vegetables growing. Lama told me to give names to different parts of the garden, such as Aryatara Garden and Chenrezig Garden. He also said to divide one section into little paths, where city people could come and work because contact with the earth was so beneficial. But those things never happened.”

Institut Vajra Yogini was not the happy family of residents Lama Yeshe might have wished for. Many had no money; others wanted a different lifestyle. Tension was mounting and by late summer many residents had left. Geshe Tengye arrived just as things were falling apart.

Spiritual program director Dieter Kratzer had been there for nearly ten months. At one point Lama took Dieter aside and told him, “You go Germany; you make center there.” When Geshe Tengye heard this, in a des-



With Merry, Elizabeth Johnson and Tony Wengoborsky, IVY, 1982

perate moment he said to Dieter, “You won’t leave, will you? You and I are going to stay, set up the program and put energy into the center.”

Lama gave a talk encouraging harmony among the residents but then sent Dieter off to Germany anyway. “So I said goodbye to dear Geshe-la, confident that Lama knew what was best for me,” said Dieter.

## PARIS

Lama Yeshe’s days in France were extremely busy. Before leaving he held a small lunch at the institute for some of the nuns from the local Catholic convent. “Yes, welcome! I know the problems of nuns because I was a nun before in my past life,” he told them happily.

He then left for Marseilles to catch a flight to Spain but at the airport suddenly decided to fly to Paris instead and spend a

few days there with Elisabeth. Lama had never been to Paris before. Together they looked at churches and walked on the main boulevards and window-shopped on the Champs-Élysées.

“He loved gift shops and china shops,” said Elisabeth. “He bought a few candies but seemed to just want to feel the city. He didn’t explain himself to me. We sat in cafés and drank tea, both of us in robes, of course. He

told me I was too fat and should avoid eggs. He also told Robina she was too fat and told Wongmo to wear perfume. He said I should keep cutting my hair but wear it a little longer when in Paris. He said I should always take care of my physical appearance. He also mentioned to me during those days that something would come together in Paris that would eventually be very big.”<sup>328</sup>

### LAMA VISITS THE LAND AT BUBION

Things were changing in Spain. The center in Ibiza had fragmented because everyone wanted something different. François Camus moved to Bubion with his mother and another group formed in Alicante.

When Lama Yeshe arrived in Spain, he went straight to Bubion with Jampa Chökyi, Carmen Montagnes and Alberto Vignoli to view the land with Philippe and François Camus. There was not a lot to see, but Lama was enraptured by the steep, herb-clothed hills, pristine skies and views all the way to Morocco. It was as barren and rugged as Tibet. In winter there were even snow peaks to be seen. “Beautiful, incredible beautiful!” Lama exclaimed.

Tibetan carpets and cushions were arranged inside the small stone half-building where Lama rested after a long puja and a picnic under the old chestnut trees. He stayed inside that hut for some hours and the students could hear his clear bell ringing out across the mountains.

When he emerged he told them, “This is the perfect place to make retreat. I think so, it is worthwhile. Thank you, very good place. Thank you so much.” Lama immediately outlined a plan. The flat area was to be a carpark, families could settle on the lower

Lama knew the power of first impressions. He also knew that people tended to trust those who were clean, neat and well-presented. “The outside is a reflection of the inside,” he told his students. Lama encouraged his Sangha in particular to look “professional.” It was one of his favorite words.

hill and retreaters would stay right at the top, away from everyone.

That same day, Jampa Chökyi drove Lama back to Granada, where he had dinner that evening with her father and his wife in their



With Alberto Vignoli, Spain, 1980

328. In 1985 Elisabeth and Lise Medini founded Centre Kalachakra, the FPMT's Paris center.



With Jampa Chökyi and her parents, Granada, 1980

comfortable apartment. Jampa Chökyi's mother had died some years earlier and her stepmother was utterly enchanted with Lama. Their very best Spanish silver was laid out, delightful little dishes were filled with delicacies and soft golden light fell from the antique lamps. Lama was delighted. "Oh, so much silver in this house!"

After that meal Jampa Chökyi's stepmother always kept Lama Yeshe's photo in her daily agenda and never washed one little dish into which some candle wax fell during dinner. "Your family is so nice, Helly, and

you are such a bad girl," Lama told Jampa Chökyi.

But Lama Yeshe was not well. The long car ride and all that clambering about the steep hills at Bubion had taken a toll on him. His body was now permanently swollen and puffy. Sometimes he was quite gray. The next day, September 23, Jampa Chökyi's father, a cardiologist, gave Lama an electrocardiogram and wrote a report that repeated what every other doctor had said—that his heart was very enlarged and he should not travel so much.

## THE TWENTY-ONE TARAS COURSE IN BARCELONA

Lama Yeshe flew to Barcelona, where he was to teach on the Twenty-One Taras for three days (September 19–21) in a mountaintop hotel in Caldes de Montbui, outside the city. Eighty people enrolled in the course, which had been organized by Xavi Alongina.

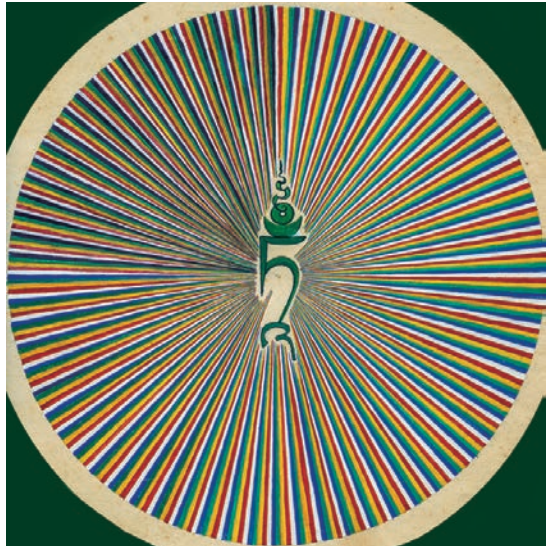
Jon Landaw gave introductory talks at the course while Lama taught on emptiness and bodhicitta. Lama did not go into detail on each of the Twenty-One Taras, just noted that each one has a specific energy. For example, White Tara is associated with long

life and Red Tara increases personal power for those who are weak and oppressed. But the main emphasis of the course was on Green Tara:

*In my view the rejection of the female quality by the male is a rejection of life. There is a scientific explanation for why we call Tara 'mother.' What is Tara? Tara is the wisdom that touches reality. Mother Tara has much wisdom to manifest many aspects—sometimes peaceful, sometimes wrathful, some-*



Rinpoche and Xavi, Ibiza, 1978



Tara's seed syllable TAM, (probably) by Jampa Chökyi

*times all different colors—all in order to help mother sentient beings.*

When falling asleep at night the students were to visualize themselves as Tara, with the seed syllable TAM radiating green light at their hearts.

*Gradually the TAM sinks into the heart and the heart also becomes small, small, small until it disappears and you slip into shunyata, nothingness. From the tantric viewpoint, the right way to sleep is very important. If you go to sleep with an obsessed mind, the whole night becomes negative. According to the psychological explanation of Buddhism, daytime reality and nighttime reality are the same. You think that daytime is real but nighttime is only a dream; this is not true. Karmically they are both real. And in Tantrayana, sleeping with skillful method becomes the path to enlightenment. If, from the moment we fall asleep until we awaken, we sleep with shunyata meditation, it becomes wisdom. Then if, as you start to wake in the morning, you hear some sounds—birds singing or someone banging around—visualize Tara's mantra,*



Green Tara, by Peter Iseli

*OM TARÉ TUTTARÉ TURÉ SOHA, in your inner space and recite it until you're completely awake.*

*According to tantra, what you project is what you see, and that is reality for you.*

*What you don't see, what you don't project, is not reality for you. That's why you imagine that any living being you see is the divine wisdom Mother Tara. Every sound you hear, even airplane noise, is her mantra. And whatever thoughts come, whether positive or negative, imagine them as divine wisdom Mother Tara's wisdom. If you imagine in this way—recognizing the qualities of Mother Tara's body, her divine speech and her nondual wisdom—you will have no problems. There is no way delusions can arise.*

To emphasize the possibility of transforming even negative energy into Tara's wisdom, Lama pointed out that many of his students had been hippies yet had turned out differently.

*The Western hippie movement lasted ten, maybe fifteen years. These hippies tried everything, every pleasure. They tried everything, this, that, politics, drugs, communism. But they reached a certain point where they discovered something and became good persons. Very good persons. The things they did were garbage things but then suddenly they turned out to be strong, transformed. So many hippies were creative, extreme extremists. They had a kind of power, super-samsaric power, that created nuclear energy. But when they became practitioners they stopped that super samsara and used that energy to become kind of super Dharma practitioners. Some of my students are just quiet and peaceful and their Dharma practice is slow, very slow. But this is just common sense. The main point is to look subjectively rather than objectively and, in that way, recognize that every appearance in our life, every desire thought or hatred thought or ego thought has an inborn, nondual nature. Its nature is clean clear like the ocean. Each one has the character of nondual blissful wisdom.*

Of course, when we are dealing with the

*world we are not strong enough to see nonduality. It is natural for us to see dualistically. But we can make a strong determination within ourselves to recognize the duality that appears to us for what it is. One cannot avoid thinking dualistically; it comes through our habitual perceptions. But inside we can have the determination that this is illusion, dualistically appearing illusion. That we can do; that we should do.*

Lama spoke to his students about their dreams:

*Usually we forget our dreams. This is not good. Dream comprehension is very important. Why are we so slow to become enlightened? Because half our life is spent unconscious, asleep. Maybe a quarter is spent eating, unconsciously. In tantra, practically speaking, we can make every important movement of energy become wisdom. It becomes awareness, mindfulness. It is very important to become mindful of our dreams. So, before you go to sleep, make strong prayers to Tara to give you inspiration to be mindful of your dreams and to recognize your dream as a dream. This is good enough. Then put your head in Mother Tara's lap and fall asleep like that. In this way, your sleep becomes more conscious, less unconscious. This is the best way to sleep.*

Using every possible example from daily life, Lama continuously strove to bring home the core Buddhist understanding of emptiness to his students.

*Perhaps if I explain it in a simpler way: the minute you check up with ego how you feel, how you are, what you think about yourself, you can only think about the previous you. The previous one is [finger-snap] gone already. Isn't it! It is non-existent. The ego is very slow, I tell you. It doesn't matter how intelligent the ego may be; it is too slow. It thinks that yes-*



Manjushri, 1979

*terday's me is somewhere around here still. That's too late. Even from the relative point of view of time and space it's unrealistic. In Buddhism when you seek shunyata, in that moment when you are aware, that mindfulness cuts the self-existent appearance, which is totally non-existent. That is the way to seek shunyata. The skill is how to observe the ego's interpretation.*

*Whenever there is emotional excitement and the ego manifests, the I-projection arises strongly. That is the moment when you get the chance to recognize it—for example, when you are angry. That is a very important moment.*

*Remember. Philosophical doctrine is not important. Intellectual religion is not important. That's why many intellectually religious people—intellectual Buddhists, intellectual Muslims, intellectual Christians—they miss the point. Just making things philosophical doesn't work. Destroying the intellectual ego and making another one is just sublimating. The main business is our intuitive inborn ego.<sup>329</sup>*

Lama gave instructions on how to set up the visualization of Tara on a lotus and moon bed and how to absorb this image into oneself so that one manifests as Tara, radiating clear green light. Upon that, one adds divine pride in oneself as Tara—which is why it is so important to meditate on emptiness before making the absorption.

At the end of the course Lama offered a transmission giving the students permission to do the Dorje Khadro fire offering practice, but added, “If you don't want it, then OK. You just meditate as Tara.”

The Dorje Khadro fire puja is held at the end of certain retreats to purify the mistakes made during retreat. In France, Lama had given a short explanation of how to do the puja:

*Make a small fire. First meditate on the nondual shunyata nature of the fire. Then, from the nondual space fire, visualize the very powerful, wrathful buddha called Dorje Khadro, whose mouth is open like a black hole. Dorje Khadro is very powerful in taking away all impure energy. Just as when a peacock eats*

329. All above excerpts edited from archive #260.



Dorje Khadro



*poison its feathers become very beautiful and magnificent, in the same way Dorje Khadro takes in all our impure energy and it becomes an enlightened, blissful experience for him.*

*Then recognize that the main point of doing this practice is to develop great compassion wisdom. Compassion, bodhicitta and nondual wisdom.*

*Make up an offering, a mixture of many different things, which you will burn in the fire, imagining that Dorje Khadro is in the fire and destroying all this negative energy. If you can get them, black sesame seeds are best. Otherwise get something else black and then add a little bit of kusha grass or some other grass, some flowers and long-life grass, a little barley, a little honey, a little butter and then mix it all together.*

*Then sit on your meditation seat in front of the fire. In your heart imagine a small very dark light, radiating throughout universal space in all ten directions, magnetizing all disease and problems—all the world's problems, all the grasping problems, all the Middle East problems, all other people's problems, your friends' problems, any problem you can think of. All that energy is absorbed into that dark seed in your heart.*

*Then imagine that wind energy rises up*

*from your feet through your central channel. At your navel chakra is a red-hot, glowing seed that is heated by the wind such that the fire there becomes stronger and stronger each time the wind blows. At a certain point there is a strong explosion of fire up through your central channel. This pushes that very dark light at your heart containing all the problems and diseases upward and out through your nostrils, exiting in the form of the worst sort of creatures you can think of: scorpions, snakes, spiders and so forth. They come out through your nostrils and sink into the black sesame seeds. As you recite each Dorje Khadro mantra, offer with a teaspoon the black sesame seed into the mouth of Dorje Khadro in the center of the fire.*

*This is very powerful, very useful. For example, if you are feeling totally confused and don't know what you want, just go to some place, a mountain or somewhere, and do this. I guarantee it will cut through all your confusion and not knowing. When you're looking at the fire, it's so easy to visualize all your garbage thoughts being burnt, becoming fire. I think this is good for the wounded mind to be healed. Naturally.*

*Another thing is that, if any of your family members are having difficulties, you can do*



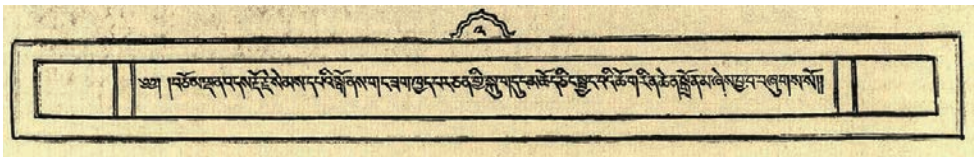
*this meditation for them, taking their impure energy into your heart. You can change the atmosphere of their heart; it will help them.*<sup>330</sup>

While in Spain, Lama told Jampa Chökyi he had something to say to her and that she should write it down: “He handed me a text and said, ‘This is for you to translate. So now you should write down that it is a quarter to eleven on September 27, 1980. You are responsible for this translation. I want you to make sure the phonetics are done and the prayers written out so that an individual can follow them. And this has to be ready before Lama Yeshe dies.’

“I was horrified, but he continued. ‘Everybody has to die. So write down the time and the date I am giving you this text.’ He said that when he died, as many students as possible should come to where his body lay and do one million Vajrasattva mantras there; that by doing this, his body could be kept for one year. He said we should do Vajrayogini

self-initiation first, then Hayagriva self-initiation, then Yamantaka self-initiation, then Tara Cittamani, Heruka Chakrasamvara and Guhyasamaja,<sup>331</sup> and we should also perform Mahakala puja every night. ‘You call some good geshes for these initiations. All the students and the Tibetan monks should do the Vajrasattva practice too,’ he told me.

“Lama was very serious about this. I was the only person to know about it—he didn’t even tell Marcel. I was totally overwhelmed because this was a big responsibility. When I mentioned it later to some people they said, ‘As soon as you finish the translation Lama is going to die.’ So then I felt very reluctant and just couldn’t bring myself to do the work. Also, I didn’t know enough Tibetan, so it was a huge effort for me. The text was an instruction of how to build the cremation stupa and prepare bodies of lamas and things like that. The puja in it related to Vajrasattva.”



The text Lama gave Jampa Chökyi: *The Precious Lamp: A Vajrasattva Ritual for Offering to and Purifying the Relics of Special Persons*

## TAKING CARE OF KOPAN, PRESENT AND FUTURE

During the Barcelona course, Lama Yeshe dictated a long letter to Maureen O’Malley at Kopan:

We need our school organically creatively constructive, produce some-

thing. So the painting class. We need materializing something for the whole Kopan community. I think it is a bad attitude that the children are not producing any returns from their study. I want you to be strict in a constructive

330. Edited from archive #588.

331. Self-initiation is a practice that can be done only by those who have received initiation from a qualified lama and have completed all the retreat requirements, including the relevant concluding fire puja. Vajrayogini, Hayagriva, Yamantaka, Tara Cittamani, Heruka and Guhyasamaja are all Highest Yoga Tantra yidams.

way. Children who are advanced should produce beautiful artistic works in order to help the economy of our center. I want you to understand that we should use the children, they should not use us. The precious human rebirth that is not producing anything is a bad one, Eastern point of view and Western point of view. Helping each other, that is value. You tell the children that only taking material advantage and not giving for the center is a very bad attitude.

So you can make a one-month program to paint a certain amount each day. Then they should have something to show. Next, do you know that some of our children paint at their homes and then sell their work outside? Do you think that is right? That is wrong! We take care of food and everything and they do business for themselves. Where do they think our money comes from? Only thirty students have benefactors. The money comes from the efforts of Lama Zopa and me and from our students' efforts. It is a shame we spend so much energy and they never put anything back for the community benefit. In the gompa, cleaning, maintenance, gardening—everyone should have equal responsible attitude. Same with producing paintings for the benefit of the community.

If I am at Kopan for one month we do some good, bring some benefit. If I am not there nobody produces anything. That is too bad. Producing nothing is very bad in the world. Even in Tibetan monasteries they have carpet factories and other ways of making money. Not working for even two hours, one hour, to produce something is terrible. Terrible! Everyone should understand this. So if you like to meet with Lama Lhundrup and Lama Pasang, you should do.



Maureen, Kopan, 1979

Also the teachers, Western and Eastern, are responsible to produce good behavior and discipline from the children. Look at Kopan children! What kind of behavior! Our school is worse than a lay school. You meet with other teachers and discuss why Kopan monks have poor discipline worse than Western lay people. Where comes the mistake? You tell me. You are responsible.

When I reach there I hope you show me work by the children that makes me satisfied. OK. Openly you have to educate the children that they study these things in order to produce something. OK, I think that is enough. See you soon.

Big love,  
Lama Yeshe

That summer, Amala Judith, together with Pam Philip, Maureen O'Malley, Connie Miller and the other Westerners dedicated to caring for the Mount Everest Centre monks took on the rather daunting problem of Kopan's young bed-wetters. This was a difficult situation, especially in the middle of



Class with Lama Pasang, Lawudo, 1973

monsoon season. No matter how diligent the boys were about hanging their bedding out during the day, it would seldom dry because of the daily monsoon rains. So these boys were constantly going to bed in wet, urine-soaked bedding that only became wetter each night.

Judith and her colleagues came up with a plan. All the boys who were bed-wetters were moved into one large dormitory room and Amala Judith moved in with them. Lama Pasang had built a high bed for her. "I was living with about a dozen little monks who

wet their beds," she said. "A special shed had been fixed up for all of us to sleep in, so I could be nearby. I asked that the bed be built up over the floor because of the fleas and lice. I slept on this kind of ledge and the bed-wetters slept on mattresses on the cement floor. Every night I'd wake them up and send them out the door to the toilet, to break the habit." Sometimes the other Westerners on the hill took turns getting up in the middle of the night to make sure these boys urinated outside rather than in their beds. It was a difficult regimen but it worked.

### THE FUTURE OF LAMA'S SPANISH CENTERS

Twenty Spanish students met with Lama Yeshe over dinner to discuss the development of Dharma centers in Spain. "People wanted to take the land at Bubion away from Paco, François and me and get Lama to give them the authority to develop places in Alicante and Madrid instead," said Maria Torres. "For one hour everyone just shouted, Spanish-style. Lama showed a lot

of patience. When everyone was quiet again he said, 'François has the karma and energy to develop the land. Let him do that. He has my confidence.'"

Paco and Maria had brought their two children with them. Lama told them to have nine more, saying Spain was a good country in which to raise children.

Lama Yeshe telephoned François to say

there should be a course in Bubion next year. François felt very strongly that as new neighbors the Buddhist group should be quite prudent because the locals had all heard about “hippie drug communes” and wild Rajneesh stories. It took over a year to establish themselves in the community as good employers and business people.

On September 30, Lama wrote an important letter to his Sangha:

Dear International Mahayana Institute students,

I hope you are all well and dedicating your life for the happiness of all sentient beings.

I am now in Europe visiting our centers and giving teachings, which has given me the opportunity to see many of you already. Our Sangha family has grown to nearly one hundred monks and nuns living in centers all around the world. This is a great success and we should be proud of it.

With this in mind I wish that we all meet in India at the beginning of 1982 and make a “BIG DHARMA CELEBRATION” for our International Mahayana Institute.<sup>332</sup> I would like to outline a suggested itinerary of activities for this. First I think we could all meet in February for Losar in Bodhgaya and offer a big puja for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Some time could also be spent discussing the most effective way to develop the education and economy of the IMI and so on. In March we could go to Dharamsala to receive teachings from our precious gurus—His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Kyabje Ling Rinpoche and Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche. Then in

April we would make retreat together in Dharamsala and receive more teachings from various high lamas.

Concerning finances, I think that each Sangha should be responsible for his or her own “coming and going” ticket, because our organization is not rich enough at this point. From our side we will arrange professional facilities and other expenses. We still have one and a half years to prepare and try to find benefactors, so it should not be too difficult. We feel at this moment that the IMI will have to raise some \$70,000 to finance the whole of the three-month activities, which will also include offerings for pujas and teachings. So if you know anyone who would like to contribute to the IMI fund and help sponsor these costs, please let us know.

I would very much like to receive your suggestions on this as soon as possible. Please write to Marcel Bertels as soon as possible care of Maitreya Instituut so we can discuss the project while I am in Holland.

So I pray that each of you will see the great benefits of such celebration in the Dharma and will put much positive energy to help bring together all our brothers and sisters of the International Mahayana Institute.

When Lama Yeshe departed from Spain, among those bidding him farewell at Barcelona airport was a couple who brought along their two-year-old son. The boy had been diagnosed with a form of bone cancer in his leg. An X-ray had shown almost no bone there at all. Amputation had been mentioned. However, other doctors insisted it was osteomyelitis, an infection of the bone or marrow. Worried out of their minds they

332. Lama later changed the name to Enlightened Experience Celebration (EEC).

asked Lama to bless the boy. He placed his hand on the leg and said, "Oh, this is nothing, it will just finish." The boy subsequently

had radiation therapy. His rate of recovery was so unusually rapid the doctors declared themselves truly amazed.

### ISTITUTO LAMA TZONG KHAPA

On October 2, Lama arrived in Pomaia, going directly to Joyce Petschek's home to rest for three days. Although her living quarters were quite separate from Lama's, they had breakfast together with no attendants around. After that, Joyce never interfered with his schedule. During the morning Lama usually received his invited visitors as well as students from the institute.

At this time Joyce was completing her book and writing magazine articles about dream states. Lama Yeshe suggested she teach a course on that at the institute, something Joyce would never have considered had Lama not requested it. More than sixty people attended the three-day course.

"Everything Lama said was a teaching," expressed Joyce. "Once I told him I couldn't cope with the commitments taken during

initiations. He said not to worry about them, that writing and needlework were my meditation.

"Another time Lama spoke about the hidden Etruscan cave tucked down a hill on my property, with many arches that once held statues. He asked me to fix it up so he could do a retreat there. This was the only request Lama asked of me that I never did. It was just too dangerous and too costly. Years after Lama's passing on, the Etruscan cave actually 'caved in.'

"Prior to that, when I finally visited Kopan he said, 'What took you so long!' He made sure I was comfortable there."

Before arriving in Italy Lama Yeshe had asked that Francesca Piatti and Piero Sirianni be his attendants at Casalone. He



Above: With Francesca and Piero Sirianni, ILTK, 1980  
Left: With Joyce, Casalone, 1980

was comfortable with Francesca, and Piero was a quiet, unpushy sort who spoke little English. He also planted the things Lama and Joyce bought for the institute's garden.

One day Massimo Corona and his father came to have lunch with Lama and Claudio Cipullo, who was ILTK director at the time and whose wild personality was the cause of many complaints. Lama wanted something better from him. He turned to Pino Corona and asked for advice about how to run the organization. Pino replied that to be a leader you must first be an example to others. "Thank you," Lama replied. Claudio knew these words were for him.

"Lama was very soft with me," said Massimo. "He never told me what to do because I was in such a mess, but he did give me the energy to get divorced. Afterward he said to me, 'Now that you see all this suffering, do you still want to go with another woman? OK, for the next six months you go with as many women as you can and after that you become a monk.' Then in the very next sentence he said, 'For example, Susanna. Don't you think Susanna is pitty [pretty]? I think she is really pitty!'"

"Lama told me the only attachment he had was for Western bathrooms! He also said that while our parents are alive we should work to help them, but when they are dead we are free to dedicate our lives to Dharma."

Massimo's daughter Maitri Dolma was living at the institute with her mother. One day she took a young friend up to Casalone. "I was really proud that I knew Lama so well, so I was showing off, demonstrating to her how much confidence I had with him. Usually, Lama kissed my cheeks and laughed with me. This time he was really serious and hardly spoke to me but was very kind to my friend. He had never done that to me before. I realized he wanted to show me that pride is a mental defect," said Maitri.

At a dinner with the ILTK committee



With Massimo and Pino Corona, ILTK, 1982

Lama Yeshe suggested that a group of eight people make decisions, including those relating to his personal expenses. "I can stay Himalaya mountain with nothingness," he told them, "but very different to come down to sense world with nothingness. My own desire is I don't want to come down. I have no attachment your spaghetti and mushroom!" Lama pointed out that Massimo's mother was also giving money to the institute and unless they used it wisely, she would stop.

That night Lama Yeshe was most unwell and the next morning he was unable to give refuge as planned, though he did send a letter to all his center directors in which he told them of his visit to Bubion: "I went to land Nagarjuna Institute buy for the retreat center. It is near Granada, about 5,000 feet high. Beautiful, like Lawudo, and they growing grapes and corn. My feeling we build retreat center for all Europe. I hear in London meeting all centers agree to help Nagarjuna financially. I think very good."

The following day, October 9, His Holiness the Dalai Lama visited the Pope in Rome.

Many people from ILTK wanted to go, but Lama thought it better that they stay at the institute. Instead, he conferred the empowerment of Four-arm Mahakala to forty-five people with the commitment of a ten-day retreat, followed by Dorje Khadro fire puja. The next day, Geshe Yeshe Tobden returned from Rome with Geshe Rabten, who gave a teaching on bodhicitta. Lama Yeshe later gave a Lama Tsongkhapa initiation to eighty people.

For the next three days Lama Yeshe taught in the afternoons, while Frau Kalff taught in the mornings, further supporting Lama's enthusiasm for the educational potential of combining Western psychology with Buddhism.

Siliana Bosa, a new student, had been deeply affected by Geshe Yeshe Tobden's teachings. She asked Lama Yeshe if she could take the five precepts of no killing, stealing, lying, sexual misconduct or use of intoxicants. Siliana thought she had done enough sex and drugs and rock and roll and wanted to try another kind of life. Lama Yeshe told her to take the eight Mahayana precepts every day instead, which included the five lay precepts. "But he never said how long I should take them for," said Siliana. "I took them every day for two months and after that I wanted to become a nun." Siliana was ordained a year later.

Susanna Parodi was following the tour. At Manjushri Institute Lama Yeshe had told her it was time for her to become a nun again. The ordination could take place in Italy and she could go on to the November course at Kopan. Two days before leaving for Holland, Lama sat down to lunch with Susanna and her mother.

Susanna: "He said to us, 'Here is your father and mother and here is our daughter. Now, Mother, we want her again to be a nun. Will you take care of her and be her sponsor?' My mother said no, because I was healthy and beautiful again and she wanted me back. Lama got furious with her. He grabbed me and said, 'I will find you a sponsor. I will take care of you! Why don't you ask Massimo to pay for your ticket and sponsor you in Kopan?' It was not really heavy at all, but my mother was a powerful and successful woman who gives and takes as she likes. Lama too, he can say whatever he likes.

"I had already spoken about these things with Massimo. He told me that back in France Lama had asked him if he had seen me and had said, 'She is so beautiful, my daughter. She is so pitty. Take care my daughter.' I met Massimo at his parents' house and told him what I needed.

"He and I went out a few times, then one day he kissed me. The next day he went to China. When he came back he said, 'Listen, instead of you and me becoming monk and nun, why don't we make business? I have already promised business to Lama with this clothing label, Karma. He said I should make business until the Dharma Celebration in



With Siliana, ILTK, 1981

Bodhgaya, then he will ordain us.’ So we stayed together one year doing business and what do you think? No ordinations.”

Lama was powering through Europe. Since leaving Iceland he had spent two weeks in England, just over a week in France, a week

in Spain and twelve days in Italy. Now he was leaving to spend just over a week in Holland, another week in Germany and four days in Greece. This from a man who had been told many times by different doctors that he should not travel much!

## AMSTERDAM

One hundred people attended Lama Yeshe’s talks in De Kosmos in Amsterdam on October 18 and 19, translated by Marcel into Dutch. George Churinoff arrived from Manjushri Institute to lead the meditations. He was having a hard time with Geshe Tegchok, whom he found very demanding. Lama wasn’t impressed. “Your head is full of concrete, cement!” he told George and walked away. It was just what George needed. “Right then I made a breakthrough,” he said.

Lama stayed at a hotel in Amsterdam with Jan-Paul and Margot Kool as his drivers and Paula de Wys in charge of appointments. Paula and Matti were going through a bad patch together, but Lama put a khata around

their necks and tied it as tight as he could. Then he hugged them both and said, “You two make it good!”

“I had a list of people who wanted to see him and as they went in I saw how he treated each one so differently, individually, correctly,” said Paula. “He touched my cheek with the back of his fingers, the way only my mother had done when I was a child. He was always doing things like that to people.”

On a visit to Amsterdam Zoo Margot watched Lama looking at the sea anemones, which spend their whole lives stuck in one place. “It was the first time I realized that your mind can be stuck in one place too, and that it was a kind of hell. Lama was sending them blessings and we all became so sensi-



Above: Truus Philipsen and Paula de Wys, Manjushri, 1980

Left: With Margot Kool, Corine Terstegge and Jan-Paul Kool, Amsterdam, 1980



tive to their sufferings we could barely look at them,” said Margot. Everyone was taking photos, so Lama turned around and began taking photos of the humans watching the animals.



Amsterdam Zoo, 1980

Lama had asked Pieter van Heys Wyck to start up a center in Amsterdam. The result was Overlever, an eccentric place. One event Pieter held was called the Garbage Weekend. “The concept was about garbage inside and outside the body,” he said. “One thousand people came and eight bands played, including one where all their instruments were made out of garbage. City municipalities got involved in a big discussion about garbage issues and support for the weekend came from all quarters.

“We found people were more interested in non-meditation activities. We started up another center called Stichting de Stroom.

We gave massage and cooking lessons and sold food we had grown. We never really declared ourselves Buddhist until the Ganden Tripa came to visit and we put up thangkas.”

### MEVROUW STUMPEL-FOKEMA

Margot Kool’s mother, Mevrouw Stumpel-Fokema, lived out in the Dutch countryside. Lama went to her house for a quiet five-day break.

Mevrouw Stumpel-Fokema: “Everyone wanted a piece of him and he just had to rest. One afternoon I came into the living room, where he was sitting with some students. He jumped to his feet and asked me to sit down, saying he would take the students upstairs so as not to disturb me. He was always so polite.

“I am a smoker and always had my cigarettes and ashtray handy. I never thought of not smoking in front of Lama. He never said anything about it. He called me ‘Amala’ and loved how clean Holland was. Lama carried a lot of dried herbs with him to make up his special teas. He was so affectionate and would touch and hug you all day long. I gave



With Margot and her mother, Maitreya, 1981

him a good piece of china once, but it ended up at Paula de Wys's place.

"It was autumn and there were still some flowers about. My house was almost in the middle of Holland, in an area where the woods are filled with ancient trees and winding paths. He talked to me about the garden he was setting up at Kopan. He could change so easily from being an Easterner to a Westerner. I noticed that he kept an image of the fasting Buddha on his altar.

"One afternoon he asked if we could manage to buy a Pekingese dog the next day. I had a book of breeders and found two places selling dogs. Lama, Jan-Paul, Margot and I went there together on a wonderful sunny day. We went to both kennels and Lama watched the litters to see which dog he wanted. I bought the cage and he bought the dog. If only you could have seen his enthusiasm! He couldn't stop playing with that puppy." A female, it was named Yeshe Senge, which means Wisdom Lion.



With Yeshe Senge, Tushita-Dharamsala, 1980

Before leaving for Germany on October 22 Lama asked Margot's mother if there was anything he could do for her. She asked him to please visit her son, a longtime patient in a psychiatric hospital. As usual, Lama was running late for a plane but he made it to the hospital. Lama gave the young man a birthday present and he gave Lama a money offering. Lama Yeshe promised to pray for him. Then it was full speed to the airport, leaving Yeshe Senge in Holland. Margot and Jan-Paul brought the dog to India a few months later.

## THE PFAFFENHOFEN COURSE, GERMANY

At Pfaffenhofen, located just north of Munich, Lama Yeshe conferred a Vajrapani empowerment and gave a commentary on the practice to 120 people over a period of three days, starting on October 24. Lama was vomiting constantly, though very few people knew it.

After the course the energy among the German students remained high. A few months later, together with monk Dieter, fifty students did a two-week Vajrapani retreat, ending with a fire puja. It seemed

this was the first tantric retreat to take place in Germany.

A group of students associated with Dieter wanted to form a German Dharma center. Apparently, some of those students didn't get along well with those who were managing the center in Munich. Two students, Peter and Angelika Seifert, offered the schoolhouse they owned in Jägerndorf rent-free in return for work on the house. The building had been vacant for five years, was icy cold and had poor wiring and plumbing.

Lama sat down with twenty interested people. “OK,” he said. “We have been offered a place to make a center—what are we going to do there?” As in Ibiza, he went around the table asking each person what they could contribute. He appointed Sylvia Wetzel director and Dieter Kratzer spiritual program coordinator.

Together with Peter, Angelika and Dieter, Lama and Rinpoche drove to visit the schoolhouse being offered. When they arrived, Lama ran through the building, up and down the stairs and into the various rooms. When he finally stopped he said, “We take it,” and that was that.

Lama then told Sylvia her main job was to make people happy. At the request of the students involved, Lama agreed to call the country center Aryatara Institut. The Munich center was still functioning under the name Vajrasattva Institut and was managed by a different group of students.

Dieter moved into the Jägerndorf schoolhouse to start setting up the new center. With the compassionate help of Erika Reiter, he moved an old stove and a few mattresses in. But the place was so cold and uninhabitable that Dieter became sick after just one week and returned to Munich to wait until the weather got warmer.

By the following spring there were seven residents at Jägerndorf and the center was flourishing. Eva März started a fundraising venture making little silk hearts stuffed with fragrant dried Moroccan roses to help support the German FPMT centers. Lama Yeshe loved her silk hearts and ordered many as gifts for people.

John Schwartz still battled on as tour attendant. While organizing Lama’s appointments in Munich he received a message that a man with a number of devoted disciples



Sylvia, Jägerndorf, 1981

wished to talk to Lama: “I watched this guy walk in to the teaching. He had a very powerful face and definitely had something going on. Afterward Lama said he would see people in the anteroom and this guy just marched straight in with his small entourage. I told him he should wait, but Lama said, ‘Let him sit.’ The guy had this incredible stare. He never blinked and just looked right through you. It was kind of terrifying.

“While he was sitting there this other guy came in who had cancer. Lama told him to take his shirt off and blew mantras on his back and did things with his fingers while the German guru guy stared at him the whole time. It was the only time I ever saw Lama do healing.

“Then it was time for the guru guy. Lama began by staring right back at him. Then the guy says, ‘Do you know what’s in my mind, what I’ve been telling you?’ ‘Yes, dear,’ said Lama, ‘I do. And do you know what’s in my mind and what I’ve been telling you?’ There was a silent moment and then the guy said, ‘Yes.’ So Lama said, ‘Fine, then we understand each other.’ And he stood up, lifted the guy up from his seat and said, ‘Thank you for coming.’ I don’t know what went on there, but Lama handled it so skillfully. You

could just see that he broke the guy in thirty seconds flat.

“That night Lama had a dinner appointment, but the wrong person showed up. I

asked if I should cancel him, but Lama said no and ended up having dinner with someone he didn’t know at all.”

## GREECE

During the tour Lama Yeshe told John he wanted to stop in Greece, probably because he had heard so much about it from Zina, Mummy Max and Anila Ann. They flew into Athens on October 30 and left on November 2. Lama had little time for tourism but was shown some historic ruins by Yorgo and Yasodhara. He also gave lamrim teachings, a public lecture to 140 people in a Catholic church and a refuge ceremony for thirty-five in a private house.

On a visit to Athens from her home on the island of Paros, Ingrid Braun got a call from a friend who ran the Kagyu center asking if she would like to meet “an important lama.” In the coffee shop of the Athens Hilton, where he was staying, Lama told Ingrid all about Kopan. After that, she just wanted to go there. Ingrid later became ordained and turned her island home into a retreat center.



Above: Athens, 1980

Right: With Yasodhara Cassapidis, Athens, 1980



## TUSHITA RETREAT CENTRE

The tour was over. Lama and John flew to Delhi, departing immediately for Dharamsala to report to His Holiness the Dalai Lama. John Schwartz wrote in his tour

report: “Lama needs to stretch out in private, his health requires it. Always try to get him a private house, a flat or a hotel rather than placing him as the guest of a family.” Lama

was ill and exhausted, but very few of his students had any notion of just how precarious his health actually was. After all, although he might appear very ill one moment, in the next he would be exuding seemingly boundless energy.

While at Manjushri Institute Lama Yeshe had told a desperately unhappy Rob Preece to begin retreat in Dharamsala. Now he gave him more precise instructions. “He knew exactly what I needed and understood me personally, rather than just handing me a bunch of prescriptions about how I should

practice,” said Rob. “I then began what was to become five years of retreats. We had lunch with Gen Jampa Wangdu one day, during which I saw how significant their friendship really was. Lama was always visiting his house and outrageous laughter poured out of it.”

Rob asked Gen Jampa Wangdu if he would guide him through his retreats, as Lama Yeshe was not often in India. Gen Jampa Wangdu’s advice was, “If you die while you are in retreat, just do the self-initiation and lie down and die.”



Rob Preece, Manjushri, 1978



With Gen Jampa Wangdu, Tushita, 1982

## THE THIRTEENTH KOPAN MEDITATION COURSE

Lama Zopa Rinpoche returned to Kopan from his Australian tour before Lama and in time to teach the thirteenth meditation course. It ran from November 10 to December 10.

Hearing Rinpoche for the first time, Dean Alper, an American attorney, was shocked to discover how tense he was and how short

his attention span. He remained plunged in misery until Lama Yeshe appeared like a ray of light and reminded him that yes, there was laughter in the world. Dean returned for the next three meditation courses and became familiar with various student types: the ones who called everything “purification” and others who couldn’t make a decision about



Jon Landaw, Chuck Thomas, Dean Alper, thirteenth course



Thirteenth course



With Merry, thirteenth course

anything without consulting a lama. He noted how cleverly Lama Yeshe managed both the slavish and the arrogantly learned.

Many students had difficulty making up their minds about taking initiations, but Lama just told them they should make their own decisions. “Next thing they’ll be wanting me to tell them when they can go to the bathroom!” His constant refrain was, “Use your own wisdom, dear.” Everyone knew that Lama Zopa Rinpoche made divinations with dice all the time, but Lama was openly displeased with those who asked for mos for trivial reasons.

After studying Dharma for just a year, Merry Colony asked Lama Yeshe if she could become a nun. He gave her a hard, scornful look and asked her if she was quite sure she had “finished with men.” “Four years later I disrobed for a man, so apparently I wasn’t,” said Merry.



Kopan, 1980



Above: Denis Huet, Maitreya, 1986

Left: Pashupatinath picnic, 1980

Sex was a common subject in interviews. A “man-hating” Italian feminist told Lama she only had women friends and felt alienated from patriarchal society. “I understand, dear,” he told her kindly. “Women do understand women better, but I think that when a woman’s energy is balanced she will like men.”

When Denis Huet asked if he could confess his faults, Catholic-style, Lama Yeshe burst out laughing: “I’ll never forget how much he laughed at that, but it wasn’t embarrassing. His laugh was full of love and fun.”

Everyone celebrated the end of the course with a picnic in the park opposite the famous Hindu temple, Pashupatinath. Rinpoche had the students meditating on the *ghats* by the side of the river, where corpses were burning. Lama got them playing football. He gave one student a big goodbye hug, which seemed to carry some hidden message: “During the twenty-five-minute walk to Boudha my back got hotter and hotter until it felt like it was on fire. It was an extraordinary sensation I never experienced again.”

### FURTHER TEACHINGS ON *U THA NAM CHE*

Lama Yeshe declared Kopan hill a mess and ordered all the trash picked up. When all was in order, Karuna Cayton led a lamrim retreat and in the evenings Lama Yeshe taught chapter five of Maitreya’s text, *Discriminating between the Middle and the Extremes*:

*Up to now we have explained the calm abiding side, so tonight we are going to continue with the side of penetrative wisdom<sup>333</sup> in detail.*

*So, regarding what are we deluded? We are deluded with regard to the truth, with regard to dependent phenomena. We discussed this previously. This refers to words, the names of things, their meanings and how they are connected, how they are habitual and become concepts. We have to understand that the notion of interdependence is a conventional reality. Thus, it is important to know conventional reality: relative phenomena and*

333. Or, penetrative insight (Skt: *vipashyana*; Tib: *lhag tong*).



Thirteenth course

*the way in which they exist. It is about this that we are deluded. This also includes how we ourselves exist; we are also deluded about what we are. You know, Chandrakirti, the great Indian pandit, himself said that understanding relative conventional reality is the method leading to an understanding of absolute truth. By understanding the structure of relative compassion, we are able to transcend, to go beyond that. We are no longer caught in the bondage of the relative bubble.*

*So, it is with regard to the fundamental truth that we are deluded. Let's take, for example, Jon. Because of the way that I am deluded, my superstition is mixed up about the name "Jon" and the meaning of Jon. When I hear the name Jon I get a sort of artificial picture of what I think is the reality of him. I cannot perceive his real reality because the means of my understanding is through words, through this name. But the name "Jon" is here*

*[Lama holds his hand up in front of his face], like this, so it is through this that I must try to look, to find out his reality. But the name is not the reality, this artificial cloud picture is not the reality, so already I am deluded. I am deluded in the beginning and in the end. The result is that deluded imprints are repeatedly placed in the mind. You understand?*

*Next, we have the characteristics of delusion. Delusion means the misconception or superstition that is characterized by the dualistic view of phenomena, even though what that dualistic view perceives does not exist. And from where does delusion come? Delusion arises from our consciousness. Of course, there is the philosophical view of the Cittamatrā School, which talks about the ground-of-all consciousness, which holds all the imprints of karma and delusion and whatever there is. Like a container it holds all these imprints, all our garbage experiences,*



all our good experiences, since we were born up to now. Everything is held there as in a container. It is a kind of foundational consciousness. Why do we call it “foundational”? It holds all the roots, you know? The roots of the manifestations are held there in consciousness and from there all those imprints can manifest all of samsara. All of samsara manifests from all those imprints. But leaving aside the philosophical points, according to our common sense we can say that delusions arise from consciousness, which holds the imprints of all our experiences, the karma from our bad experiences and our good experiences. Holding, holding. Until the necessary cooperative energies, conditions, come together, these imprints simply remain there, latent. But when all the cooperative conditions come together, the seeds are there and the cooperative causes are now present and PAM!, they manifest in an experience of samsara. They again become a samsaric reaction. We react, react, react.

From that, then deluded actions and functions arise. From just one moment of superstition, reaction after reaction after reaction, one after another after another, are accumulated. Endless superstitious reactions. [Lama laughs as he winds his mala through his fingers.] Because of cause and effect, the functioning of causation, from delusion comes delusion, delusion, delusion. In other words, hallucinations. In Buddhist terminology, we refer to this state of delusion as hallucination. In other words, we do not see reality but are always perceiving wrong projections.

So what is the cause of the wrong projections that appear to the mind? The cause is the repeated perceiving of wrong view, which creates imprints that are stored in our consciousness. They are manufactured non-stop, PAM, PAM, PAM, PAM, like a printing press publishing more and more imprints in every moment. PAM! PAM! PAM! PAM! Then these are stored in our consciousness and they never

finish. They are held there, like a treasure of superstitious imprints. It is from there that all delusions arise.

We have to understand this clean clear. Generally, we think that when one delusion comes, it comes just once and then it is finished. No! It is not like that! One delusion produces a hundred delusions; one superstitious mind has the ability to produce a hundred reactions. And that hundred has the ability to produce a thousand. This is why it is not easy for us.

In Western culture, we are almost forced to watch television. Everybody does it. And there are so many incredible things shown on the television and we watch them. It seems so simple. You just sit there, the TV is on, and you seem to be doing nothing. But as you watch, each moment is recorded. Moment after moment, imprints are made, tremendous imprints. And tremendous negative imprints arise . . . unless you see and recognize these things as characterized by nonduality, as like a mirage or a dream. Recognize that! By doing so, instead of producing superstition, you produce wisdom energy. Then it is OK.

But we are not able to do this. We are beginners and are not able. It is very difficult to transform our projected view into wisdom energy. It is possible; we cannot say it is not possible. But as we are beginners, we should be very careful about what we see, what we watch. We should be careful. Why? Because the object itself also has the power to delude, the power to be superstition, hallucination. The object also has power. Because we have magnetized the energy of superstition inside, objects outside also come together as delusional.

Remember, in the Abhidharmakosha it says that the cause of delusion is incorrect imagination, or, as we have called it, superstition. You always imagine the object incorrectly. And it says that we have this incorrect imagination already. So as you already have

*this superstition that sees incorrectly within you, when the external object appears and you come in contact with it, then PAM! Delusion arises.*

*For example, while we are here in this primitive tent in Nepal, you don't have a certain particular New York pleasure-grasping mind, do you? Because the object isn't here. The particular object needs to be close by. It's when the superstitious thought is there inside and the external object is in close proximity, delusion arises. That is why I am saying that we usually perceive things unconsciously and think that it doesn't matter what we are seeing, but everything matters. Our minds are uncontrolled. Thus, as I am trying to demonstrate, it is very difficult to see objectively and not be deluded.*

*Good. So now we understand what we are deluded in regard to, the characteristics of delusion, and from where delusion arises. Now it is clear.*<sup>334</sup>

In addition to all the other things happening at Kopan that winter, another course on Tibetan medicine had been organized. However, the Tibetan doctor who was to teach the six-week course failed to turn up. Barry Clark, who had just qualified in Tibetan medicine, and Gyatso, who agreed to teach meditation, filled the gap. It was arranged for another Tibetan doctor from Kathmandu to teach the course but he proved more interested in propositioning the female students than in teaching. "He is a Tibetan hippie! No good!" said Lama Yeshe, when Gyatso reported him.

Lama Yeshe's considerable skill in medical science was not known to most of his students, who, had they known, would have undoubtedly brought him a flood of complaints. "Please be careful with doctors," he wrote to one student. "Do not let chop your body easily. Sometimes doctor makes mistakes. They make presumption. Take Hay-



Tibetan medicine class with Gyatso, Kopan, 1980

334. Edited from archive #314.

agriva pill and Panax ginseng extract first thing each morning or at night before going to sleep.”

To a girl with amoebic dysentery for whom Tibetan medicine was proving ineffectual, he offered simple commonsense: “Better you take antibiotics and get rid of it quickly, then use natural medicines to restore your body afterward.”

Diana van Die had come to Kopan to teach English to the geshe and the boys. She had spent long enough at Manjushri Institute to know that Lama Yeshe’s advice was often extremely individual. “He asked me to write out the Medicine Buddha mantra, saying he wanted to put it up on the blackboard in the courtyard. He leaned over and repeated the mantra very clearly, several times, but it never did appear on the blackboard. He was saying it just for me,” said Diana.

“While at Kopan, I was also helping Lama Zopa translate texts. Years later, a friend with a life-hindering disease was put to work translating the same texts I had already done, just as though they had never been touched. But that was her ‘spiritual medicine.’”

Weakened by a bout of giardia coupled with toothache, Diana slipped and hurt her spine while going down to the spring to wash. “Crawling back up the path all I could think of was clean sheets and getting out of Kopan. Suddenly, there was Lama at the top of the path. I burst into tears and told him I had this and that. He held my hand the whole time and laughed and laughed. “These are



Diana van Die, Freak Street, 1977

not problems dear, these are just little things. I think you’d better stay here,’ he said. Lama was always gentle with me, never heavy. I knew his laughter was not putting me down, that it was more spiritual medicine.”

A young English student of the lamas shared her experience of that summer. “I did the Vajrasattva retreat at Tushita, which was so comfortable we didn’t want it to end. Lama warned us not to talk about our retreat experiences. Twenty-four of us started it and Lama said only twenty would finish. He was right—four pulled out.”

## KARUNA’S TRIALS

At Kopan, Karuna was responsible for money, cleanliness and just about everything else of a mundane nature. Lama Yeshe always knew when anything was amiss, both from his instincts and the endless inspections he made. Kancha the cook shook every time

Lama stepped into the kitchen but Karuna took the brunt of his wrath. Jacie had given Karuna the title of director but Lama didn’t approve, saying, “You don’t need a title—everyone knows who you are.”

Karuna: “Lama just had to look at the

kids wrathfully and they shuddered. I often didn't want to be around him myself because he criticized me so much. Every morning I'd wonder what he was going to have a go at me about today. But I never doubted that he loved me. He was the only person who could make me feel those two things at once.

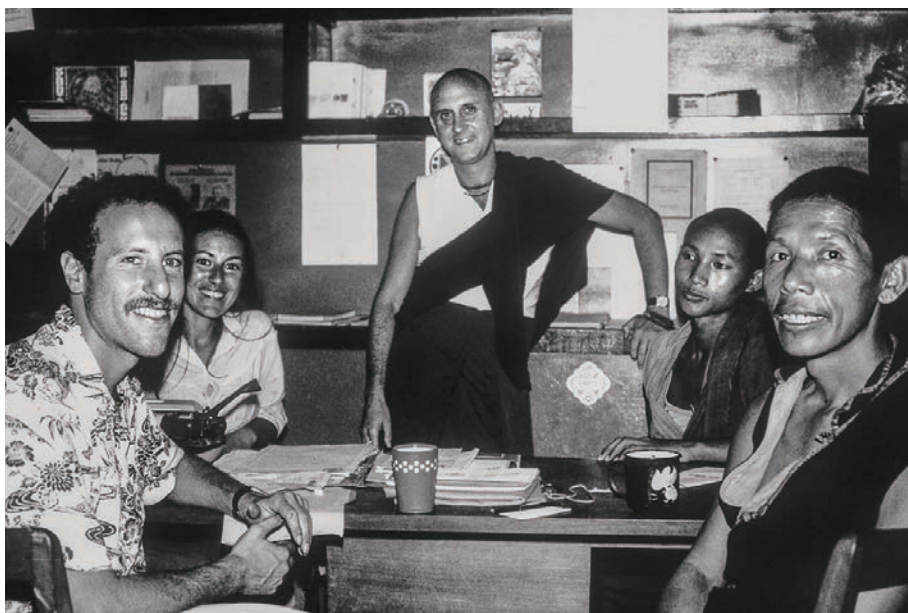
"Every night we had 'money meeting' with Lama Lhundrup, Lama Pasang and a couple of other monks, such as the driver. Lama Pasang went into Kathmandu nearly every day because there was no refrigeration in Nepal. Inevitably, if he left with 2,000 rupees he would account for 2,500 or 1,400, never 2,000. So the books were far from being balanced and Lama insisted we keep good books.

"Every year when Lama came back to Kopan he wanted to know how much we had spent. The November course involved a lot of money—shopping for 250 people cost many thousands of rupees. So every night we'd all get together in this room. Lama Lhundrup sat there very quietly doing his mantras. He held the key to the safe. I had everything

itemized: a code for petrol, a code for bricks, another for flour, milk, seeds for Lama's garden. I had ninety different codes. Then Lama Pasang would say, 'I bought steel rebar today,' and I'd think, 'Oh, I don't have a code for that.'

"It seemed that my relationship with Lama was not like what he had with a lot of other people. It was not sweet. Anyway, one night at the money meeting I was sick with a fever, it was 9:30 and raining, I hadn't eaten and all I wanted to do was go home, but Lama Pasang was going through his day. I'd say, 'I gave you 10,000 rupees and there's only 8,200 accounted for.' He'd pull out all these scraps of paper from various folds in his robes, with receipts like five rupees for a rickshaw, two rupees for tea and we're that much closer to the figure. I'd ask for more and he'd start scratching his head and talking to the monks in Nepalese, which I spoke, asking how much they had spent on petrol that day. I was just exhausted.

"After two hours of this, the door flies open and it's my worst nightmare. Many



Karuna, Pam, Nick, Thubten Tsering, Lama Lhundrup, Kopan office, 1979

people have described how Lama seemed to change sizes. Well, this night he burst through the door like John Wayne into the saloon. He was six-foot-six, I swear! Lama Pasang was so clever. Without a hint he just slipped out the door because he knew that if Lama was in the office that late at night, he meant business. Next, Lama Lhundrup asks Lama really politely if he'd like a cup of tea or something, and he gets out. So then there's just me, trapped behind the desk.

"This was the first time he'd come to the office at night after returning from being on tour. He sat across from me and started. 'How much did we spend on powdered milk last year and how many kilos did we buy?' I said that I didn't know as I didn't record kilos. But he steamed right on. How many yards of steel rebar, how many gallons of petrol—when things were sold in meters and liters. How much money did we save by growing our own cauliflower? On and on for two and a half hours, going right through the books. When I couldn't answer his questions immediately, he'd berate and belittle me, saying, 'You're from America, richest country in the world, and you don't know anything about money!'

"Then he starts going through the drawers in the office, then through all the files. He even went through the rubbish bin, finding obscure pieces of paper and asking what they were. He was brutal! And I have this aching fever and I just want to go home. I didn't want to be there! He finds these letters in a drawer written by someone in 1970 or something and he wants to know where that person is now. On and on and on. . . .

"Finally, around midnight he said, 'OK, dear, you can go now but I want you back in the office at six o'clock in the morning because I want to go through the coffee shop's books then.'

"I just went outside into the rain

and cried. It was all I could do. Then I noticed a kitchen light was on. Kancha often worked until one in the morning preparing for the next day, when breakfast was served early and people taking precepts needed to have tea ready. I thought I'd better have some soup. So I went down and opened the kitchen door, took one step inside and there was Kancha—and Lama Yeshe. All I could think of was escape! But of course, he turned and saw me. 'Yes, dear?' Like I hadn't just spent three hours with him. 'Come in, come in!' I sauntered in, all defensive, and he said, 'Something?' I didn't say anything and he said, 'You need to hear "I love you"?"

Lori Cayton was at Kopan, sitting back quietly observing as usual. She could see why Lama tortured Karuna: "He was the one in our family who always got away with everything and had a knack for getting other people to do things for him. I always felt Lama's method was to teach him how to take care of himself. Lama was the only person I ever saw treat Karuna like that.

"I saw how Lama affected my parents, especially my mother, who was so touched by him. Lama was so incredible with parents who were worried about cults and such things. People often asked my folks, 'Is this what your kids are into?' and they'd say, 'No, no, Lama Yeshe is not like that at all.'



With Lucille Cayton, Aptos, 1983

“But Lama was in Karuna’s face the whole time, often in public. I saw Lama hit him with his big mala several times. Lama never did anything like that to me because I was already so hard on myself. When I told him I wanted to do a three-month retreat at Tushita, he said, ‘Oh, so much beating!’ and started hitting himself on the back.

I thought, ‘Gosh, Vajrasattva is going to be really tough,’ but because that image of Lama beating himself stayed in my mind the whole time, I kept wondering what it meant. Eventually I saw that I didn’t need someone to beat me, because I beat myself up the whole time.”

### ANN’S YAMANTAKA STATUE

Ann McNeil returned to Kopan after many years away and wanted to buy a statue of Yamantaka. Lama Yeshe offered to come with her and bargain for it. Patan is famous for its statues. In a shop there, Lama found another statue he liked and asked the price. “You can’t ask that!” Lama told the shopkeeper and offered one tenth of the named price. The man said that wasn’t enough. “How can you have the nerve to charge me so much? I’m the abbot of a monastery and you’re charging me tourist prices. You should be offering this to me!” Naturally, the little Nepalese shopkeeper was Buddhist, so this barb was well-aimed.

Eventually Ann said they might as well leave, as Lama’s offer was not going to be accepted. “We started down the street and

sure enough, the shopkeeper came running after us. Lama got his statue at the price he wanted. So we went back in and Lama told me he didn’t have any money. Of course, we paid for it with the money I had brought with me for the Yamantaka statue. In fact, we bought three statues in Patan that day. Finally, we saw a perfect Yamantaka and I let Lama bargain for it, although I had no money left. Then Lama surprised me by producing his own money,” said Ann. She may have been surprised by this, but felt she had no reason to complain. After all, she ended up with the statue she wanted and in the process was able to make three offerings to her guru, thus creating exceptionally good karma.



The 15" x 7" \$10 note Lama sent to Peter after he moved to Hong Kong (see page 813)