tara house news

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Tara Institute — Assorted News

A Saint-Malo postcard arrived at TI from our friends The Hopes. *"Cher Amis, we have done a good tour (tours) of Europe and now almost on our way home. Lynda and Tristan are going to stay on for a while. Europe is wonderful especially when the sun shines, but the SA is terrible! Hope all is well for you all. Best wishes, Lynda, David and Tristan".*

On Friday, August 22, Pauline Alvarez, Lee Tan and Tanya Ingevich took "Triple Refuge Precepts" from Geshe Doga.

On Saturday August 23, Geshe Ia conferred Vajrasattva Empowerment on Carla Bettos just before she went to Mahamudra Centre in New Zealand to do the retreat. The event took place in the case of very immediate need. Mark Fernandes and Tanya Ingevich also had the privilege of receiving the Empowerment.

Twenty-four students who have been attending the Study Group, which is held every Tuesday night on the subject of the Wisdom chapter of Bodhisattvacharyavatara by Shantideva, sat for the exam/review test on 26th August for the first time. Geshe Doga's remarks on the results were very encouraging: "All of you have done very well in the review test. I really appreciate and admire your efforts, sincerity and devotions in Dharma practice. Thank you very much."

Vacancy at Tara Institute

One of the outside rooms is being vacated and should be available to a new resident in early November. The rent is $265 per month. Please contact Wayne at TI on 51 3784.

Transcribers Required

To make literal transcriptions of Geshe Sopa's teachings in Melbourne. Geshe Sopa's teachings in Australia are to be made into a book. Please contact Ross Moore at TI on 51 3784.

"A Million Minutes of Peace" is a world-wide International Year of Peace project in which individuals are being asked to give a few minutes of their time each day for the month starting September 16th and ending October 16th 1986. These minutes should be dedicated to the practical development of peace within themselves and in their relationship with others. At the end of the month you write your minutes on the back of an envelope and send it to a PO Box number which will be advertised in the media. It's a great moment for the family to spend together.

The top right hand corner of your mailing label now carries a vivid indication of whether or not your Membership or Newsletter fees are due. There are three different stories up there. The first is the mail sorting code, 3E, 4A, etc. The two remaining alternatives are EITHER the date you are paid up to OR a $ with a figure which, when paid, will bring your membership up to the current issue of the newsletter. If you have any questions, call Adele on 592 9663.

Forest Fire Burns O Sel Ling!!!!

Dear friends,

We are writing to tell you about an unfortunate event at O Sel Ling. On the 26th of August a large forest fire destroyed most of the grass and trees and damaged several of the retreat huts. The fire spread so quickly that we had to run for our lives. Fortunately, everybody together with the cows, dogs and cats survived without harm.

Apart from the main house and the stone retreat houses everything was burnt. The lower retreat-houses were badly affected and the water supply was almost totally destroyed. Despite the difficulties we have the enthusiasm to continue our work and we have already started to get things back to normal, which must be our goal at the moment.

To enable us to do this we need help. We are already running on a shoe-string and this event has added a further financial burden.

We would be grateful for any assistance you could give us, whether large or small, to enable us to continue and hopefully to expand in order to provide retreat facilities for more and more people.

With much love from all,
Paloma Alba.

This unfortunate news brings into sharp and painful focus the fact that Lama Zopa Rinpoche warned us that we must make many purifications to protect the long life of Lama Osel. Please don't forget our commitment to save the lives of several thousands of sentient beings and dedicate the merits in that direction. Open the little book on the counter at TI and count for yourselves how many we have saved.

INSTANT SUPPORT FROM TI

At the Tara Institute Executive Meeting of September 17th, Executive Members privately donated the sum of $520 which was matched dollar-for-dollar by TI funds. A cheque for $1040 was promptly forwarded to O Sel Ling and concerned friends are invited to donate by addressing correspondence to The Treasurer, Tara Institute and clearly indicating that the money is for O Sel Ling Retreat Centre.

The following extract is from the minutes of the CPMT '86 held in Holland. Ref p.12, Item 9.

"Concern expressed about Lama Osel's welfare. Recognition of the need to follow the advice of Lama Zopa Rinpoche. People should not offer food or drink from their plates and glasses, pick Lama Osel up or give him kisses and so on. Osel should wear robes and people should learn to relate to him as Lama. It was agreed that we express our confidence in his mother Maria Torres for working with Rinpoche to ensure the well-being of Lama Osel."

Seven Point Training of the Mind

Lama Thubten Yeshe

Kopan, Nepal Nov-Dec 1977

Part Two

We blame anything we have difficulties with. If someone has incredible richness and pleasures, he thinks he cannot meditate. For example: first he comes here (to Kopan) and he tries to be simple — Milarepa trip, you know? Practising the Dharma. Suddenly he goes back home and fortunately for him his father dies. (Laughter) His father dies and all his father's material possessions are his. Suddenly his renunciation is completely finished at that time. Suddenly he becomes completely concrete. So by gaining this material wealth he completely loses his value of understanding, of practising Dharma.

Next he is in Hawaii and having this this that that . . . trying to be happy. But "Oh, that doesn't make me happy!" Then he tries to go to the mountains, tries to be happy, you understand? Then he says, "Oh that's not right, I should have a new girlfriend". Then he tries to go to some new place. He tries many many many many many trips. He does all this because of the co-operative MJcause which is his belief in that way of life. However, wealth becomes a distraction and one cannot practise.

Then, one who is poor: "Oh I am poor I am not happy!" Then one who is sick: "Of course I am sick now, I can't meditate, I can't practice!" That's all wrong, OK. From the point of view of Buddhism and particularly thought training, that's all wrong. When you're sick you should transform that sickness into the blissful Path to Liberation. When you are in the state of being intoxicated and deluded by being wealthy, you should transform that into the Path to Enlightenment. That is possible. Maybe you think "Oh terrible, that's too much!" That is possible.

Basically, the Western thought is just not right. The attitude is completely wrong and the reason is because of all the blame — blaming others, others, others. This is all wrong. The attitude is: "I have suffering because he gives me suffering". You understand? — SHE makes, HE makes.

You never blame the self-cherishing thought of ego. That one we never blame. Basically if you're not putting the blame right there, then your conclusions are nothing whatever to do with Dharma. That's all! You blame all the distraction — this, that, this, that. If you blame, then somewhere you have to integrate that blame into your own grasping attitude of ego — you have to understand that is the self-cherishing thought — that it is all the manifestation of one's own ego. We should recognise this, we should understand.

That's why in the text there is a piece that means, "You blame the ego". Everything that you give blame to, saying "This makes me unhappy, this makes me miserable, miserable, miserable", you blame outside yourself. You should blame into your own self-cherishing ego — you should blame there!

So, for that reason, Geshe Sharawa, one of the Kadampa Geshes, he says that all the distractions are really helping, can be transformed into helpers and become teachers for him.

We say: "Oh this dog is barking. Wowo wowo wowo wowowow". You are meditating here and the dog is barking. Instead of having compassion for him you say, "I wish this dog was killed!" You say this dog makes it not possible for you to meditate. Actually at that time we should recognise that dog as our guru because he is showing that this "ra ra ra ra ra" is within me. You understand? Actually the dog is within me — he shows he is a real guru.

In the text we say this kind of wonderful suffering can be transformed into bliss. It's true, it's possible. You know, normally we are poor quality and have poor quality wisdom. We conclude that some small suffering is a sign of weakness. "Oh I'm suffering. I'm finished now. I've had it". This is poor quality. Not poor quality of your potentiality, but poor quality of your wisdom, your lack of wisdom. You don't have the truth to cope with the situation, to make yourself stable and stay in the peaceful quality. Even with such small things, you completely can't cope. You know, "Oh, I can't!" When you say "I can't do" it becomes "I can't do" because your mind says so. You decided — you decided you can't do anything.

Such suffering, temporal suffering and hurting legs, this is actually not concrete, not self-existent and it is possible that by such causes, you can be made blissful. I think you have to check up — you have to seek reality. First of all, what is the nature of feeling suffering? We know that whenever we feel suffering we feel the painfulness is concrete. When we get pleasure, the pleasure is concrete. We do feel that way and I say it is all wrong.

Whenever we feel pain, the pain becomes so strong that it becomes concrete because your mind is believing it is concrete. The same thing when you have pleasure and you are grasping. The grasping is increasing, increasing, increasing because you are believing this pleasure is concrete. This believing you have is not something from a philosophical point of view. It is the instinctive nature of ego, the darkening shadow of ego-nature. The conception of ego instinctively says: "This is self-existent, self-concrete". So you get the incurable grasping attitude, not realising that this is a combination of names. Happy or unhappy is a combination. Interdependent existence is a combination in the mind which together produces happy or unhappy.

For example, you have a certain place to touch where you get pleasure. Yes? One energy comes, you get touched here and you get pleasure. That is in the beginning of the touch. Then the degeneration comes and the pleasure disappears. All this, whatever you think is pleasure, whatever you think is psychedelic pleasure, every pleasure . . . Now I'm going to make a statement: The very highest experience of your pleasure, the worst lowest suffering of your miserable condition, whatever you are feeling, that experience is just confusion, the relative mind making a bubble. And you feel it is concrete. So you grasp. So you're miserable, you're self-sensitive. You are self-believing, you understand, that's all!

The Seven Point Training of the Mind is a series of seven tapes and they are available singly by sending a cheque for $8.50, (payable to Tara Institute,) to Adele Hulse, 124 Were Street Brighton, 3186. Also available is the recently transcribed "Temporal Happiness".

Gomo Tulku's Stupa

Finally we have some resolution of the matter of Gomo Tulku's stupa. This information comes from the minutes of CPMT '86, Maitreya Institute, Maasbommel, Holland. Lama Zopa Rinpoche has designed the stupa which will be started in November and will cost $US7000-15,000 depending on the materials used. There is frequent communication between Rinpoche and Gomo Tulku's family. Jane Seidlitz at Kopan is in charge of collecting for it, but Tara Institute students should direct money, gold or jewellery to The Treasurer, 3 Crimea Street St Kilda and identify clearly that this is for Gomo Tulku's stupa.

OCTOBER SPIRITUAL PROGRAM

MONDAY NIGHTS:
8 pm Oct 6th, 13th, 20th, 27th

INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHIST MEDITATION
Four Consecutive Monday Nights at TI

This month we commence another of our popular series of introductory sessions on Buddhist Meditation. The sessions are led by an experienced Western student who will help students explore different aspects of Buddhist theory and practice. Students will be taught how to use different meditation techniques and will be shown how the insights arising from them can be used to benefit and enrich their own lives. Active participation with open discussion is encouraged and there will be ample opportunity for exchanging ideas.

This course will be specifically of benefit to new students but any older students wishing to expand their meditation practice are welcome.

Course Fee: $20 (Members $8). Fee includes a copy of the outstanding text "Wisdom Energy 2" by Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa.

Registration: Contact Patrick Campisi or Ross Moore at TI on 51 3784 or else just turn up at 7.45 pm on the first night (Oct 6th).

Any students who have already attended one introductory series of talks are free to keep attending on Monday nights in order to expand their knowledge of meditation. No further charge is made for such students.

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS:
[illegible]pm Oct 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th

A GUIDE TO THE BODHISATTVA'S WAY OF LIFE

On this night Geshe Doga continues his commentary on different aspects of Buddhist thought as illustrated in this moving text by the famous Indian Yogi Shantideva. This text which many regard as being unsurpassed in terms of its profundity and clarity has been taken as a personal "guidebook" along the path by such figures as His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Although of most benefit if studied as a whole, students able to attend on an irregular basis or new students wishing to attend for the first time will find that each night's commentary is a complete teaching in itself and so will be able to draw great value from them. Such students will quickly find that the insights contained in the text can be readily applied to their own lives in a direct and practical way.

Everyone welcome. Teachings free of charge.

Guru Puja
Friday October 24th 8 pm

A puja is a ceremony in which — by combining meditation, visualization, chanting and the offering up of both symbolic and actual offerings — we acknowledge the debt of gratitude we owe to all our teachers. It is a powerful group practice which can often have a very immediate "energizing" or invigorating influence on our spiritual lives.

All students (new and old) are welcome to come and share in this very positive experience.

Offerings of food or flowers welcome.

Tara Puja
Friday October 10th 8 pm

Dedicated to the success of the Bleeding Hearts Charity Ball! Don't miss it! (or the Ball . . .)

WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THE OCTOBER WEEKEND LAM RIM COURSE OR ALL ABOUT THE NOVEMBER RESIDENTIAL COURSE

In October there will not be a weekend course at the end of the month. Instead, a four day residential course will be held on the 1-4 November at a beautiful venue in Mornington. The course will be held at the Mercy Conference Centre which is set in attractive gardens and is directly opposite the sea. Each person has a separate room and we are informed that it is all very luxurious — ideal for Dharma-retreating city slickers! The topic is a famous Lo-Jong root text by Atisha. This will be the last course held by Geshe Doga this year. November 4th is a public holiday (CUP DAY) so try and get the Monday off work to do this last course of 1986. See supplement to the Newsletter advertising the course for more details.

REPORT ON SEPTEMBER VAJRASATTVA TEACHINGS AND RETREAT HELD BY TARA INSTITUTE AT ATISHA CENTRE

Geshe Doga taught the Vajrasattva sadhana to twelve fortunate students. All felt very grateful to have had the opportunity to obtain such clear and full instructions from our own precious Geshe Doga. Five students stayed on to do a one week's retreat — John Wright, Jane Lewis, Patrick Campisi, Brian Ashen and Peter Gilks. We hope that courses such as this will gradually open the way to more tantric teachings and practice at Tara Institute.

The powerful Vajrasattva purification meditation is certainly an excellent way of commencing such a practice.

REPORT ON THE MONTHLY LAM RIM WEEKENDS AT TARA INSTITUTE

Taught by Geshe Doga with meditations led by the Program Director, Ross Moore and run with the able help of the Spiritual Program Committee, these have been steadily gaining momentum and soon the problem will be that the gompa will prove too small. The July Course — **CHOOSING A BETTER FUTURE** attracted 50 students and the August Course — **LAW OF KARMA** saw 49 happily ensconced in the gompa. The attendence over four weekend courses has been one hundred and sixty students. Ads placed in the Age newspaper have been drawing a good response and many students have become regulars.

If you think about it, the chance to hear four discourses from Geshe Doga, have meditations, discussions, two wonderful lunches and the chance to talk to Dharma students new and old and make new friends — all in two days — is more than equal to attendence at the centre for a one month period if you come to one part of the weekly program. The courses seem a perfect solution to the Dharma needs of hectic city dwellers. With the October Course — **UPROOTING OUR PROBLEMS** — we are now up to the beginning of the second broad division of the Lam Rim teaching which deals with the practice of the person of Middle Scope.

It is planned that these courses will continue next year, starting from March so join us then. In the meantime there is the November Residential Course. See elsewhere for details.

Repaying the Kindness Fund

All financial members of Tara Institute recently received a letter from Lama Zopa Rinpoche announcing the creation of this new fund. The letter was accompanied by another from Vajrapani Director John Schwartz describing how to subscribe to the fund. As not all Newsletter recipients are members we here reprint the essence of Lama Zopa Rinpoche's letter:

"The idea is that the fund would help repay Lama Yeshe's great kindness by fulfilling his wishes which, in turn, were to repay the kindness of sentient beings.

"The profits (from the fund) would be used for: providing Centres with the best teachers and translators, training Westerners bringing His Holiness the Dalai Lama and other highly realized Lamas to the West, offering retreat to those who have dedicated many years for others (and many other ventures). Lama Yeshe says every student is FPMT and we are all one group family, one mandala. Together we can help ourselves individually and collectively, as well as widely help the Dharma. And we can continue to preserve the Mahayana tradition as our precious guru Lama Yeshe wished."

John Schwartz' letter advises how to deposit the optimum gift of $100. We would like to point out that your donation doesn't have to be $100 — it can be $5 or $5000, as you are able, and that there is no need to send money directly to the Fund's Californian account. Please direct all donations to this most precious fund to The Treasurer, Tara Institute, clearly marked that it is for Rinpoche's "Repaying the Kindness Fund". TI will collect and forward donations —making the process easy and also saving the many bank fees.

Lama Yeshe's Stupa

This will be built at Vajrapani Institute in California on the site where Lama's holy body was cremated and is intended to remain as a monument until the coming of Maitreya Buddha. Funds are needed to complete the construction. Hundreds of thousands of images of the Buddha, holy objects from India and a microfilm copy of the complete works of the Buddha and Lama Tsong Khapa will be placed inside the stupa which will be set in a landscaped meditation garden. The stupa is intended to serve as an object of inspiration for all millennia and will be consecrated on October 26th. Everyone, of course is invited to attend the ceremony for which Lama Zopa Rinpoche will make a special trip to Vajrapani.

Donations should be addressed to The Treasurer, Tara Institute and clearly marked for Lama Yeshe's stupa.

Donations of gold and jewellery are also acceptable and you should also indicate if you would like to receive a tsa tsa containing Lama's holy ashes.

"Members First" for Lama Zopa Rinpoche

One of the primary tasks of the FPMT is to protect our most precious Guru, Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche. Members and non-members of Tara Institute should note well right now that on his proposed Australian tour following Lama Osel's enthronement on February 28th in Nepal, Members will be given clear preference for private interviews and all Teachings. As head of the FPMT, Lama Zopa is being invited by and coming for TI Members. We have also extended an invitation to Lama Osel but have not yet received a reply. If you are no longer a Member of Tara Institute or never have been, perhaps the precious visit of Lama Zopa may inspire you to join.

CPMT '86

On his return from Maitreya Institute, Holland last month, George Farley addressed some twenty-five people at Tara Institute on the subject of the 1986 Council for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition CPMT '86 annual meeting which he had chaired. George's affinity with computers enabled the fifty FPMT representatives present to receive copies of the previous day's minutes the following morning and a bound copy of the full minutes plus addenda have been placed in the TI Library for perusal by anyone who is interested. Minutes are NOT to be removed from the Library.

Fifty-one subjects are covered, ranging through childminding suggestions, the reports of Centre Directors, faresharing, Translator schools, Retreat Savings Scheme, centres in trouble, membership reciprocity, and the important new Root Institute in Bodh Gaya.

Next meeting will be held at Kopan following Lama Osel's enthronement on February 28th.

FPMT Australasia

Twice yearly FPMT Centre Directors from Australia and New Zealand meet together and last month saw them all at Vajrayana Institute in Sydney. It was noted that Buddha House in Adelaide is the fastest growing Centre in Australasia and has just opened a health food shop called True Nature which is doing very well indeed. All other centres are doing well. We are grateful to Simon Harrison from Dorje Chang Institute for making the trip from New Zealand. Under discussion were plans for Australia to host a CPMT meeting soon.

A scholarship fund was planned whereby we could send Westerners to India/Nepal to study Tibetan, bring them home every year during the break period and then bond them to FPMT Australasia for an appropriate length of time. Anyone interested in this should consult Peter Guiliano (266 3501).

It was noted with sorrow that fundraising for Australasia's own Wisdom title "Introduction to Tantra" by Lama Yeshe, has fallen short of target. The next meeting will be held in Sydney in February from where most Directors will make their way to Kopan for Lama Osel's enthronement and CPMT 87.

HELPING OUR HELPERS

While the Repaying the Kindness Fund is being set up to help those who have helped us, perhaps you could spare a moment to think about **Trish Donnelly**. She spent many years as Director of Tushita Delhi and was the principal exporter of the Dakini range of clothing, Australian sales of which clinched the bank loan that bought us our wonderful house in Crimea Street. Trisha is now at Kopan doing nyung-dros for her planned three year retreat. She writes: "At present I'm offering water bowls — 40,000 to go, then tsa tsas. It would be so distressing to have to stop . . ." Trisha had many friends in Australia — perhaps they would like to contact Adele (592 9663) about giving her some support.

Welcome home to Isabel Lengyel and **Debbie Wright** back from their recent world travels and happily resuming their many tasks at Tara Institute. Thanks girls.

September was the big birthday month at TI and the following people celebrated their impending demise: Carla Betros, George Farley, Joe Alvarez, Brian Ashen, Wah Huxham, Debbie Wright, Ross Moore and Gil Trebilcock.

Anyone who would enjoy to share some of the cleaning duties in Geshela and Samdup's apartment should contact **Jools Gardiner** on 531 7170. You will find it blissfully rewarding work.

Sue Dalkin and **Hal Young** heartily recommend going to Chenrezig Institute for a break. They waxed lyrical on their return last month on the relaxed atmosphere, the birds, the sun; on having the very best of both worlds by being virtually on the fabulous Sunshine Coast with a group meditation session every day. And cheap! If you put in just two hours of karma yoga a day you get accommodation and three meals for a mere $10 a day. They also said that the special welcome given members of Tara Institute was extremely heartwarming.

No doubt about it, **TI News gets around. Thank you for letters to Scott Brusso** which came from as far afield as Kathmandu and Queensland. We will send them on.

The Bleeding Hearts Ball

As the Ball is scheduled for Tuesday November 4th, (Melbourne Cup Night) this will be the last pre-Ball notice in these newsletters. At the time of going to press there are very few tickets unsold and there will definitely be none available at the door on the night. If you want to attend the Ball ring Adele now on 592 9663. Tickets are $50 each. We are extremely grateful to the following people who have sworn their assistance both in the afternoon (setting up the Hall and delivering platters) and the really special people who have promised to turn up at midnight to help clean up: our dear monk Bob Liesk, Carole Wallace-Mitchell, Dorian Ribush, Peter Stripes, Ross Moore, John Egerton, Patrick Campisi, Jemima Ling, Bev Greet, Mark Fernandes, George Farley, Jools Gardiner, Gabrielle Wallace. Needless to say these are not enough people. With Bodhicitta anything is possible . . .

Every year the Ball makes new leaps forward. This year Australian Airlines have donated two tickets to the Gold Coast as a door prize. We are honoured by their support. We have also been given a free spot on a South Melbourne tram — watch for it! A working breakfast last month saw last year's kitchen team showing even more enthusiasm. These people are professional chefs and lecturers in catering with families and full-time jobs. They know nothing about Tara Institute yet are so happy to dedicate many long hours of unpaid labour to helping the homeless children and the Sera Je School. Thanks to **Helen Farley** for her dedicated telephoning to all the restaurants. It is so good to feel that others want to help. Tara Institute is truly honoured.

If you are unable to do any of the above, but share our heartfelt desire to lessen the suffering of others in a practical way, then you may wish to attend the **Tara Puja scheduled for October 10th** which will be dedicated to the success of the Ball so that it in return may better help our beneficiaries. The Open Family Foundation cares for 500 homeless children virtually on our doorstep and the children attending the Sera Je School are the teachers and translators of tomorrow. With clean water to drink they will do a lot better at their studies, don't you think? At present there is hardly a child in the school who is not riddled with parasitic infection and head ulcers.