

# Quiet Achiever ~ Sarah New

I've done various jobs around the centre over the years, I don't call them volunteering, since I never thought of taking on any of the roles until I was asked to. It was about twenty years ago that the then SPC, Ven. Carolyn Lawler, asked me if I'd clean the wax from the little dishes that held the tea light candles. I felt really proud, I had a role in the centre. Then I was asked if I'd do one Monday night a month at the door to greet and take the fee from those coming to the Introduction to Buddhist Meditation. That's always quite uplifting as people turn up with much friendly enthusiasm.



For a few years I was back up person for the weekly healing meditation group team whenever a regular volunteer couldn't come. Along with the participants I got a lot out of those sessions. There are others things I help out with.

I'm glad to have been given those roles which are not too challenging and which have made me feel more of a sense of belonging at Tara Institute.

# REFLECTIONS ON LIFE IN LOCKDOWN

It has been an interesting time for me during this COVID 19 period. My initial reaction was shock and disbelief, seeing things around the world and how this has affected me over time on a personal level. The bubble I was living in popped, realising how interdependent we really are.



Normal routines, people, places and things were less accessible from the outside world. Not having the freedom to come to Tara and attend teachings each week totally 'blew' my mind amongst other things - impermanence for sure.

Fortunately, through the kindness of our precious teachers Geshe Doga and Geshe Lobsang, I was able to tap into the spiritual guidance I had received and built up over time, through the Dharma teachings. It has definitely been a time for personal reflection and processing. With less distractions, I have had the space to dig in deep into what is going on in my mind.

Committing to a daily practice has helped me through this period. It has not only become part of my self-care, but also my ability reach out to connect to others in a sincere way, sharing my love.

A few weeks ago I had lunch with Geshe Doga and his advice was so clear and practical. **He said for us to extend our love and care to those who are in our day-to-day proximity and to extend our prayers to people in other countries or places we can't practically reach.**

*Tina Rouvalis*

You are welcome to contact the Tara Institute newsletter editors Allys Andrews and Sandra Kinread at [allys.andrews@gmail.com](mailto:allys.andrews@gmail.com) for issues relating to the newsletter.

# Tara Institute news

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# Recognising the states of mind within us that make us unhappy

Normally, we don't recognise the states of mind within us that make us unhappy. However, if we observe such a state of mind when it arises, we can recognise it as the immediate cause of our unhappiness. Then we can see how, by getting rid of that state of unhappiness; this is all it takes to get rid of our unhappiness. Now, to get rid of that unhappy state of mind we need to recognise its causes and conditions and apply an appropriate remedy.

First, we need to closely observe as it arises. As we do this, we can see that it arises due to a certain object or a thought with which our mind engages. Each state of mind arises in dependence upon its object, and the type of mind that arises indicates the relationship between the mind and its respective object. So, an unhappy state of mind can't arise without its object. Hence, from one perspective, all we need to do to get rid of any unhappy mind is to simply forget about the object the mind is preoccupied with. It sounds simple, doesn't it? Anyway, at least we are getting a better understanding of our mind.

Meditation practice is a means of training or subduing our mind. Through meditation, we habituate our mind to abide in a positive object, which enhances the peace and happiness in our mind while overcoming the unhappiness and chaos. ... *continued next page*

*Ven. Geshe Doga, Middle Length Lam Rim, 3 March 2020  
Photo by Damien Busby, members' puja, February 2020*

**"Through meditation, we habituate our mind to abide in a positive object, which enhances the peace and happiness in our mind while overcoming the unhappiness and chaos."**





His Holiness the Dalai Lama speaking to viewers around the world live from his residence in Dharamsala on 16 May 2020. Photo by Ven Tenzin Jamphel.

### Excerpt from the talk given by the Dalai Lama on the 16th of May

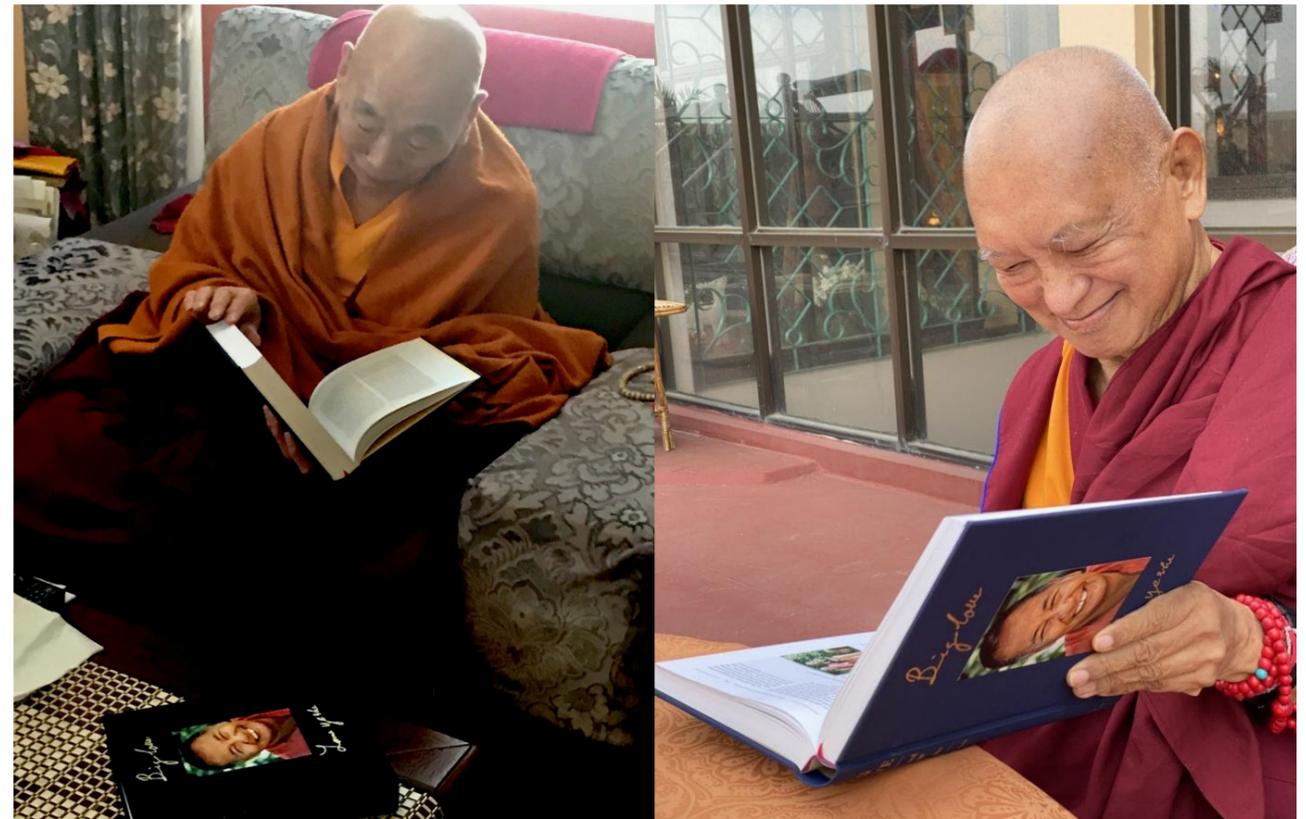
His Holiness remarked that, drawing on ancient Indian knowledge, Mahatma Gandhi revealed how non-violence can be employed in contemporary circumstances. He noted that the Collection of Higher Knowledge, the Abhidharma, describes world eras dominated by famine and weapons. He lamented that one of the results of material development has been the focus on designing and producing ever more lethal weapons. Some people take pride in them and base their business on their production and sale. At the same time, there are others who comprise a movement intent on disarmament. They understand that human problems are not resolved by employing more powerful weapons. Problems arising from attachment and hatred are not eliminated by resorting to the use of force. No one ever achieves complete victory; enemies are never completely vanquished. Because, ultimately, we have to live together, we have to settle our problems through dialogue and negotiation. And to achieve external disarmament requires that we first have a sense of inner disarmament.

'Children survive because their parents care for them,' His Holiness declared, 'Even as adults, individuals survive in dependence on the community. This is because we are social creatures. In the past, people lived in small communities with little interaction between them. Today, we are economically interdependent and we are faced by challenges like climate change that we can only meet if we are united. We must think globally and work together. As far as climate change is concerned, our own experience tells us it's happening. Many of our problems are rooted in the unruly states of our minds, we are attached to our friends and relatives and hostile to foes. We neglect the fact of our interdependence. **As Shantideva makes clear, "All those who suffer in the world do so because of their desire for their own happiness. All those happy in the world are so because of their desire for the happiness of others"**.'

### Ven. Geshe Doga, continued from front page ...

Meditation practice allow us to be aware of, and to recognise the train of thoughts that arise within us. We generate many different thoughts, but normally we don't observe them, nor do we try to control them. As we said before, if we check, we will notice that these conceptual thoughts arise due to their contact with various objects or events. These objects serve as immediate causes and conditions. So, to prevent such unwanted thoughts from arising, we need to prevent our mind from venturing after the respective objects of those thoughts. By doing this, we can definitely put a halt to such unwanted thoughts, at least temporarily.

When we engage in meditation practice – where we make a deliberate effort to stop the mind from going after a particular object, and instead try to fix it on whatever object we have chosen for the meditation practice – we can prevent unwanted thoughts from arising. **If we can practise such meditation for even one or two minutes, we will see the effect on our mind, in terms of reducing the influence of an unwanted thought on our mind.**



# Big Love

**Big Love: The Life and Teachings of Lama Yeshe** has arrived at Tara Institute.

After 30 years in the making, the author Adele Hulse, one of Lama Yeshe's earliest students, highlights his special connection with early Dharma seekers and skillfully weaves their intimate stories with details of where Lama went, and with the teachings he gave. **We at Tara rejoice in the virtuous merit created by Adele in bringing this herculean task to fruition. Congratulations Adele.**

If you'd like to order a copy, please contact Pam at [bookshop@tarainstitute.org.au](mailto:bookshop@tarainstitute.org.au). If you've already ordered, please contact Katrina at [admin@tarainstitute.org.au](mailto:admin@tarainstitute.org.au) to arrange pickup and payment details.

**Geshe Doga enjoying Big Love, Tara Institute May 2020 / Lama Zopa enjoying Big Love, Kopan Monastery April 2020. Photos by Cynthia Karena and Ven. Roger Kunsang.**

### Reflections on life in lockdown ~ Ven. Carolyn Lawler

Recently I had the pleasure of receiving an email from a friend studying in Europe, who in recent years has undergone a great deal of difficulties. She has decided to take robes and wondered if I had any advice for her (since I have been a nun for over 30 years!). I wrote: I have only one real piece of encouragement for you on this new adventure and it's as follows: I watched today's YouTube talk by Lama Zopa Rinpoche and he, once more, emphasised our need to meditate. I think this is something that we need to do more of than we tend to think (or at least, I've tended to think). We read texts, take tests and say many prayers, and that can cause us to miss out somewhat on our meditation practice. Rinpoche said that if we haven't integrated the Dharma into our hearts, nothing changes. We can know all the texts, prayers etc., but if it is only the rational mind that knows, then it won't change us. Rinpoche said again, it's hard work, but we need to keep going however long it takes to achieve enlightenment.



Auspicious days in June are calculated according to the lunar eclipse. On these days, the benefits of actions are greatly multiplied, so are especially good for spiritual practice.

Monday 1	Tibetan 10	Tsog Day	Guru Puja
Friday 5	Tibetan 15	Full Moon Lunar Eclipse	Precepts
		<b>Lord Buddha's birth, enlightenment and parinirvana</b>	
Monday 15	Tibetan 25	Tsog Day	Guru Puja
Sunday 21	Tibetan 30	New Moon Solar Eclipse	Precepts
Sunday 28	Tibetan 8	Tara Day	Tara Puja
Tuesday 30	Tibetan 10	Tsog Day	Guru Puja