

**May you see the light however small in your hour of darkness as**

**YOU ARE NOT ALONE.**

**Thank you Geshe la for being the LIGHT.**

**from**

**Your students**

**'Being the LIGHT' is a collection of stories from students about their Dharma experiences with Geshela. If you like to share your story with us, you can email to [editor@tenzinzopa.com](mailto:editor@tenzinzopa.com)**

Before I met the Buddha dharma, I was in constant search for the purpose of my life. This really hit me hard when I was in university because I always have a strong feeling that there is more to life than just following the norms of getting married, having children, growing old and dying. I was searching for a more meaningful existence because I was not happy with what the world presents. One day I realised that you can still have all the material things in this world but if you don't understand your mind and how it works, it can still be a miserable existence. I read a lot of personal development books but it still did not answer my question on the purpose of life. One day in class, my teacher was reciting mantras using her mala and I asked her what she was doing. She started telling me about the Buddhist Centre she has been going to for a few years and attended classes on mind training. I immediately became very interested but the causes and conditions did not come together for me until after 6 months. One Sunday morning out of boredom, I remembered my teacher mentioned the meditation class held in the buddhist centre. I visited Langri Tangpa Centre and this was my introduction to Tibetan Mahayana Buddhism and I never looked back after that.

It's been 10 years since I met the Buddha dharma in Langri Tangpa Buddhist Centre in Brisbane, Australia and it has been the most fulfilling time of my life, full of challenges but at the same time the most enriching. I met my three heart gurus including Lama Zopa Rinpoche who was the spiritual director of FMPT when he came to Australia in 2015. Little did I know that one of them will fully awaken the essence of guru devotion in me towards Lama Zopa Rinpoche.

A friend from the centre mentioned about the movie, Unmistaken Child, a story of a Tibetan Buddhist monk looking for the reincarnation of his precious teacher. This was the first time I heard of Geshe Tenzin Zopa and I did not know anything about him. I watched the movie and I could not stop crying for two hours because I was so touched by his love and guru devotion to his teacher. The movie was very moving and I prayed that one day I would want to meet this monk. Three months passed after watching the movie, I was told that the monk in the video was coming to Langri Tangpa Centre with Phuntsok Rinpoche who is the reincarnation of his precious guru. This was my first ever encounter with Geshe Zopa and I was honoured to be given the task to give his cheesecake during the class. He was very approachable and had a very good sense of humour. I was volunteering in the centre at that time so I was able to see him and just observe him from a distance.

The next year, he came to the centre to do more Buddhist teachings and I really enjoyed the class because he speaks English very well and I loved hearing his stories of life as a monk and just his experiences with his teachers and gurus. This was also the time I started attending the Chenrezig practice of Nyungne retreat where every second day is fasting which involves no talking, no eating and no drinking for 24-26 hours. Geshe Zopa briefly told us a story of his guru doing Nyungne retreat and his nun aunt who has done at least 2000 Nyungne retreats. This was extremely fascinating and inspiring that there are people practicing this very intensely. Over the years I always looked forward to Geshe Zopa coming to Langri Tangpa Centre to teach more Buddha dharma.

In 2018, Lama Zopa Rinpoche came to Bendigo to do a 6 weeks retreat and I was very fortunate to have attended the retreat. Geshe Zopa had a big role in this retreat because he was helping out so much in the pujas and his experience helping out in most aspects of the retreat really inspired me to become a better student. His approachable and friendly nature made it easier to connect and I was able to ask him questions on things that I don't understand yet, for example the unimaginable compassion of the Buddhas towards all sentient beings and not feel disappointed towards us for not doing things right. Every afternoon Geshe Zopa leads the protectors' prayer with the cymbals and chanting and leading at the same time. I really enjoyed this puja because it's good to hear how pujas are done in the monastery and it really gives us that experience first hand during the retreat.

The first Guru Bhumtsok in Australia was led by Geshe Zopa in Tasmania in 2018 and it was three days of prayers attended by monks and nun and dharma students all over Australia. During this time I was also preparing for my upcoming 108 Nyungne Retreat in France and trying to create as much merit as I can. Geshe Zopa advised us that Guru Padmasambhava practice is very effective in removing obstacles especially towards any dharma activities and that we should ask for help and to have a pure motivation when asking for help from Guru Rinpoche

### Pictures from Guru Bhumtsok



On 18th June 2020, I was able to complete the 108 Nyungne Retreat (7-8 months) in France. This was only possible because of the blessings of my gurus and Lama Chenrezig himself. One of the key people towards the success of this retreat was the absolute guidance of Geshe Zopa. I mentioned earlier that Geshe Zopa's guru and his nun aunt have done thousands of Nyungne (Fasting) retreats and he was so kind to take me on board and guide me throughout the entire retreat. Geshe Zopa always reminded me to be kind to myself and offer the effort and merits to countless sentient beings. He always reminded me to look after myself and to take things easy and not be too harsh to myself but rather approach things with kindness, humility and compassion. I had so many struggles in this retreat especially mentally and how my mind was very critical and unhappy but Geshe la always made me feel at ease and cared for. I also offered

this retreat to Geshe la because he is benefitting so many students especially in the West.

Geshe la is definitely so precious he has always been a big part of my major dharma activities. For example, I always wanted to do one of the approach retreats and he instructed me to do the retreat in Kopan Monastery in Nepal because all the materials and preparation will be taken care of for me. I followed his advice and in May 2022, I completed my 3 weeks retreat which he helped me organise and under the supervision of one of the tantric masters in Kopan Monastery. He was very kind to me and I was able to meet his Auntie nun who has done thousands of Nyungne at the end of my retreat. He also helped me structure the retreat and especially reminded me to have pure motivation and to relax during the retreat. All was possible because of his kindness and care towards dharma students to become better practitioners. It didn't stop here because during this time my heart guru Lama Zopa Rinpoche has been staying in Kopan monastery especially during the pandemic and the causes and conditions came together for me to receive his blessings and offered the 108 Nyungne retreat in France.

Before I started the retreat, I saw Geshe Zopa to go over some instructions before he departed Kopan the next day. Lama Zopa Rinpoche after hearing my completion of the 108 Nyungne retreat in France, gave Geshe Zopa some instructions for me to continue my strong connection with Chenrezig. Geshe Zopa informed me that Lama Zopa Rinpoche wants me to walk up to the Tsum Valley and spend time in Rachen Nunnery. This nunnery is well known for practicing Nyungne retreats and most of the nuns there have done thousands of Nyungne. Geshe Zopa was also from the Tsum Valley and he helped me get connected with the right people so that I can trek the next year.

In May 2023, I trekked to the Tsum Valley as instructed by Lama Zopa Rinpoche and Geshe Zopa gave me instructions and guidance as this was a very challenging time. Three weeks before my trek, Lama Zopa Rinpoche passed away and Tsum Valley was the last place Rinpoche went and Geshe Zopa was with him the whole time.

Geshe Zopa for me is like the extension of my guru with his kindness and great compassion for everyone. He inspires me in so many ways and sometimes I see Lama Zopa Rinpoche in front of me everytime I see Geshe Zopa. Geshe la is a beacon of light for me because he continually benefits others day and night. He embodies guru devotion, compassion and wisdom and I aspire to one day be like him. Having a dharma teacher like Geshe Zopa is extremely important because we need guidance to help us in studying and practicing dharma. They can guide us in the correct direction and receive precious teachings. They can challenge our mind and thinking but most importantly allow us to use logic and reasoning to understand how our mind works and allow us to decide what to take on board and what to put aside. Like what His Holiness the Dalai Lama mentioned in past teachings, do not blindly follow but explore and investigate these teachings.

May our precious gurus continue to live long and achieve all the success in all their activities. May we continue to meet our precious gurus in all our lifetimes and never be separated from them.



**Left: Geshe Zopa and me in Chag Tong Chen Tong Buddhist Centre in Hobart, Tasmania during consecration of Padma Sambhava statue.**

**Right: Geshe Zopa in Buddha House, Adelaide during the second Guru Bhumtsok 2020.**



**Diana Zopa**

**The Valley That Called Me Home**  
**— A Journey Toward Inner Refuge, Guided by Geshe Tenzin Zopa**  
**By Erica Saccente**

**“You can build a temple at your heart.”**  
**– Geshe Tenzin Zopa**

The first time I saw Geshe Tenzin Zopa was through a small Zoom screen, his warm voice reaching out from thousands of miles away to offer 2020 New Year blessings to our cohort in the Contemplative Studies Program. None of us knew then what was about to unfold in the coming months. But looking back, I sense there was no coincidence in the timing of our meeting. Geshe-la entered my life precisely when I would need refuge most.

Although I had been studying the Dharma for many years by that point, I didn't yet have a heart connection with a qualified teacher in the Sangha. And this, I would come to learn, is essential for deepening one's practice.

Within a few short months, the COVID-19 pandemic overtook the world. I found myself, a psychiatric provider, unexpectedly redeployed to the frontline, caring for some of the first COVID patients in midtown Manhattan. It felt like I was being drafted into a war I didn't want to fight. And yet, I understood that this was an invitation to step up and honor my Bodhisattva aspirations. I accepted the task, put my pride and fear aside, and stepped into a humbling role. Each shift brought uncertainty, suffering, and death. But before I entered the hospital each day, I reminded myself of the teachings on emptiness—in part, the understanding that how we relate to experience shapes our reality. And it was there, amidst the chaos, that Geshe-la became a beacon of hope.

During a particularly challenging workday in April 2020, Geshe-la happened to offer prayers for our cohort—a gesture that landed right when it was needed most. On my break, standing outside the hospital with my headphones in, I listened to his steady voice chanting Medicine Buddha—or perhaps Green Tara; I can't recall exactly. But I remember how the essence of refuge entered my heart. I carried this energy back inside with me, anchoring myself in compassion as I moved through those long, uncertain hours. I began asking myself each day: “How can I bring the Bodhisattva aspiration into this moment, into this darkness?” Dharma became the Home that sustained me.

As months passed, my virtual encounters with Geshe-la deepened both my connection to the Dharma and to him as a spiritual guide. Yet he remained a figure of inspiration behind a digital screen. In January 2021, trusting the ripening of karma, I made the decision to leave behind everything I had known—a stable career, my apartment, familiar comforts—to pursue a lifelong dream: to travel the world and step into the unknown, in search of what true Home really meant.

This journey has unfolded into countless adventures, each rich with insight and change. Most importantly, it brought me into direct connection with Geshe-la. In October 2022, on pilgrimage to Nepal and India, I finally met him in person for the first time at Kopan Nunnery. I'll never forget the evening he arrived, along with the plaque our group would later dedicate at Rachen Nunnery. A few days later, after a breathtaking helicopter ride through the Himalayas, we landed in the Tsum Valley. As I stepped onto the sacred ground of Rachen, Geshe-la, having arrived earlier that day, walked toward me, smiling, his words gentle yet profound: “Welcome Home.”

Tears filled my eyes instantly. I had been traveling the world with nothing but two backpacks, living deliberately without a physical home, exploring the idea of refuge inwardly—and here I was, greeted with

the very words I had been seeking. In that moment, I understood what I had only begun to glimpse: Home is not a place, but a way of being. A sense of trust, inner stillness, and joy cultivated through connection to the Dharma and the heart of the Guru.

Since then, my connection to Geshe-la and Rachen Nunnery has blossomed into something alive and enduring. Together with Dharma friends, we raised funds for an apple orchard, water tanks, and accessible washrooms—simple offerings, yet full of meaning. Most recently, we have been supporting the construction of the Rachen Nunnery World Peace Stupa, envisioned as a luminous prayer for humanity, rising from the sanctuary of the Tsum Valley. What once felt like a remote monastery now feels like the heart-center of my own practice—a sacred mirror of Home.

It's not lost on me that the Tsum Valley is also Geshe-la's home—his literal place of birth. He was raised just a few villages from Rachen Nunnery. Twice now, I've had the rare and humbling privilege of visiting the very house where he was born. In 2022, he shared his origin story in the courtyard just outside the room where his life began. In the Spring of 2025, I had the rare opportunity to return to the valley with Geshe-la. As we walked together through the mountains, I asked him how it felt to return—to walk this same path he once took as a child, journeying to and from Kathmandu. He paused and reflected with equanimity: that he didn't feel particularly excited or unexcited—just calm. At peace. That he can be okay anywhere.

His words struck something deep. That is the fruit of the path, isn't it? To be at Home not only in sacred valleys or monasteries, but in every moment—wherever the wind carries you.

When I returned to Tsum in April 2025, walking alongside Geshe-la, the meaning of refuge deepened even further. At Geshe Lama Konchog's cave, where Geshe-la had spent much of his childhood sitting at the feet of his Guru, I remembered our first visit in 2022, when I read "Calling the Guru From Afar." This time, I realized how profound an opportunity that had been—and how much my mind has shifted since meeting Geshe-la. It is as if a veil has been lifted. My mind is steadier, my heart softer and more open. Bodhicitta no longer feels like a distant aspiration—it has begun to take root, nourished by devotion and trust in my teacher's unwavering presence.

I've also had the good fortune to travel on other pilgrimages with Geshe-la, visiting sacred sites in Indonesia, Japan, and Spain. Each journey deepened my commitment to Dharma and strengthened the invisible thread that connects my heart to his. Even in brief moments of egoic delusions—seeking approval or avoiding rejection—I've found clarity through Geshe-la's silent teachings. Beneath my human frailties exists a light that does not waver. That light is Dharma. That light is Home.

Looking back, I see how courage led me to the edge of the known—and how, like the Lam Rim itself, the path has unfolded gradually, each stage preparing me for the next. Over time, that courage softened into something more tender. My heart, once guarded, as if locked in a cage, has slowly opened. I've begun to loosen my grip on control—not just outwardly, but in the quiet ways I relate to discomfort, uncertainty, and self-worth. There's more space inside me now, less urgency to fix or manage, and more willingness to feel. Trust has begun to replace the old reflexes of doubt. Devotion, too, has changed—from something I aspired to, to something that arises naturally when I feel connected. These shifts didn't happen all at once, but they've reoriented me from the inside. I relate to the world differently now—with more patience, compassion, and a growing sense that refuge isn't outside me. It's becoming the way I move through life.

Geshe-la once told me, "Guru is whoever inspires your heart." Slowly, beautifully, he has become that for me. A guiding star in the dark. A joyful reminder of embodied compassion, generosity, and gratitude.

Through devotion, service, and the cultivation of inner refuge, the journey continues—not toward a destination, but inward. And perhaps that is Home: the steady unfolding of trust and refuge, in the Guru, in the Dharma, and in the heart itself.

**Author’s Note**

On the occasion of Geshe Tenzin Zopa’s birthday, this reflection is offered with deepest gratitude and devotion.

May it reflect even a small part of the immeasurable light you bring into the world.

May your blessings continue to guide countless hearts—through devotion, through Dharma, and toward the Home within.

May the light of refuge guide us all—through uncertainty, through devotion, and into the heart of what matters most.





## **In Love with the world**

Like a flower rising up towards the sun spreading joy around,  
Like a river making its way to the infinite ocean,  
Like the wind blowing away our dark days,

Being under your boundless wise care, Lama la, is like honey on a broken heart: piece by piece the missing pieces of a fallen apart puzzle got assembled together again.

Truly I thought I would never feel safe in this life, I was broken, and then you were there.  
You were the key both the threshold and the way.

Off course, Lama la, you already know all that but in case this clumsy birthday letter could help anybody in any way...well a few years back the ebook "the Guru" helped me a lot to understand what was going on in my mind after meeting you so who knows?

I used to have a "normal modern westerner life". I was as happy as one can be in samsara: I had an office "24/24-7/7" job. Yes, we had some good laughs with the colleagues, but what was the point of having that kind of life. It was just an accumulation of everything without any kind of form of fulfillment.

One day my body broke. My mind was holding so hard to that meaningless life, so my body broke. Health issues. Not walking. Experiencing the kind of physical pain that could break one's mind. Was not even able to walk. Needed even somebody to wash my body.

I fought so hard to recover and, on the way, I started to meditate. A friend had told me one day "you should start meditation". But, I mean, I was not able to walk slowly, always running running running, so sitting and doing nothing, come on!

I started a list. A list of all the things that put me in that situation, externally and internally. Slowly slowly I started to change everything. I even open a practice at some point as "a holistic therapist" and of course, I burn out.

This time the mind broke. I had not healed inside. So, I burnt. This time I lost the meaning of life. Always trying all kinds of techniques to try to help, but without proper understanding of how the mind work, of how things exist, always limited in the approach to try to heal inside, and still so dependent on external conditions to experience a bit of joy.

Then the dreams. 2 years of them. I eventually found out there were all about Buddhism, Nepal, Kopan and my Lamas.

When I arrived in Kopan, I finally met you again. And that was it. The real journey, the ultimate healing. Everything finally started to make sense. No more limitations. The potential to change everything inside and one day reach true happiness.

It is said in the teachings that no matter what, the teacher will always be at our side...until enlightenment. You're beyond that. No words could express the gratitude, the faith and the devotion to you Lama la.

I was so confused. So miserable. So much suffering. You really saved me.

This journey is a long run.

But now I can say I am doing better, even somehow, I can say I am happy, I mean...still as happy as one can be in samsara...but in a different way.

Your guidance, the vows, your limitless blessings are like the final scene of a book I used to quote to describe my aspiration to reach one day the purest form of unconditional love.

Your teachings, the Triple Gems, made me understand the preciousness, the joy, the peace (even as imperfect as it still is, still in training that comes from expanding that warm thing inside to all, to everything that exists. It is so much more than that book.

It is the "In love with the world". In love with life (still wanna the way out as soon as possible though...for the benefit of all.

I truly can feel now how fulfilling it is (even with the up and downs, jajaja) to live this life, this most precious human life under your perfected guidance. Am somehow actually happy to age living this life, somehow feeling that it will get better and better.

I am still in training, but you told us how by shaping our perceptions in a different way, by letting go step by step of any form of grasping, by being present in the moment, we could build some kind of inner peace, cause at the end, it must come from us, the healing. Even the most skillful teacher like you, Lama la, cannot heal us inside (everything is interdependent so if we do not do the job, even if you are giving us everything and more, Lama la, how could we heal one day).

You can show us the way, train us, make the blessings pour down on us like rain (an auspicious one), but it must come from us.

So here I am, doing my best to apply all that you've been sharing. And this time with a smile on the face. A genuine one.

So, happy happy birthday Lama la.

May we always have the merits for you to keep on teaching us endlessly, not only in this life but in all future lives.

May peace and goodness prevail.

For as long as space remains

For as long as sentient beings remain

Until then may you (Lama la) too remain

To dispel the miseries of the world

**Tenzin Kunzang**





## **“Tonight is the dark night.”**

We had barely arrived at the remote ashram atop the holy mountain of Lawu in central Java, and I already knew this trip was going to change my life.

It didn't take much convincing when my friend, Dr. Miles Neale, asked me if I'd like to come and film a special pilgrimage to Indonesia that would unite two masters from two different traditions in order to perform a ceremony atop the Borobudur monument—the largest stupa in the world. One was a local master in the tantric Shaiva Hindu tradition named Mangku Jitho. The other was a Tibetan Buddhist monk named Geshe Tenzin Zopa.

Being a filmmaker myself, I instantly recognized Geshe-la from the beautiful documentary film *Unmistaken Child*. I had been slowly orbiting Buddhism for many years, and even as I dabbled in different spiritual paths, it was the tradition that always seemed to call me home. But I never thought I'd so suddenly find myself amongst a group of seasoned practitioners receiving teachings from a Geshe. I felt like I wasn't deserving to be there. Who was I to be included in such an auspicious gathering? I felt like a nobody. Surely there must be more devoted and worthy students. But Geshe-la was so warm and welcoming and instantly, I felt like part of a family.

A lot happened on that trip through Indonesia which I won't recount here, but if anyone reading this is interested, you can watch the film I made about the experience called *The Missing Peace*:

<https://youtu.be/7z43khsWeYg>

What I want to share is the events that transpired on that dark night. It was a particularly powerful and astrologically significant new moon, and as per the customs of the ashram, we were to spend time alone in our little rooms, in the dark, contemplating the seeds we wished to sow in the coming days, months and years. While I was busy worrying about how I was going to film this ceremony atop the Borobudur stupa all by myself, Geshe-la, as we would later learn, was experiencing his own dark night. He had another stupa on his mind: the World Peace Stupa project, a wildly ambitious 70-foot stupa to be built at the Rachen Nunnery in Tsum Valley, Nepal. A project that was the final wish of Lama Zopa Rinpoche, given the very day before he passed. And on this dark night, Geshe-la had just received an email with an unexpectedly high budget estimate for the construction and it sent him into an uncharacteristic panic. What follows is a transcript of his exact words from the following morning when he recounted the experience on video.

***“Building in a place [Tsum Valley] where there is no road for transportation, even to collect the sand, you have to collect on people’s back, all the building material has to be transported by helicopter, through harsh weather. Even though it’s a beyul, a hidden valley of Guru Padmasambhava’s treasure, holy place of Milarepa and a great many yogis, but to build this 70-foot stupa, this responsibility is falling on this nobody, me here, this nobody. It’s almost like being given an impossible task. Who am I? I’m not a big lama, and I feel like all the doors are shut...If I had a home, any property, I would sell everything and use that money, but I look at myself and I’m also empty of that. So I even lost the courage to ask others if they might have the means to help me. Then I said, ok, you just need to call off this project, even though this project was blessed by an enlightened being [Lama Zopa Rinpoche] who envisioned it to be of benefit to limitless sentient beings and for 1000 years to remain there to protect the world, bless the world. And that’s where I break down. And I call off the project. And the room was dark, the lights were all off, but inside me it’s worse than that darkness.”***

Geshe-la would later tell us that in that moment, he believes he may have experienced a minor heart attack, his breathing became difficult and he fell to the ground with pain in his chest. But he was able to remain calm, and eventually the chest pain passed and he was able to come out of his room and share what had happened with the rest of us.

And there I saw the true power of the Sangha. I saw the others, like true bodhisattvas, spring into action with boundless compassion and support. I saw the division between teacher and student dissolve. I saw someone with the courage to be vulnerable and authentic and totally devoid of ego. I saw Geshe Tenzin Zopa at one of his lowest moments. And I learned all I needed to know about him in that moment. I saw a true teacher.

I learned that, for each and every one of us, from the great teachers to the complete nobodies, this remains true: the light we seek is only visible on the darkest nights.

Later, Geshe-la described how once the darkness had passed, his faith was renewed:

***“[It was like] someone remembered to turn on the light. And after that, all my ignorance was kind of like, fading away. Until I start to see, wow, the meaning of this project. So much inspiration, every single moment is like rejoicing!”***

I knew that from that moment onward, I would keep following Geshe-la toward that light.

With gratitude,  
**Matthew Freidell**



Geshe-la atop the World Peace Stupa, under construction, April 2025



Matthew and Geshe-la at World Peace Stupa groundbreaking, Rachen Nunnery, May 2024

## EVER GRATEFUL

Every time I think of Geshe Tenzin Zopa and the profound blessings he has bestowed upon my life since I met him, 2 years ago, I can't help but cry tears of deep gratitude. His prayers shift obstacles swiftly and his teaching, which is absolute medicine to my being, makes the walls around my soft vulnerable heart melt.

In Western spirituality there is so much ego boosting, so much more attachment, aversion and sensation grasping, it takes us further away from our innate nature. When I met Geshe Zopa during a time of crisis. I had been searching for a spiritual teacher for 12 years but hadn't found the right one until I saw Geshe Zopa walking with such grace, potency and humility towards our Gomba that I only discovered a few months before his visit.

As an alternative healing practitioner and being trained in Western spiritual practices, having a Guru was frowned upon. I had been taught that by having a Guru you were giving your power away. Everything you need comes from within, therefore there is no need for an external Guru. Since entrusting myself in Geshe~La's gentle, wise and skillful hands I recognise that until I achieve full Buddhahood my perception is clouded and very deluded. No one can see past their own faults that they hide behind. We all need a guide and I'm so grateful that I have found such a perfect and pure Teacher.

I realised after just one teaching with Geshe~La that he had the power to tame my mind when I couldn't. As a carer for my Father with Alzheimer's the first teachings I received from Geshe~La were cut short but I remember walking to my car and driving back to my caring responsibilities with a big smile on my face feeling absolutely cleansed and renewed on every level. In late October or early November of the same year I was blessed to go on Pilgrimage with FPMT Australia and Geshe~La to Kathmandu.

It was an experience like no other. I never believed in enlightened masters until I met Geshe Zopa. I was entrenched in Western spirituality believing the highest state anyone could achieve was godhood. To manifest your own dreams and reality, what more could you want than that. Geshe~La, on that pilgrimage opened my eyes to my self centered, big ego nature that I hadn't seen before.

My heart opened in ways I never knew possible. Geshe~La gave us the best advice when answering my question on how we should integrate our experience, basically he said give it all away, don't try to hold on to the experience as if it is pearls or precious, give all the good that you received from this pilgrimage to others. For a period of 8 months or so I gave every feeling of beauty, joy and love that filled my heart during the pilgrimage to others. I thought to myself the more I am giving away the more I am receiving. It was like I couldn't give it away actually, even though I tried so hard. I could see the effect that this way of being had on others, it brought people I didn't even know real joy and a feeling of connection. Complete strangers would stop and talk to me. It was the most amazing time and it all stemmed from the blessing of the Guru on my heart since that 2 week period on pilgrimage.

Geshe~La helped me ride the storm of losing my Father. His support through prayers and dedications were palpable. I have truly never met a being more kind and compassionate, selfless and masterful. It's such an incredible honour to have met such a Great Master in this life. I pray that I will be fortunate enough to meet him in every life, again and again and again. And one day I pray I will be able to repay his kindness.

Ever Grateful,

**Dorianne Daniels (Tenzin Khachoe)**

Tasmania, Australia

## Going Home ....

Coming out of a difficult relationship was not easy, i was looking for a peaceful place just to sit in silence and be alone. That was all I was searching for at that time as I have been somewhat a 'prisoner' of my own mind for far too long, swirling in my own pool of ruminations. Geshela came in to Losang Drapa Center, Malaysia as the resident Teacher just at the right time. My understanding of Buddhism then was limited to praying and putting three joss sticks in front of Buddha only .

Geshela's teachings was relatively easy to understand especially on karma and Lam Rim and over time my interest in Buddhism grew. Topics on the existence of previous lives and reincarnation intrigues me. Teachings on karma fascinates me especially on karmic debts, harm givers – those that have caused you pain in this life perhaps were caused by you in the first place in previous lives. That didn't go down well with me of course initially. Questions on 'Why me?', 'Is this my karma to always be in this situation?' started snow balling so I begin to research on these topics to understand further. I needed to step back to look deeper into my life from a bird's eye view so to speak.

There are a few teachings I hold dearly and cherished in my heart every day. Your stories about your relationship with your Guru, Geshe Lama Konchong, your devotion to him, caring for him when he was sick, receiving no praises from him at times, inspired me and gave me strength to care for my late mother when she went through Parkinson's disease and dementia. I would tell her what you taught in class and teach her a few mantras which she found so soothing and calming.

Your teachings on Impermanence resonates in my daily meditation. Life is so fragile and all this will be gone like a snap of the fingers. 'Do not miss any opportunities if and when Lama Zopa Rinpoche comes , if you have a chance to see Him, just go, as this golden opportunity do not come often. Take refuge or the initiations – don't think about the number of commitments /mantras you have to do' you said. I am glad that I heeded your advice and each time Rinpoche comes, I will get so excited, the last being in Singapore 2022 where he confer the Five Deity Cakrasamvara initiation. Unknowingly then, that would be the last time I would see Rinpoche again. I witnessed his 'final' teaching in Kopan on the winterish month of April 2023, that was indeed a sombre day for me, a day of reflections and soul searching.

I also look forward to the late Khensur Rinpoche Lama Lhundrup yearly visits to Malaysia for the light offering events. My mother and I took refuge from Him in 2008 and that was indeed a precious divine moment for both of us, felt like we have been 'reborn' again when we each received our refuge booklet.

When I went on my first pilgrimage to Boudha stupa, Nepal in 2009, you said the minute you see Buddha's eyes, say your prayers and repeat the same on all 4 sides. I have never forgotten that moment ,tears just flowed easily like a sense of relieve of sort, a feeling of assurance that everything is going to be okay. The divine energy of this place is simply amazing, indescribable when one is in it's mandala. I felt at peace even though there were throngs of people around me. Everything seems to fall into place whenever I think about my Gurus like the last piece in a big jigsaw puzzle.

Dharma is an experience and after more than 20 years if I have not met Dharma, i will still be wandering aimlessly in my life. I am indebted to my Gurus for the efflorescence of my knowledge in Buddhism. Thank you Geshela for planting that dharma seed and for all your prayer support for me and my family over the years. May you and your family be showered with abundance, good health, long life to turn the wheel of dharma for eons to come and remain till samsara ends.

**Angeline Lim**

P/s -Happy Birthday Geshela! Hope to see you again soon one day. Richard Stankey.