

Loving Kindness Peaceful Youth: The Beginning

“All human beings carry the potential for peace within them, but we have to work to develop it.”

— HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA

By Shyla Bauer

Have you ever received advice from your guru, and then later questioned yourself as to whether you could really fulfill their advice? In 2004 that happened to me.

I was volunteering in the FPMT Mongolia center at the time. I had been there for almost eighteen months, after offering my services to Lama Zopa Rinpoche in 2002. Before that I had been volunteering and traveling in India and Nepal for a few years. Mongolia was an amazing center to be involved in, but I was now twenty-five-years-old and wanted to return home to Australia, to my family and friends, the sunshine and beach.

I was fortunate enough to have a meeting with Lama Zopa Rinpoche and I mentioned my plans to return home, saying that I would always be happy to continue helping while I was home. I envisaged helping out at Buddha House and De Tong Ling (my FPMT centers in South Australia), secretly thinking that having offered service in Ulaan Baatar, (the coldest capital city in the world), nothing could be harder than that.

Well, I certainly was wrong!

Rinpoche was in Mongolia teaching at EEC4 [Enlightenment Experience Celebration 4], which I was coordinating. During his teachings Rinpoche mentioned a new organization that he wanted to start for young people, called Loving Kindness Peaceful Youth (LKPY), which would use the tools of Essential Education to teach young people of all religions and countries the principles of the ‘good heart.’

“You teach young people loving kindness, the result is peaceful youth, and as youth are the next generation, the result is a peaceful world,” Rinpoche explained. I heard it briefly while rushing around organizing things and I

remember thinking, “Wow, that sounds pretty interesting; it will be amazing when that happens,” but I didn’t give it much more thought, as EEC4 was keeping me very busy.

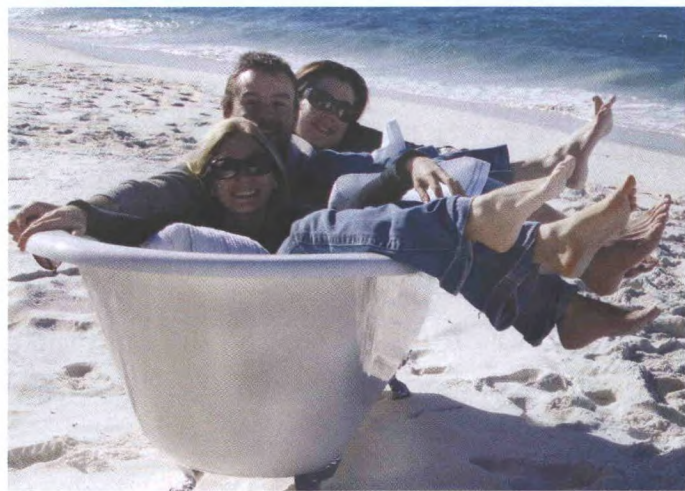
However, during my meeting, Rinpoche mentioned the youth organization again, and asked if I would be interested in setting it up. Instantly my dream of relaxing on sunny beaches in Australia and occasionally volunteering at the local Dharma centers disappeared, and when I said yes, I would try, the very next thought that came to my mind was – how?

How was I going to set up a new international organization that was not Buddhist, but is based on the Buddhist principle of loving kindness, and also make it attractive to young people of all countries and all beliefs?

For the next two years this question lingered in my mind while I went about my daily life back in Australia, working as a registered nurse, studying for my master’s degree, and occasionally volunteering at my local Dharma centers. I was living my dream, but not fulfilling my guru’s advice.

I knew I had to follow Rinpoche’s advice but I just couldn’t work out how. My friends, family, other Dharma students and work colleagues helped me with ideas and plans. I bombarded practically everyone I met with questions over that time. I even went into a few small retreats with all of Rinpoche’s advice about Loving Kindness Peaceful Youth and Essential Education to try to work out how to set up the organization.

Finally in 2006, two years after I received advice from Rinpoche, things started falling into place. I met some wonderful people who were Rinpoche’s students and were



Some of the young people involved with LKPY: with Lama Zopa in Mongolia, and at the beach in South Australia. Below: Shyla Bauer.

keen to create a Board; Alison Murdoch held an Essential Education launch in Australia; it was announced that His Holiness the Dalai Lama was touring Australia the following year and they wanted to hold a youth event; Ven. Roger put me in touch with some fantastic people who had the skills and background in setting up organizations – and then Rinpoche came to Australia.

One minute it seemed like an idea, the next moment it was all happening.

But how were we going to get the message out there? Rinpoche advised to start with people we already knew and who were interested in the topic, then they would tell friends and family and it would grow from there. Our small board of four people from all parts of Australia (Perth, Adelaide, and Melbourne) spoke at our Dharma centers, told all our friends and families, and slowly the networking began. Later that year I attended the Kopan November Course, and it was there that LKPY really evolved. Speaking to hundreds of inspired people from all over the planet who want to make a difference to the world, it seemed like the perfect place to introduce an international peace organization for young people, founded by Lama Zopa Rinpoche. They soaked up the concept like a sponge, came up with fantastic ideas, wanted to be involved, and also had amazing skills to offer. These seemed to be just the people that Rinpoche had advised us to talk to and, of course, he was so right!

So now we have volunteers all over the world, and a concept that is attractive to young people, while continuing to keep the principles of Essential Education and projects that will bring it all to life. In June 2007 LKPY is set to be



launched in five countries, with events involving His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Lama Zopa Rinpoche.

It's been three years since I met with Rinpoche in Mongolia and received my advice to set up LKPY. Since that time I have learned a lot, grown a lot, and met a lot of fantastic and supportive people. But what I am looking forward to the most, in June of this year, when I have set up the organization, is to finally be able to say, "I've fulfilled the advice of my guru." ☸

On Friday, June 8 there will be a "Dialogue with the Dalai Lama": a multi-faith Youth Forum for secondary schools in Melbourne, in association with the Dalai Lama in Australia organization. This will be just the first of a series of LKPY events which will continue through to the end of the year. To find out more about Loving Kindness Peaceful Youth and its launch go to www.lkpy.org Email: shyla@lkpy.org