

Osel Hita Joins FPMT Board Meeting, Portland, Oregon

From May 14 to May 16, the FPMT Board of Directors held its biannual meeting at International Office in Portland, Oregon. Like the organization itself, the board is a diverse and international group of people offering varied service within the organization, lending distinct skills, experience and expertise to the combined effort of carrying forth the FPMT mission.

The three-day meeting was packed with conversation and debate, inspiration and energy.

The weekend meeting also marked a special “first” for FPMT. Not only did Lama Zopa Rinpoche attend the closing session of each day’s meeting, but for the first time ever, Osel Hita, the 25-year-old Spanish man recognized as the reincarnation of FPMT’s founder, Lama Yeshe, in 1985, joined the board as a guest participant.

Over the last several years, since leaving Sera Je Monastery and pursuing a Western education and many creative interests in Canada and Spain, Osel has preferred to keep some distance from FPMT as he finds his own way. As he wrote in an open letter in 2009, “Personally, my job is to find new ways in which to discover the true nature of our being. There is no separation between myself and FPMT – we are all working together in so many aspects and terrains. Humanity is our office.”

The weekend before the board meeting, Osel also attended the Big Love Day event held at Vajrapani Institute in California. The event was organized as an all-day celebration of Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche’s selfless service to others, and to consecrate Lama Yeshe’s cremation stupa, built on the site where Lama Yeshe’s body was cremated in 1984 (You may read an extensive article about the event at www.mandalamagazine.org).

Osel’s attendance at Big Love Day marked his first public engagement with FPMT in over five years. From California, he traveled to Portland for the board meeting.

Following the three-day board meeting, *Mandala* sat down with Osel to ask some questions about his first experience dealing with the organization in this way.

Mandala: What did you think of your first board meeting?

Osel: I found the whole meeting very educational. It gave me huge insight into understanding how things are

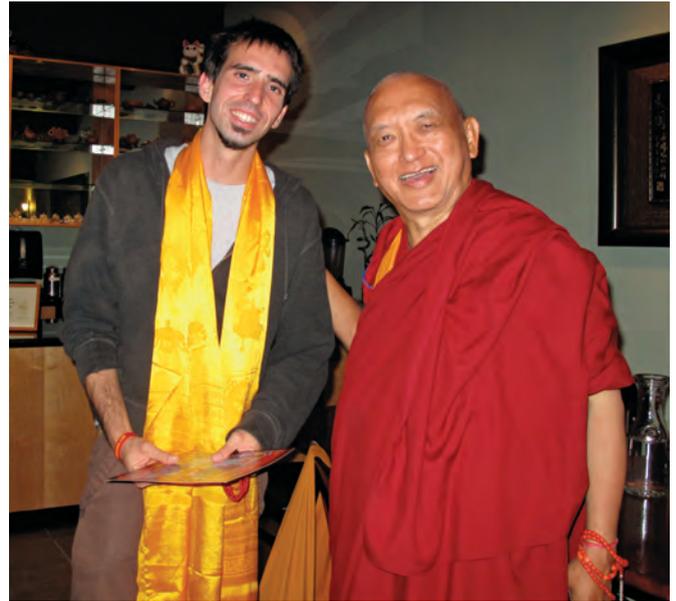


Photo courtesy of Tara Mehwani.

Osel with Lama Zopa Rinpoche in Portland, Oregon

managed. It was a great help to see that it is very hard to make decisions. It’s a good job that they’re doing. I was really happy to be there and see how things are run and get to know how things work.

Mandala: Did anything surprise you about the organization? Any projects or activity you weren’t aware of?

Osel: Many amazing projects that will be so helpful to many people. It was surprising to see how difficult it is to manage everything! The board has such great compassion at the moment of making decisions. I didn’t even know a quarter of what was going on, so it was very eye-opening.

Mandala: What was your general impression of how the meeting was run?

Osel: Everyone is really good hearted and does so much work out of their good heart and kind heart. I was so happy to see that.

Mandala: What were your impressions of International Office?

Osel: I was very surprised how advanced it has become! Remember the old days when it wasn’t so advanced? And now everyone has a computer. The office has turned very professional and modern. An amazing discovery to see what



FPMT Board of Directors with Osel. Back row: Karuna Cayton, Ven. Roger Kunsang, Peter Kedge, Tara Melwani, Lama Zopa Rinpoche, Andrew Haynes, Paula de Wijs-Koolkin, Tim McNeill. From row: Ven. Pemba Sherpa, Osel Hita, Alison Murdoch. Photo courtesy of Tara Melwani.

is happening now. It was also really nice meeting people I hadn't seen for a long time and getting to know some new people too!

Mandala: Why did you decide to reconnect with the organization in this way?

Osel: I turned 25 not so long ago, so it is time to return the help that was given me. It is time I returned the kindness. I feel it is time to get involved in the organization more. I want to learn more about everything because I haven't been keeping up over the last few years. That could take some time. I want to do Dharma studies too, study some more Buddhist philosophy.

Mandala: Why now? Did this decision come after your visit here?

Osel: Well, I didn't finish the studies in the monastery, because I left halfway through, so meanwhile, I've been working on different projects, keeping really busy with my own things, even though over the years I've stayed in touch. This is the first time to come out publicly with the organization.

Mandala: So why now? Why come out publicly?

Osel: It was just about time. It happened like that.

People are starting to accept me for who I am, so it made it easier.

Mandala: You feel people are accepting you?

Osel: Well, half the people are accepting, half the people are maybe still putting projections onto me.

Mandala: You've been very clear that you'd prefer not to be called "Lama." Anything you'd like to say about that?

Osel: I don't agree with people calling me "Lama." For me, it's a label, and I find it hard to identify myself with that label at all. "Lama" is for someone who really deserves that name. Someone who has helped lots of people, who teaches, works hard for sentient beings, and has the merit to become a lama for the people. For me personally, it works so much better keeping it simple. It can be so much simpler to see me as a normal person. If people see me as a lama, rather than someone simple, I'm more limited in my ability to communicate. It is more important for me to be with the people rather than hovering above them. Or being venerated.

Mandala: Anything else you'd like to add?

Osel: No, thanks. It's been really nice. Thank you everyone for everything. Peace of mind. ☸