

LAWUDO TREK ITINERARY

UPDATE

5 – 19 April 2017

Welcome to our Himalayan adventure!

We're so pleased to be able to offer this opportunity to retreat at the holy cave of Lama Zopa Rinpoche at Lawudo, in Solo Khumbu, Nepal, where Rinpoche's previous reincarnation, Kunsang Yeshe, meditated for more than twenty years.

For each person who joins us on the trek, USD\$500 will be donated to Rinpoche's Lawudo Gompa (lawudo.com).



Kristina Mah

Lawudo Trek Organiser

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LAWUDO



Solo Khumbu

Lawudo is a hermitage nestled in a picturesque and secluded corner of the Himalayan mountains in the Solo Khumbu, the Everest region of Nepal.

For students of Lama Zopa Rinpoche there are few places on earth that hold as much significance and meaning as Lawudo.

According to Ven Jamyang Wangmo, the author of *The Lawudo Lama* (Wisdom Publications), the place is 'a beacon for all who seek an authentic, blessed and naturally mystical place'.

The meditation cave was discovered by the previous **Lawudo Lama Kunsang Yeshe** and empowered by the blessings of a lifetime of pure Dharma practice. It's known as the Cave of Blissful Attainments.

LAMA THUBTEN ZOPA RINPOCHE



Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche was born in Thami, near the Everest Region of Nepal, in 1945. At the age of three he was recognised as the reincarnation of the Lawudo Lama. From 1956 to 1959 he studied at Domo Monastery in Tibet. He then fled Chinese oppression and continued his study and practice in Tibetan refugee camps in India. There Rinpoche met **Lama Thubten Yeshe (1935–1984)**.

They met their first Western students in the late 1960s and Lama eventually established what is now Kopan Monastery in the Kathmandu valley. The annual November Lam Rim courses attracted students from all the over the world.

In 1974 the lamas accepted the invitation of their students to teach in Australia, the USA, and Europe, and a year later Lama Yeshe named his burgeoning network of centres the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition.

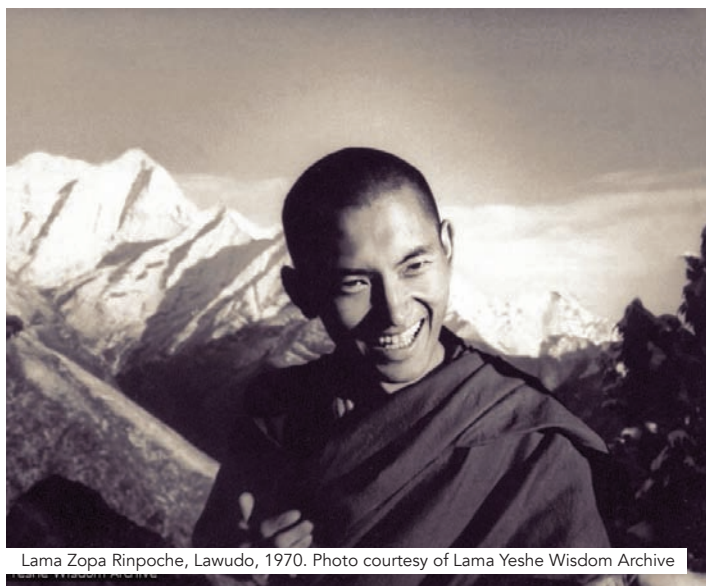
Rinpoche is now the Spiritual Director of the FPMT, overseeing more than 160 centres and related activities in 30 countries.

Ven Jamyang Wangmo: 'Just seeing the place blesses and transforms the most hardened of hearts and minds to think only of Dharma in one's life.'

'Lawudo offers anyone who sincerely wants to nourish and develop their mind in Dharma and meditation one of the most conducive and inspiring opportunities imaginable.'

From 1970 Lawudo was cared for by **Lama Zopa Rinpoche's mother** and sister, **Anila Ngawang Samten**.

Since 1991, when Rinpoche's mother passed away, **Anila** and the monk **Ven Tsultrim Norbu**, have looked after Lawudo and the retreaters who spend time there. Rinpoche's brother **Sangye Chhotar Sherpa** is the director.



Lama Zopa Rinpoche, Lawudo, 1970. Photo courtesy of Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive

Lawudo Gumpa & Retreat Center
Sangay Chhotar Sherpa

Director

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VEN ROBINA COURTIN



Ordained since the late 1970s, **Ven Robina Courtin** has worked full time since then for her gurus Lama Thubten Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche. Over the years she has served within the FPMT as editorial director of Wisdom Publications, editor of Mandala Magazine, executive director of Liberation Prison Project, and as a touring teacher of Buddhism.

An award-winning film by her nephew Amiel Courtin-Wilson, *Chasing Buddha* documents her life as well as her work with prisoners. She is one of the subjects of Vicki Mackenzie's book *Why Buddhism?* and a film by Christine Lundberg, *On the Road Home*.

'I've wanted to go to Lawudo for years and finally I have the opportunity. I'm so delighted to lead this trek and to raise money for Rinpoche's holy cave.'
~ Ven. Robina Courtin

KOPAN MONASTERY



Monks performing rituals at Kopan Monastery

First we will spend two days at **Kopan Monastery**.

Just north of the ancient Buddhist town of Boudhanath is the Kopan hill, which rises up out of the terraced fields of the Kathmandu valley and is visible for miles. Dominated by a magnificent bodhi tree, it was once the home of the astrologer to the king of Nepal. The view across the valley is magical.

It is now the home of 400 monks, lamas, teachers and workers. The monks come from all areas of Nepal and Tibet with ages ranging from seven to sixty years old.

Since the 1970s, Kopan has also been offering year-round courses and retreats for visitors from all over the world. Its sister monastery, **Kachoe Ghakyil**, just down the hill, is home for of 400 nuns.

Read more about Kopan at kopanmonastery.org

ARRIVAL IN KATHMANDU

Our meeting point for the trek is **Kathmandu**.

We recommend that you arrive one or two days earlier to settle in at Kopan, recover from jet lag, do some sightseeing in Kathmandu, and prepare for the trek.

We can organise your earlier arrival at Kopan, so let us know. If you are arriving by plane, our local staff will pick you up at the airport and transfer you to Kopan.

AT THE AIRPORT

Visa: First you will go through immigration to obtain your visa. A one-month single entry visa will cost you USD50. You can apply for this online or upon arrival.

Read more about Nepal visas here:

lawudo-trek.org/index.php/2016/07/17/more-info/#visa

Baggage: Then you will go upstairs to claim your baggage.

Read more about what to pack here:

lawudo-trek.org/index.php/2016/08/30/what-to-pack/

Meet our representative: Proceed through customs and exit into the public area of the airport.

When you're outside, look for a sign with your name on it. If you do not see anyone at the airport, or if there has been a last-minute change in your flight details, contact **Amber Tamang**, our local guide, or **Kristina Mah**, trek organiser. There is a free phone in the arrivals area of the airport.

Amber's phone: +977 98510-84961

Kristina's phone or FaceTime: +61 455 951 274

A TIP FROM AMBER, OUR LOCAL GUIDE



Be aware that there will be people at the airport who will ask for money to help you with your bags.

You can use a free luggage cart if you wish. If you prefer to use somebody, have a small bill (US or AU \$1 or 100 rupees per bag) handy in your pocket to give to them. Keep your wallet well-hidden as you exit the airport.

Our staff will find you and we will make sure you and your baggage are safely transported to Kopan Monastery.



Amber Tamang is from a small village in the Solo Khumbu region of Nepal. He became a porter in 1992, to put himself through high school and college; he graduated as a lawyer. He is an advocate of better working conditions for trekking staff.

Amber has worked as the local guide for Dharma Journeys pilgrimages with Ven. Robina since 2001. Those who've traveled with him praise his patience and kindness. He is very knowledgeable about local customs of the Himalaya and its people. Amber and his family live in Kathmandu.

Amber Tamang

Three Jewels Adventures

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DAY 1, WEDNESDAY APRIL 5

- **Meet in Kathmandu**
- **Kopan Monastery**



Stupa Garden, Kopan

If you haven't already arrived, we will pick you up at the airport and transfer you to Kopan.

12 noon: Lunch

6:00pm: We will all meet for dinner and be briefed about what to expect for the coming days.

7:30pm: Teachings with Ven Robina

DAY 2, THURSDAY APRIL 6

- **Kopan Monastery**

6:30am: Meditation with Ven Robina

12 noon: Lunch

After lunch, you are free to relax in the afternoon.



Boudha Stupa, Boudhanath

You may like to visit **Rinpoche's Animal Liberation Sanctuary**, a short walk away from Kopan (1 hr return). The sanctuary gives a home to animals that otherwise would be killed so that they may live out the natural course of their lives in peace.

6:30pm: Dinner

7:30pm: Teachings with Ven Robina

DAY 3, FRIDAY APRIL 7

- **Kathmandu to Lukla flight**
- **Trek Lukla (2800m) to Phakding (2650m)**
- **Day's walking: about 3.5 hours**

5:30am: Depart Kopan for flight to Lukla.

7:00am: The flight time is 40 minutes. If the flight is on time, we will have breakfast at Lukla. If there's a delay (because of weather, for example), we will have a light breakfast at the airport as we wait for the flight.

7:40am: At Lukla, we will meet our porter staff and start walking.

Our first day's trekking is mostly downhill and flat, with just a little being uphill. A few short up hills will be involved over the course of the day.

Our journey will start on a popular route. Highlights of the day's walk are two suspension bridge crossings.

We will pass the Sherpa villages of **Choplung** and **Ghat**.

At around noon, we can expect to arrive at **Phakding** for lunch.

12 noon: Lunch

After lunch, we could visit **Thulo Gumela village monastery**, a short walk away. (1.5 hours return.)

6:00pm: Dinner

7:30pm: Teachings with Ven Robina

We will stay here for the night in a family-run lodge.

DAY 4, SATURDAY APRIL 8

- **Phakding to Monjo (2835m)**
- **Monjo to Namche Bazaar (3440m)**
- **Day's walking: 7 hours**



6:00am: Wake up, tea or coffee

6:30am: Meditation with Ven Robina

7:00am: Breakfast

7:30am: Ready to hit the road

The first part of our walk involves crossing over **Dudhkoshi River** and following the river canyon, passing many small tea houses and shops. This section of the trek is on the Everest Base Camp trail and is walked by many every day. **Some short up and downhills involved.**

We cross a bridge over the river to reach the village of **Monjo**.

11:30am: Lunch

After lunch we will enter the Everest National Park.

From Monjo to the base of Namche Hill, where we cross the river once again, is mostly flat.

From the river it is a steep uphill walk all the way to Namche Bazaar. We will be walking for about 3 hours.

6:00pm: Dinner

7:30pm: Teachings with Ven Robina

DAY 5, SUNDAY APRIL 9

- **Namche Bazaar**
- **Rest Day**



It's highly recommended to have a rest day while trekking in this altitude.

We can sleep in this morning.

Have breakfast at your leisure.

You can use the rest day to visit one of the local monasteries, explore the market, coffee shops
Lawudo-Trek.org

and local lookouts.

Namche Bazaar is the main trading centre for the Sherpa people and hub for the Khumbu region. It is a bustling village, popular with Tibetan Buddhist practitioners and tourists.

6:30pm: Dinner

7:30pm: Teachings with Ven Robina

DAY 6, MONDAY APRIL 10

- **Namche Bazaar to Theso**
- **Theso to Lawudo (4270m)**
- **Day's walking: about 3.5 - 5 hours**

6:00am: Wake up, tea or coffee

6:30am: Meditation with Ven Robina

7:00am: Breakfast

7:30am: Ready to hit the road

After a nourishing rest day at Namche Bazaar, we will trek mostly flat or downhill to Thamo towards the Tibetan border. This section will be full of spectacular views of the mountains and valleys.

12 noon: Lunch along the way

This last section from Theso to Lawudo is more physically challenging. You can expect a straight and hard uphill along a tree-lined and rocky trail.

We will make our way along it slowly. Although it will be more steep, it is not long and should take us about 3 hours.

We will be greeted by Rinpoche's sister, Ani Samten.

6:30pm: Dinner

7:30pm: Teachings with Ven Robina



DAYS 7-11, TUES APRIL 11-SAT APRIL 15

- **Lawudo Retreat with Ven Robina**



View from Lawudo

DAY 12, SUNDAY APRIL 16

- **Lawudo to Namche Bazaar**
- **Namche Bazaar to Monjo (2835m)**
- **Day's walking: about 6 hours**

6:00am: Wake up, tea or coffee

6:30am: Meditation with Ven Robina

7:00am: Breakfast

7:30am: Ready to hit the road

On our return from Lawudo, we will trek back to Namche Bazaar on the same route, via **Mende (3840m)**.

12 noon: Lunch at Namche Bazaar

After lunch, we will continue to Monjo.

6:30pm: Dinner

7:30pm: Teachings with Ven Robina



Lawudo Gompa, image courtesy of Alison Murdoch

DAY 13, MONDAY APRIL 17

- Monjo to Lukla
- Day's walking: about 5 hours

6:00am: Wake up, tea or coffee

6:30am: Meditation with Ven Robina

7:00am: Breakfast

7:30am: Ready to hit the road

Day 13 is the last walking day of our journey.

We will stop for lunch on the way and stay the night at Lukla.

6:30pm: Dinner

7:30pm: Teachings with Ven Robina

DAY 14, TUESDAY APRIL 18

- Fly Lukla to Kathmandu
- Hyatt Regency, Boudhanath

6:00am: Wake up, tea or coffee

6:30am: Meditation with Ven Robina

7:00am: Breakfast

8:00am: Ready to hit the road

Our flight will be **before 9:00am** unless there is a delay due to weather.

At Kathmandu, we will be picked up and transferred to the Hyatt Regency overlooking the Boudha stupa.

You can buy your own lunch and dinner today.

We can relax in the afternoon and evening.



Hyatt Regency, Boudhanath

DAY 15, WEDNESDAY APRIL 19

- Kathmandu
- Hyatt Regency, Boudhanath



Boudha Stupa

Breakfast at the Hyatt Regency at your leisure.

Relax today and explore Kathmandu, Boudha or surrounding districts.

You can buy your own lunch again today.

4:00pm: Meet at the hotel lobby for our last teaching and prayers together, at the blessed Boudha stupa.

6:30pm: Farewell dinner in the Hyatt Regency dining room.

END OF LAWUDO TREK

THURSDAY APRIL 20

- Depart

Breakfast at your leisure in the Hyatt Regency dining room.

After breakfast, we will organise your transfers to the airport, or you may choose to continue exploring the region.



ABOUT THE ORGANISER



Kristina Mah

Trek organiser

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Based in Sydney, Australia, I have been a student of Lama Zopa Rinpoche since 2014 when I attended the Lam Rim November course at Kopan. It was during this course that I first heard about Lawudo from my tutor Ven Thubten Gyatso.

The Kopan November Course was my formal introduction to the Dharma which has since become my compass in life. I have tried to maintain a strong connection with the FPMT and my teachers as a student and volunteer at Vajrayana Institute, in Sydney. It was during a weekend workshop earlier in 2016 at the centre that I met Ven Robina Courtin, after which planning and organisation for Lawudo Trek really took flight.

The idea of this trek was quite simply to travel with a group of open-minded and inspired people to Rinpoche's cave and raise money for Lawudo gompa, its carers and community. This trek is not run through a company; it is the result of the hard work of a few people who have generously offered their time and services to make it happen.

Thank you Ven Robina Courtin, Amber Tamang, Reyne House, Effie Fletcher, Fran Reid, Ian Basckin, Chris Moses and all the FPMT centres and groups who shared our information with their communities.

I am so grateful for the opportunity that has manifested to organise this trek. I believe that this trip will be unique and fulfilling for all.

Look forward to meeting you,

Kristina x

