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July 21, 2023

To whom it may concern,

I was recently delighted to hear from my old friend, Yvan Larrivee, that he was applying to do his second three year retreat at Sopa Choling.

I've known Yvan since the late 1980's when he became a regular meditator at the Montreal Dharmadhatu (later the Montreal Shambhala Centre). He quickly became a reliable weekend staff member, then a coordinator for Shambhala Training programs, and we served together on the first Shambhala Training executive committee set up by Jacques Kasma, the Shambhala Training Resident Director at the time.

Yvan and I both attended the 1992 Vajradhatu Seminary and encouraged each other through the Kagyu ngondro over the next couple of years before receiving the Vajrayogini abhisheka.

In 1995, I became the Resident Director of Shambhala Training in Montreal, and was very grateful to Yvan for his dedication to practice and his regular help in coordinating and staffing weekend programs. When I resigned from the position, he was the obvious choice to replace me, and he did an exemplary job. Later, when he became a Shambhala Training Director, I was always impressed by how his clarity, sensitivity, and dry sense of humour created a warm and dignified environment – precision with a light touch. He was particularly interested in 'decorum', and did his best to emulate and incorporate it in the community.

As a friend and vajra brother, Yvan has always been an inspiration. His understated yet sharp intellect seems always to be accompanied by a subtle twinkle in the eye – his dry humour never completely concealed. For as long as I've known him, he's always held practice and the pursuit of dharma as his utmost priority. I'm sure he could have flourished in a variety of challenging professions, but he's deliberately chosen to maintain a very humble livelihood, preferring to support a 'no-frills' lifestyle through low-stress jobs (office clerk, book store assistant, etc.) that would allow him more time to pursue his dharmic endeavours of practice and study.

During my time as co-director of the Montreal Centre in the early 2000's, Yvan continued to be a valuable and dedicated teacher, and it was no surprise when he decided to do the three year retreat. After completing it, he rekindled his involvement at the Montreal Shambhala Centre as Director of Practice and Education for a time, while continuing to teach Shambhala Training and Buddhist classes.

Now, in 2023, it's once again no surprise that Yvan is hoping to complete a second three year retreat, and I truly hope that you will be able to assist him in attaining this aspiration.

Sincerely and with warm regards,

Christine Guest