

Does this mean that when others are doing something wrong and taking advantage of us we should remain quiet and do nothing to correct their behaviour?

Of course not.

We need to stand up for our rights when others are doing the wrong thing. If somebody is taking advantage of us or abusing us, we need to stop that from happening.

However, when we confront that person, we need to do so with respect, and without losing our sense of love and concern for them.

With that attitude, we will not take advantage of the other person. Instead, we will be honest and careful by making sure that, while we are working towards protecting our own rights, our adversary will not be deprived of theirs. Both parties are equal and rightfully entitled to have their needs met.

If this confrontation is done with respect in our heart and without a loss of love and compassion, the results will be much more fruitful than if we fight with the intention of getting back at the person or wanting them to lose.

***Venerable Geshe Doga***

## The Updating of TCWC Rules 2018-2020

On the 14<sup>th</sup> December 2019, there was a vote to alter the TCWC Rules. It fell short of the required majority. Its drawing-up process had been conducted in private and supposedly driven by instructions from FPMT. However, last minute access to FPMT policy revealed mysterious contradictions.

Very late in the lead-up to the vote, it was revealed that there were two documents underpinning the required changes. Those two 2-years-old documents, although not secret, had not been seen before by voters and therefore voters had not been given the opportunity to check whether or not the proposed Rule changes were consistent with what was being asked by FPMT. These are the documents:

- *Constitution Guidelines for FPMT Centres, Projects and Services in Australia, 2018* — quoted below as [Const]
- *FPMTA Good Governance Guidelines* — quoted below as [Gov]

### Dear Tara Institute Member,

At our 14<sup>th</sup> December meeting, the proposed new Rules were almost passed as recommended by FPMT. Had they passed, serious consequences would have then followed. Closer examination of the proposed new Rules shows that none of the claimed FPMT outcomes would have been correctly implemented. However, other unstated changes would have been passed — without our knowledge and without any scrutiny. We do not know why.

Please help avoid a repeat of these surprises. I am asking you to encourage TI's Executive Committee to kickstart an informal and inclusive process that is open to all Members who would like to contribute to bringing about the Rule changes requested by the FPMT Inc Board in 2018. Phone, write or talk to ask for openness.

This is a great opportunity to take Lama Yeshe's advice that he gave us in person in Melbourne 1981:

**Listen to everyone's problems, with love**

Governance typically involves well-intentioned people bringing their ideas, experiences, preferences and other human strengths and shortcomings to the table. Good governance is achieved through an on-going discourse that attempts to capture all of the considerations involved in assuring that stakeholder interests are addressed and reflected in centre, project or service functioning and initiatives. [Gov]

*In general, countries are mostly run by one person with a self-cherishing mind, ignorance, so then that person makes mistakes or does it only to gain power for himself rather than to gain [happiness] for others. Probably people don't get happiness and even if they don't fight or complain, they are not very happy. Many countries are like this.*

*That's why democracy is better, because even though not everybody has omniscient mind, they are not bodhisattvas, people can say things when they want to say them. So it can get better all the time, though it doesn't necessarily mean the decisions are always correct and they don't create problems. Democracy is being able to have different views and what the majority like is considered, so I guess it's more or less done that way, but not necessarily always without mistakes and people not having problems. If the public develop their wisdom and compassion more, that can help the country to run better, with more happiness for the people, by developing more compassion and wisdom.*

*So people need to develop more wisdom and compassion, that's the whole issue. Even to guide you and even in your own life, you need to have more compassion and wisdom. Otherwise you follow your own ignorance or other peoples' ignorance, other people giving ignorant advice, like the blind guiding blind people.*

—Lama Zopa Rinpoche



## A Rose By Any Other Name Would Smell Just as Sweet

For 40 years, our Centre has been known at “Tara Institute”. In the 1970s it was called “Tara House”. In the official Articles of Association it is named “Tara Centre for Wisdom Culture” (TCWC). These days, many people just call it “Tara”, but here I will call it TI or Tara Institute — that’s how it’s known throughout the FPMT. It is important that we remain alert to the fact that we are being asked to change Tara Institute’s Rules and nothing less.

## How Does TI Relate to FPMT?

TCWC (TI) is an independent organization that stands on its own under the jurisdiction of Consumer Affairs Victoria. TI’s Rules are entirely its own to determine. We make our own Rules but they have to be accepted by Consumer Affairs. So it is important for Members to take the time to carefully consider the consequences of what they are being asked to pass. It is not someone else’s responsibility. It is ours.

However, our existence as an FPMT centre is dependent on our Affiliation Agreement with FPMT Inc. In that Agreement we are entirely in the hands of FPMT; if they (at their discretion, not ours) for any reason, wish to terminate the Agreement, they can do so and are not required to give any cause. According to that Agreement, once it is broken, our Centre is obliged to sell up and hand over all its assets to another FPMT Centre.

## Everything is Negotiable

Most people think a “requirement” is something you have to have. But we can deduce from the contents of the proposed new Rules that FPMT is prepared to accept Rule changes that are not explicitly in the form that they “require”. According to Peter Stickles’ letter to us, the FPMT had approved the proposed non-conforming Rules.

[The proposed revisions to the Tara Institute Rules have been discussed with FPMT International Office during this process and FPMT Inc. gave their necessary approval to the proposed revisions on the 16th November 2019, allowing Tara Institute to now proceed to hold a vote of its members on the 14th December to formally accept the revised Rules. \[FPMTA letter\]](#)

In other words, FPMT has already approved a set of Rules that do not meet its own “requirements” as spelled out in the two FPMT documents listed above [Const], [Gov]. Logically that means we are not obliged to slavishly follow what has been proposed. We can ask for something better if we can think of it. Let’s think.

## There is No Rush

All the larger FPMT centres in Australia are still reviewing, according to Peter. He also says we are not being rushed. So let’s be careful, kind and thoughtful. These are the only Rules that govern Tara Institute.

## This is a Great Opportunity

The current Rules are more than ripe for an upgrade. There are definitions missing, formatting glitches and other tidying-up that could be and should be attended to. For instance, we could move into the digital age.

To be clear, I am utterly supportive of what the Board has asked for. I completely agree that we should tighten our security against hostile intrusion and I fully agree we should implement two separate committees — Board/ Executive and Management— as is required by the FPMT Board. But somehow the FPMT has approved and recommended that we accept Rule changes that do not conform with their own requirements. What was proposed on the 14<sup>th</sup> December is flawed so I am praying that TI Members will be given the chance to craft the changes to the Rules *together* rather than just vote on a pre-packaged offering that has allowed for no dialogue or member-input. There has been no proper review at TI but FPMTA tells us the other Centres are reviewing.

There are 2 critical areas required by the FPMT Inc Board that were, inexplicably, not properly addressed in the proposed new Rules:

- *Annual Vetting of Members to Disallow Shugden Practitioners*
- *Establishing Separate Executive and Management Committees*

There was also the unexplained addition into the proposed new Rule of a:

- *President and Vice President, roles that are not mentioned at all by FPMT*

For the past twenty or so years, you have not heard a peep from me nor from any other experienced, senior TI Members. I understand that raising my voice this year has been seen by some people in the TI community as troublemaking and divisive. That has never been my intention. All I am asking for is the openness promised by FPMT. Members must be responsible for shaping our Centre — we should not just leave it to someone else to think and act on our behalf. We can’t blindly rely on a tiny group of people to carry our load and then complain when we don’t like the outcome they produce.

# PROBLEM SOLVING AT TARA INSTITUTE



## SHOOT THE MESSENGER

Lama Zopa Rinpoche hasn't given a course here at TI for more than 20 years. Meanwhile he has taught all over the world; recently he was teaching in Russia. Along with Geshe Doga and His Holiness the Dalai Lama, soon enough he will be dead — and then who will be our guide? Who will protect us and tell us what to do?

I have stopped coming to the Centre for almost a year. Many other people made similar decisions long before I made mine. My reasons include the determination that I do not wish to spend my last days in a paddock with sheep, mindlessly waiting our turn to be slaughtered. Although I am mortally saddened by what has become of the Centre, it is no longer the centre of my life and death. I have plenty of teachings to keep me occupied.

If you are content to turn a blind eye to illogical stories and are unwilling to follow the word of the Buddha to test what you are being told as you would test gold, then stay complacent. Don't raise your head. Leave everything to someone else to decide on your behalf but don't kid yourself that that is Dharma practice.

Tending to your worldly comfort is not even Hinayana practice. You are simply tending to your personal Samsara. In the Mahayana, we have been taught to give our lives for others, to stand up for what is right. Is it dharma practice to stand back and let the Centre drift into the opposite of what our teachers say above?

### Why are Transparency and Openness Such Threatening Concepts at Tara Institute?

Good governance is achieved through an on-going discourse that attempts to capture all of the considerations involved in assuring that stakeholder interests are addressed and reflected in [the] centre

That's what FPMT said in 2018. In 1981 Lama Yeshe told us to "Listen to everyone's problems with love" — nothing like that happens at Tara Institute, it's a completely closed environment where Members are expected to just shut up and do what they are told. How is that right? Why is everything so secret and nailed down away from the least scrutiny? "Don't question anything." This is an attitude that puts the Centre at great risk.

The EC has long been made up of sincere volunteers but if they were suddenly faced with something overwhelming, would they have the courage and skill sets to stay, face and deal with the problem? Or would they simply resign? Who would then take responsibility for Tara Institute?

What is Tara Institute's emergency plan? What's our fallback? Who would you turn to?



## Hey, Guiliano, Why Do You Suddenly Care About Tara Institute?

### What Changed in 2019?

Out of the blue, Lama Zopa “asked” Frank and me to be CD/ACD. Following the announcement the EC sent to all Members, there was much positive support. I got about 30 emails and texts. Members were keen to tell me their problems with the Centre and several offered to serve on committees, as had been flagged in my first thoughts. Members were looking forward to being allowed to engage in shaping TI. But without warning Frank and I were suddenly sacked after only 8 days in the job and before attending even one EC meeting.

Although there was some community objection to the sacking, there was also no space where objections could be raised and discussed without rancor or hurt. Written enquiries were routinely ignored by the EC. So rightly or wrongly, I have taken December 2018 as Rinpoche slamming some responsibility on my shoulders to try to open up discussion. As a last gesture, I again appeal to Members to think carefully about the impact of these proposed Rule changes.

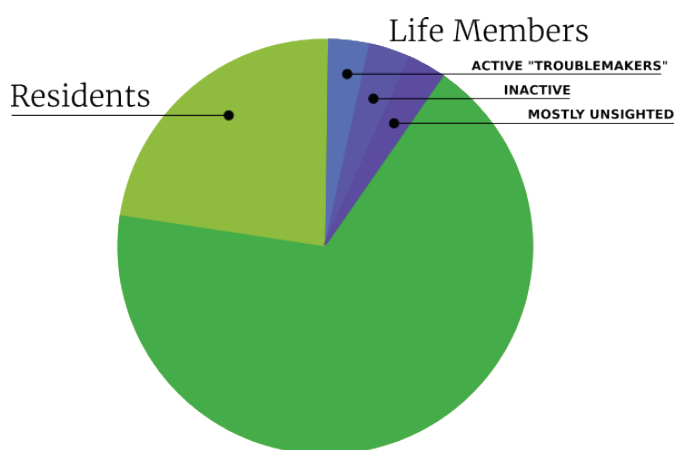
This is not a case of being for or against any particular person or persons. This is not picking “sides”. This is about ***what is best for Tara Institute***. Remember TI doesn’t exist other than through the hearts and minds of the people who use it and the Members who make it possible.

Sorry to bang on about Lama Yeshe, but he had some really cool little catch phrases. He often said “Think big” but I don’t think he meant big centres — he meant many other things and one of them was to think big about time. Lama Zopa has said he wants TI to last a thousand years. I don’t think any of us will be around then, so we need to make sure the Rules we enact and the way the Centre functions is fit for when we are not around.

We are laying the foundation stone for something big. We’ve got to stop thinking like tribes. “If not you, dear, then who?” It’s not healthy to let other people do our thinking for us, so please look at the logic and look at the potential consequences of the proposed new Rules. Will they help or hinder growth and openness? Will they help make our Centre “flourish” (as Geshela wants), become a better place, next year, in a decade, in a century?

Enemies, friends and strangers is not a concept that the Dharma encourages us to have. The Dharma teaches us how to dissolve that division, so why do we continue to act as if our friends only have good ideas and our enemies only have bad ideas? We know from the teachings that that is not the case.

This is not a grab for power. The people who are pleading for openness and communication do not want to “take over” the Centre; let’s face it, they are all too old to do anything with it anyway. They just want to follow Lama Yeshe’s instructions to “communicate and be professional”. Frankly I don’t understand the fear and animosity levelled at those who only ask for openness and inclusion. What is being hidden from view and why?



Tara Institute Members

### Before You Swing Your Sledgehammer Down on the Centre’s Life Members

The EC might be keen to get rid of certain people who have the gall to ask questions, but Members should carefully consider what is going on and what consequences will follow. What oversight and experience will be lost?

Life Membership is a peanut in the scheme of things. There have been no new Life Members since 1993. Those troublemakers who are still actively asking for openness and accountability represent about 3% of total Members. Of course, we are not the only troublemakers but without us, those other troublemaker Members (who are not Life Members) would not stand a chance of being heard in the current closed environment where the Executive Committee controls and strangles all intra-Centre Communications.

## What Experience Can Troublemaker Life Members Offer Tara Institute?

Four of us are ex TI Centre Directors, two are ex TI Treasurers, one was also an SPC of Tara Institute, I think more than once. Three of us were key organisers of tours to Australia by HH The Dalai Lama. George was also Chairman of FPMT Inc. Bob was awarded an OAM after 25 years service at TI; leading healing courses for Vietnam veterans, for the seriously ill and their families. Some of us actually took teachings from Lama Yeshe. One of us gave birth to “Big Love”.

We are not troublemakers — we are concerned about the future health of Tara Institute.

## How Does the Centre Currently Raise Money For Its Survival and Growth?

We need to grasp the answer to that question in order to make an informed decision on any new Rules. The Centre chiefly raises its income by collecting Membership fees and by renting rooms to Residents. If the number of Members or Residents falls, then the cost of Membership and/or residency will have to be increased... as Residents have recently experienced. What other financial plans does the Centre have?

Those two main income streams are what are known as “subscriptions” in financial management terms. It is also well known that subscriptions fall if they are requested each year; that’s why your subscriptions are mostly automated. Businesses know that people are likely to cancel if given the option. If TI implements an annual renewal questionnaire (as required by FPMT), Members will drop off every year.

That particular FPMT requirement seems to have been ignored or hidden. But we don’t know why that is.

Tara Institute Members are not involved in, nor informed of, financial planning. This is contrary to Lama Yeshe’s instructions that figures should be published for projects so that the community can see and be involved in ongoing financial considerations. All experience does not reside in the EC, other Members also have skills and experience that can help the Centre if only they are given the opportunity.

Now on to considering some key proposed Rule changes in close up...

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### • Annual Vetting of Members to Disallow Shugden Practitioners

The FPMT Inc Board is clearly concerned about infiltration by Shugden practitioners, but I do not know why that is only focused on Australian Centres.

Since you only need a phone and a credit card to become a TI Member, is it feasible to think a Shugden attack was planned more than 30 years ago, won the raffle to be made Life Members before 1993, but has still not activated?

Life Members are not a threat. They are a quickly fading asset. So why does the EC want so badly to get rid of them? Two explanations have been circulated but neither stands up to analysis. One was that TI is losing money by allowing 17 people to be Life Members; this cannot be true because there is no actual cost to having “free” members. On the other hand, there is the concept of *lost opportunity* — they would have paid us had we not “given” them membership. Maybe some would have, but certainly not all of them.

I personally know that at least two of those Life Members (both ex CDs) also pay their annual fee. On the other hand, if you think stripping people of their Life Membership will encourage them to pay up, put yourself in their shoes. How would you feel if you were stripped of Life Membership that had been bestowed on you as an honour?

The second reason was that some Life Members don’t deserve to be Life Members. So what? Most Life Members are old and will soon die, so why not just wait until we are dead. Why go against the teachings of Lama Tsong Khapa by forcibly taking back a gift that was given? Note: the FPMT is not saying to steal, this is what the FPMT says:

#### Life Membership

Life Membership was part of the original FPMT model rules. However, it is unwise to continue with this type of membership, unless it is made clear that Life members still need to reapply for membership each year and confirm that they have not become a Shugden practitioner.

If long-term members are to be recognised or rewarded, it would be better to look at Honorary Membership — i.e. with no annual fee — rather than Life Membership. But even so, Honorary Members would still need to reapply for membership each year.

#### Honorary Membership

Honorary membership may be conferred by the board on any person, including any current member, subject to the annual signing of the centre’s Membership Agreement, and on such conditions and with such entitlements as the committee determines. [Const]

You may have been told FPMT is “abolishing” Life Membership but there is no sign of that in their documents. They give no instruction to convert existing Life Members into Honorary Members. They ask us —from now on— to consider giving Honorary *instead of* Life Memberships.

FPMT is not telling us to break the vow against stealing, but the proposed new Rules do exactly that. Why?

FPMT tells us that continuing the practice of awarding Life Membership is “unwise” unless they (the new Life Members) are told that they still need to confirm every year that they are not practicing Shugden. There is absolutely no mention of converting Life Members to Honorary Members. This is an invention with no ethical basis and with no written instructions from FPMT Inc to do so. And nowhere does FPMT Inc suggest TI Life Members be *stripped of voting rights*; that is another invention of the TI EC.

Tara Institute stopped awarding Life Membership in 1993. That’s almost 30 years ago so there is absolutely no difficulty in making a new Rule that follows the instructions from FPMT to abandon the practice from now on.

#### Annual Renewal of Membership

##### Membership Agreement

It is recommended that all members sign a Membership Agreement as part of the application form when initially applying for membership and re-sign this form when renewing their membership on an annual basis.

It is very important that all members, and especially those with voting rights, have affirmed their alignment with FPMT and would follow advice from FPMT on the appointment of the centre director and other board appointments. The director and board need to take care to avoid any risk of a faction developing sufficient strength to be able to take over the management of a centre at the centre’s AGM.

A declaration from those applying or re-applying for membership that they are not Shugden practitioners is also important. This is in order to comply with FPMT policy. A false statement on this Membership Agreement would mean the member would be unable to vote at the AGM.

##### Membership Agreement

[Name of centre] is affiliated with the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT) Inc., which is an international, non-profit organisation, founded in 1975 by Lama Thubten Yeshe (1935-84), and Lama Zopa Rinpoche. The Foundation is devoted to the transmission of the Mahayana Buddhist tradition and values through teaching, meditation and community service, under the spiritual direction of Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche.

[ ] I declare that I am committed to the vision, values and goals of [name of center] and the FPMT and the spiritual director Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche

[ ] I adopt the attitude of universal responsibility as taught by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and accept and understand [name of centre]’s affiliation with FPMT

[ ] I do not practice Shugden (Dolgyal)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date signed \_\_\_\_\_

There also needs to be a reference to this Membership Agreement and its annual renewal in the constitution.

##### Renewal of Membership

Membership needs to be renewed annually on the anniversary of the date on which membership was first granted. Renewal is subject to (i) the receipt of a completed and signed Membership Agreement, (ii) the approval of the board and (iii) the receipt of the membership fee. [Const]

The FPMT is requiring all Members (not just former Life Members) to complete that declaration — every year.

But the proposed new Rules do not require it. They do not mention it. Why is that so? I see absolutely no mention of “Renewal of Membership”; no TI Member is being asked to renew their Membership except for Honorary Members, those who, according to the proposed new Rules, will be denied a vote, anyway.

If you can vote, you do not need to renew; this is crazy. How does that protect? Isn’t this completely opposite to the objective behind the FPMT policy? The FPMT wants to stop the wrong people from voting. But TI...?

## Now this is something that is seriously important to us all, me in particular

Lama Yeshe once rang me from somewhere in the world and said to me “If you don’t get that man (Geshe Kalsang Gyatso) out of there (Manjushri Institute) I will die”. I didn’t, and he did.



So I have long worried about how easy it would be to take control of TI. David Hope (another exCD) and I have raised this several times with past CDs but have been literally laughed at. Worse than that, the EC has ignored our existing Rules on Membership for many, many years. They ignore our only line of defense against intruders.

This year, a friend of mine became a TI Member simply by giving his credit card over the phone. He filled in no application form, no existing Member Nominated him and no one Seconded him as required on the Application Form. Nor did the EC perform their duties to check and properly process his new Membership Application as required by our current Rules. The proposed new Rules are exactly the same as the current Rules.

It’s not clear that even one single Tara Institute Member has been correctly inducted according to the Rules.

To become a Member of TI, it seems that all you have to do is pay the fee. This is not the process required by the current Rules which demand proper vetting of applicants before they are admitted as Members of Tara Institute. It is entirely unsafe to continue to ignore this process; doing so leaves Membership wide open to stacking. Why do we not take the slightest care to protect our precious Dharma Centre?

Tara Institute’s real estate is on its way to being worth \$20 million; it’s a honeypot with no protection.

In early 2018 I wrote in detail to TI’s Secretary quoting the specific Rules that were being ignored but he was entirely comfortable continuing to ignore the Rules. Go to [bit.ly/timembership](http://bit.ly/timembership) to read that exchange. With that lax attitude at the EC, why should we worry about having Rules at all?

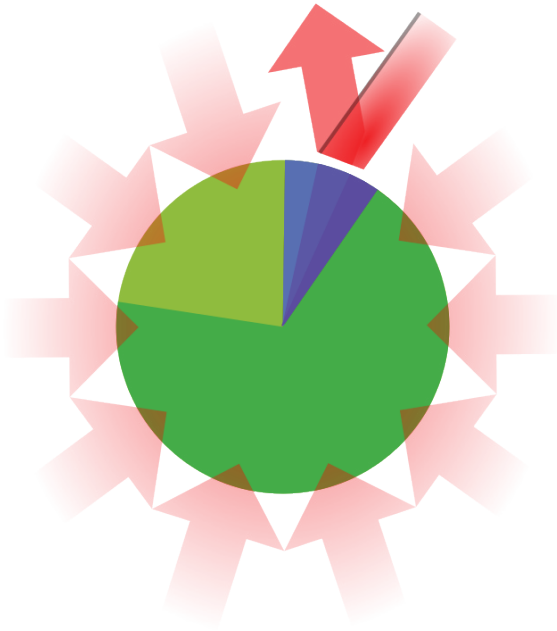
If the EC does not protect the Centre from infiltration, even one time per Member at the signing-up stage, why would we imagine they would do their duty every year for every one of 180 Members? FPMT requires such a check but it is simply not included in the proposed new Rules. Why not?

I can’t find “Annual Agreement” or “Membership Agreement” anywhere in the proposed new Rules even though it’s a requirement of the FPMT. It’s fascinating to see what is being misused to get rid of a few bothersome Life Members, while ignoring the clearly identified and serious threats to the entire Centre’s future existence.

The Executive Committee has the power to sell, mortgage and run up debts against the value of the property. There is no Rule, new or old, that requires the EC to notify anyone. No permission is required from anybody and the Members have no say until —**and if**— it is revealed at the next AGM when it will be entirely too late.

There is no protection against Shugden, property developers, embezzlement, incompetence, or...





**It makes no sense to lock one door but leave 9 other doors open.**

There is no barrier to bad actors becoming Members via 90% of the entry points. Shutting down Life Membership only blocks 10% of the doors into Membership. The proposed Rules get rid of Life Members, strip them of voting rights and require them to apply each year for more humiliation at the EC's whim. In the proposed new Rules, there are no criteria to show how the EC should make these decisions.

There is no value in Honorary Membership. The FPMT did not suggest taking away voting rights from Honorary Members, it is entirely an invention of the EC and their intention is obvious.

These Rule changes are designed to silence Life Members. Why does the EC want to stop proven Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa students from voting at TI? Something is transparently wrong.

There is not even the pretence of protecting the Centre from take-over. How did FPMT at all levels endorse these proposed Rules?

Impermanence is a pillar of the Buddha's teaching but at TI permanence (perpetual or continued existence) is king.

## • **Separate Executive and Management Committees**

I have a copy of "Good Governance Guidelines" and I did searches for both "Management" and "Executive" but came up with nothing.

For good governance, FPMT Inc. requires centres to move to having separate Executive and Management Committees as soon as practically possible, and that this be reflected in their Rules. This is set out in Affiliates Area of the FPMT website and is also set out in the FPMTA Good Governance Guidelines. [letter]

There is only one committee listed in the proposed new Rules, not two as **required** in Peter Stickels' FPMTA letter quoted above and as shown in the FPMT chart reproduced below.

| Management Committee   | Board or Executive Committee  |
|--|---|
| Made up of the people managing the centre i.e. Director, SPC, Centre Manager, Volunteer Manager, Gompa Manager, Shop Manager, etc. | Made up of people governing the centre i.e. Director and SPC, Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, etc. |
| Manages the day to day operations of the centre  | Oversees the overall operations of the centre   |
| Reports to the Board or Executive Committee  | Safeguards the organisation long term   |
|  | Appoints key staff – some in consultation with FPMT Inc.  |
|  | Ensures the centre fulfils its statutory obligations  |
|  | Conducts reviews and appraisals on key staff  |

The idea of having two such committees is normal governance in sizable organisations. We should implement this change. It helps with checks and balances and although FPMT policy years ago in 2018, it is still ignored in these proposed new Rules. How is that possible? Why were these Rules endorsed by FPMT when they are so at odds with their written instructions? (\*\*below, compare FPMT Policy, vs what FPMT recommended to TI\*\*)

The proposed new Rules are a dog's breakfast that retains old clauses that are now contradicted by new clauses. It really needs some attention. Another concern is how the role of Centre Director has been gutted.

While still sitting on the top committee but no longer its Chair, the CD has even less power than before but is expected to perform miracles "The Centre Director shall coordinate and supervise all the activities of the Association, as well as provide leadership to the members in accordance with the purposes of the Association."

Furthermore, the CD is relegated to Chair a sub-committee that has no defined purpose; the proposed new Rules do not list who should be on that sub-committee nor even their roles (which are specified by FPMT under Management Committee, above). Who does the Director direct? Not the SPC who specifically does not report to the CD. In line with the FPMT chart above, ideally it should be what TI currently calls "portfolio holders".

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## • President/Vice President instead of Chair/Vice Chair in FPMT Policy

You will see in the FPMT chart above, that they list on their Board a Chair and a Vice-Chair. However in the proposed new Rules there is only one committee and no Board yet the proposed Rules inject a “President” and a “Vice President”. Are they new names for the same roles? If so, why change the names? Do they together have 2 votes while the CD has just 1? In the current Rules, the CD is the Chair of meetings and has a casting vote, so when not Chair, how does the CD direct the centre?

In the proposed new Rules there are no powers or roles listed for the President other than to act as Chair, replacing the CD’s role defined in the current Rules. What new roles does this President have in the one committee that the President shares with the Centre Director? It seems that the President has no role. Certainly nothing in writing. What is the FPMT thinking here? Who has votes and how many do they have? Does the President —who is not checked by Rinpoche— out-rank the CD who is checked by Rinpoche?

### 45 (5) The Centre Director reports to the Committee.

Is the CD no longer Director or even CEO? It is unworkable “governance” to have the CEO answerable to the people who should in fact be answering to the CEO — that’s why you have a Board to whom the CEO reports and who appoints and fires the CEO. I would be fascinated to see a structure that is anything like this in any well governed organization. In this “structure” who does the CD govern and who reports to the CD? Who has the “considered appropriate” power in 45 (6)?

### 45 (6) The Centre Director will head a subcommittee comprising the Spiritual Program Coordinator as well as other subcommittee members that are considered appropriate to meet the Association’s functional requirements from time to time.

However, the SPC does not seem to answer to the CD...

### 45 (7) The Spiritual Program Coordinator shall coordinate and supervise the spiritual program of the Association, in line with the FPMT Inc. Affiliates Area and the purposes of the Association.

... so the only person named under the CD in 45 (6) is at the same time independent of the Centre Director. Honestly, has anyone looked at this document?

To finish off, have a look at this doozy:

## 52 Nominations

- (1) Prior to the election of each position, the Chairperson of the meeting must call for nominations to fill that position.
- (2) A member entitled to vote (as provided for by rule 13(2)) may be nominated by two other members entitled to vote.
- (3) Any nomination must be made in writing in the form set out in Appendix 3 to these rules.
- (4) The nomination must be received by the Association at such time as determined by the Committee, but no later than 5pm two clear business days before the notice of general meeting is circulated to members.

This mess has resulted from trying to mangle the existing Rules into something else. Currently, they clearly allow for someone, who has failed to be elected for one position, to nominate at the meeting for another position later. This is a perfectly reasonable and normal right. We didn’t re-invent these existing Rules, they are from the standard document issued by Consumer Affairs. But the clumsy alterations in the proposed new Rules make it unworkable. Of course, they may be fixable but what was the EC’s intention and purpose behind making these odd changes?

There’s a lot we need to know.

Even if this could be written to impose an unreasonable deadline for nominations, a good candidate who stood say for Treasurer, but failed to be elected, would be stopped from being allowed to stand for Secretary or any other subsequent position on the committee. What is the sense in that? Have we got so much talent at TI?

52 (2) “may be nominated” means does not have to be nominated. Is that the intention? It contradicts 52 (3).

52 (3) “Any nomination” Must be in writing. The actual form requires a nomination in contradiction to 52 (2)

52 (4) Get out your time machine because this one is a cracker: “no later than 5pm two clear business days before the notice of general meeting is circulated to members”. You really only want people with clairvoyance to apply because they are the only ones who can tell two days in advance of the notice being sent out.

**Why have a Centre Director at all?** Assuming that the proposed new Rules do pass and then someone does apply for the position, if they are prepared to accept this arrangement then they are demonstrating how little they understand the role; having all responsibility but absolutely no power to meet that responsibility.

Why waste Lama Zopa's time vetting the CD? The power lies with people who are not checked by him at all.

## The Four Main Points to Recap

- FPMT has required that we **protect TI Membership** from being gained by Shugden practitioners. These proposed Rules do nothing to protect Membership from Shugden or indeed anything else.
- FPMT has required that we **create two committees** to split the functions of Board/Executive (that looks at the big picture, the long term direction of Tara Institute) from the short term functions of day-to-day running of the Centre, which is to be conducted via a Management Committee. The proposed new Rules do not do that. Instead they continue to lump all functions into the one committee and then pretend to create a sub-committee for the CD to Chair but what that sub committee is supposed to do remains a mystery. There is absolutely no attempt to make it a Management Committee as required by FPMT, not even by name, let alone by function.
- **The role of CD** is at best muddled and at worst made irrelevant by the Rules proposed. What experienced person would take on this role? They are expected to do everything —and more— but have no authority to direct anyone, other than unspecified people on an unnamed sub-committee which may or may not include the CD's superiors. This is not even a Centre Manager role, let alone a Centre Director role.
- The biggest issue over-all is the totally **lax attitude towards Membership**. The current Rules give some protection (by requiring the Applicant to be nominated and seconded by two existing Members before being vetted by the EC) if actually followed. The issue of Shugden is not addressed in either the current or in the proposed new Rules; so that specific problem definitely needs some urgent consideration.

But if the Rules continue to be ignored by the EC, it makes no difference what is written in them — anyone is totally free to join and vote as long as they pay the fee, unless they were formerly a "Life Member".

The proposed new Rules only do one thing; they silence Life Members and give the Executive Committee unfettered power to control who can vote. The EC is free to deny the vote/membership on any grounds they like without having to follow any written Rule and without having to explain their reasoning for denying that Member a vote.

This is a potential situation all Members should resist.

**Peter Guiliano,  
24 December 2019**

Two Separate Committees as presented in  
FPMTA Good Governance Guidelines, Aug 2019

**Is this still required FPMT Policy?**

| Board or Executive Committee  |
|---|
| Made up of people governing the centre ie:<br>Director and SPC, Chair, Vice-Chair,<br>Secretary, Treasurer, etc.                        |
| Oversees the overall operations of the centre   |
| Safeguards the organisation long term   |
| Appoints key staff – some in consultation with FPMT Inc.  |
| Ensures the centre fulfils its statutory obligations  |
| Conducts reviews and appraisals on key staff  |
| Management Committee  |
| Made up of the people managing the centre ie:<br>Director, SPC, Centre Manager, Volunteer<br>Manager, Gompa Manager, Shop Manager, etc. |
| Manages the day to day operations of the centre   |
| Reports to the Board or Executive Committee   |

Below is the structure approved and  
recommended by FPMT for adoption at  
Tara Institute, December 2019.

- **It does not meet FPMT policy outlined left**
- **There is no Management Committee and no separation of powers**

| Executive Committee   |
|---|
| Made up of people governing the centre<br><u>President, Vice-President</u> , Director and SPC,<br>Secretary, Treasurer, <b>others unspecified</b> |
| Oversees the overall operations of the centre   |
| Safeguards the organisation long term <b>not mentioned</b>  |
| Appoints key staff – some in consultation with FPMT Inc.  |
| Ensures the centre fulfils its statutory obligations (?)  |
| Conducts reviews and appraisals on key staff (?)  |
| Untitled Subcommittee   |
| <b>Unspecified Role</b><br>Director (is Chair but voting not specified), SPC (who do<br>they report to?), <b>no other members specified</b>       |
| <b>Manages the day to day operations of the centre</b>  |
| Reports to the Executive Committee as a subcommittee  |



**LISTENING TO  
EVERYONE,  
WITH LOVE**



## End of Year 2019 Postscript

I heard some feedback that 2019 was just the dying gestures of old Lama Yeshe students who are unable to release their grip on Tara Institute and who are refusing to let the younger students take over.

There's a lot of instinctive appeal to that kind of view, unless... you do some simple analysis.

At the end of 2018, Lama Zopa identified 3 potential people he thought would be good as CD. We were all older than 60. Not one of us has had any roles at TI for the past 30 or so years. We have had no grip to let go of.

It's impossible to let go of anything you haven't got. So let's take a brief look at who may be struggling to let go.

The manager of the FPMT is in his late 60s. The four temporary CDs who looked after TI following the EC's refusal to accept any of Lama Zopa's choices are each in their late 60s. They have a powerful grip but prefer to use it in secret rather than to be open and collegiate with the whole community. Who is refusing to let go?

| Guiliano Promotes                                   | TI Ruling Class                                      |
|---|--|
| FPMT Policy: Two committees for good governance     | Proposed new Rules: one committee                    |
| FPMT Policy: strengthen access to Membership        | NO   |
| FPMT Policy: consider the future of Life Membership | Wipe out Life Members, take away their voting rights |
| Rejuvenate TI bloodlines                            | NO keep old folk in charge                           |
| Open, transparent decision making                   | NO keep secret back-room politics, spin, deception   |
| Free, considerate communal discussions              | NO keep things the same, away from scrutiny          |
| Discuss different views with an open heart          | NO everyone must act with one approved voice         |

I have explained earlier in this report how I come to be raising my head after staying low for the past 30 years. Several times in writing I have asked Venerable Roger to let me know if Rinpoche wants me to withdraw. I am sure Roger would like to see the back of me but he has not yet told me that Rinpoche wants me to shut up.

The idea that I, or indeed any of the unwanted Life Members who are being thrown out of TI by people in their 60s, want to hold onto the Centre is not credible. I challenge anyone to show where there is the slightest evidence of such a push. Everything is in writing. Just quote something that any of us has said that contradicts my claim. No one wants to take over TI but many of us would like to see it open and inclusive. An open and accessible Centre would allow younger voices to be heard, much to the Centre's benefit. Yes, I am too old and it might be easy to see me as the problem but I am the one pleading for openness so that TI can rejuvenate. Who else is pushing for openness? Not the old folk who are hanging onto the reins like grim death.

FPMT International Office (IO) previously accused me of trying to split the TI community and of refusing to follow FPMT Rules. Along with this new claim of not letting go, I would suggest those three accusations better fit those practising secret back-room plottings, private activity that has done nothing good for Tara Institute.

As a group, they urged Members to accept Rule changes that do not do what they claim they do. I can read, and I've quoted the Rules to show what I see. I have done that in public while the ruling class has refused to engage or explain. There is no reasoned debate. They stay in the shadows and plot. Open letters to the CD and EC go unanswered and are publicly labelled as "trolling". Contrary to the accusation that I won't let go, I have been asking for open and transparent discussion. The ruling class has only one way of dealing with things.

The passive aggressive strategy of ignoring all calls for cooperation, seems to be working for the majority. But...

Let me make a prediction; the FPMT IO will again refuse to discuss anything in public; they will continue to deny any genuine working together to iron out the terrible missteps that their proposed new Rules contain. No, they will prefer to keep doing what they always do — against their founder's 1981 words, against their own 2018 words. They will devise some way of not insulting Geshe Doga. They will find a way to change the Rules that they told us were approved by FPMT because they accorded with FPMT policy. In other words, there will then be two miraculously opposite things that somehow both agree with FPMT policy; the set they put up in December versus the new improved set. They will contradict themselves rather than work openly with Members.

Why would the young ever hope to be heard at TI? I was thrown out as soon as the rulers thought their position was in jeopardy. None of these people has ever been quoted as championing change at Tara Institute.

These proposed Rules are designed to concentrate power in the hands of a few. How do these proposed new Rules open up the Centre for younger people? There is not even an appearance of open government. We have already seen the effects of three people running the Centre in private, please take responsibility and make sure you are not —unwittingly— handing it over to one or two, to continue their secret control of Tara Institute.