

# Canadian dies in Peru after drinking tea with shaman

Jennifer Logan of Saskatoon died after drinking some tea during a ceremony with a shaman.

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Relatives of Canadian Jennifer Logan say they are hoping test results will reveal why she died at a rainforest retreat in Peru.

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Avid traveller Jennifer Logan had finished a job teaching English to women in Saudi Arabia, and was visiting family back in Canada, when she set off last month for her next adventure in Peru.

She had been gone nine days when staff at a rainforest retreat where she was staying called her parents in Saskatoon to tell them she had died.

Logan's younger sister says they learned that the 32-year-old had a medical reaction after drinking tea during a ceremony with a shaman. She was taken by motorcycle and boat to hospital but doctors could not revive her.

"We suspect the tea had a role" in her death, said Amy Logan, who works in Toronto as an employee of Pagemasters, a wholly owned subsidiary of The Canadian Press.

She recently travelled with her mother and other relatives to Peru to retrieve the woman's remains. While there, the family met with prosecutors and police, who said an investigation was underway. Officers had interviewed centre staff and seized the cup she was drinking and the jug the tea was poured from, Amy Logan said.

Initial autopsy results found she died of pulmonary edema, an accumulation of fluid in that lungs that can cause respiratory failure.

But the family is awaiting further tests in the next few weeks that may show whether the tea was to blame.

An obituary for Jennifer Logan describes how she travelled the world — tutoring sex-trafficked women and girls in Nepal and working on educational programs in India.

During her time as a graduate student at York University in Toronto, Jennifer made a mark on students and the professors she worked with, according to Elizabeth Lunstrum, an associate professor at York University.

She said Jennifer, as a teaching assistant, went out of her way to make the then-new and nervous professor feel more comfortable in front of an audience of about 500 students.

“I was not very far out of graduate school, and so I was a bit nervous teaching a class of that size, and she immediately put me at ease — which I thought was a really interesting dynamic, to have a graduate student be the one that puts the professor at ease,” Lunstrum said.

Lunstrum said Jennifer was “friendly” and “lovely”, and had been interested in accessible housing research both as an academic and activist.

In Peru, she had booked a two-week stay at the Canto Luz Centre outside Puerto Maldonado, then planned to meet up with her mother, who would be travelling through the country with friends.

Amy Logan said staff at the all-female retreat made various teas for clients and, on Jan. 17, crafted a drink for her sister to give her “clarity on her future path.” The teas are designed to make people vomit, or purge and cleanse the body.

“The other three women in the group stopped vomiting within 15 minutes ... Jennifer didn't stop and began to panic.”

She then passed out, said her sister. Staff gave her first aid before taking her to hospital.

Amy Logan said her sister was healthy, about 120 pounds, and a vegetarian who did yoga and meditation.

Staff at the centre have been kind and apologized, she said. And although the family doesn't want vengeance, they want more answers.

She said the tea was not ayahuasca, a hallucinogenic drink that has become a tourist draw in the Amazon, but also reportedly caused several deaths.

An emailed statement from Canto Luz called the tea Jennifer Logan drank a “tobacco purge” and described her reaction to it as “extreme and unusual.”

Its shaman has 20 years of experience, it said, and people are given full disclosure about activities and must provide written consent. It is no longer accepting visitors while it deals with the tragedy.

We “are devastated by this reminder of the power of nature, both for life and death, and the absoluteness of life deep in the Amazon rainforest.”

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