



EASTERN TREASURES:
Lama Ole Nydahl at the Alstonville home of Michael and Sandy Koenen yesterday during a working visit to the Far North Coast.

Picture:
JACKLYN WAGNER

Eastern Culture Gets Western Treatment

BUDDHIST guru Lama Ole Nydahl is not your average monk.

Sporting a crew-cut and tight red T-shirt, Ole is a far cry from the flowing orange robes of the traditional Tibetan monks.

In many ways Ole's outward appearance is a direct reflection of his quest to bring Buddhism to the Western world.

The charismatic lama spoke at Ballina last night as part of a world-wide tour.

Ole says his teachings aim to help people achieve a sense of fearlessness through the belief that the mind is indestructible.

"If we look at the mind itself we will discover that it is not a thing - our awareness has no size, weight, colour or smell," he said.

"Experiences will come and go, but the mind itself is indestructible because space cannot be harmed or destroyed."

If you're finding the concept a little hard to digest, Ole insists it is not as abstract as it sounds.

"It is very clear that people get fearless when they understand we are not the bodies that get old, sick and die, and we are not the feelings that come and go," he said.

One couple which has reaped the benefit of Ole's teachings is Michael and Sandy Koenen, of Alstonville.

"Because Ole is a Westerner himself he structures his teachings in a way that is applicable to a Western lifestyle," Sandy said.

She said the lineage was more practice-based than some forms of Buddhism, with the emphasis on meditation rather than texts.

The Koenens hold weekly meditation sessions at Alstonville and Lismore.

For details phone 6628 7002.