



11 August 2017

Dear Sangha Friends,

The past few weeks have been a very distressing time for our whole Sangha. The allegations that have been made against Sogyal Rinpoche by members of our own community, and which have spread widely in the media and on the internet, are of extreme concern to us all.

By now, you will have received the letter from Sogyal Rinpoche in which he announces his formal retirement from Rigpa as spiritual director. His decision comes as a shock to many of us, and its magnitude cannot be overstated. Rinpoche has made it clear that this decision has only been made after deep personal reflection, seeking the advice of many of his masters, and with the best intention for the future of our community.

For those of us who hold roles of responsibility within Rigpa, this has been and continues to be a challenging time. Not only have we been digesting the shock and emotion of the current situation for ourselves; we have recognized our immediate responsibility to reach out to as many people as possible and offer our support. Over the past weeks, many of us have been trying our best to listen to everyone in our diverse community, and to take on board the wide-ranging impact of these allegations as well as Rinpoche's decision to enter retreat and step back from Rigpa's work.

Please know that we are fully resolved to meet this difficult situation responsibly, sensitively, head-on, and in a way that is completely consistent with the teachings and the spiritual values that we uphold.

In his letter, Sogyal Rinpoche has clearly stated his wish to hand over responsibility for the future of Rigpa to the Sangha. It is we, therefore, who must take charge of this situation and seek to resolve it in the best way possible for all concerned, including those who feel aggrieved. We accept this responsibility and commit to taking whatever steps are necessary. Whilst some of us may be weighed down with sadness, or feel raw or uncertain, we are confident that at a time like now this Sangha of ours can respond in a way that is truly sincere, authentic, open, resolute and brave.



To this end, after careful consideration and advice from many parties, those of us responsible for the governance and management of Rigpa have agreed to take the following steps:

1. We will establish an independent investigation of the allegations of abuse, including those outlined in the letter of 14 July 2017 to Sogyal Rinpoche. We believe that a neutral third party is needed to fully respond to the concerns raised and to lay a foundation for restoring trust and confidence in the Rigpa community. Professional advice is being sought so that the investigation can be fully international in scope and satisfy necessary requirements.
2. Immediately, we will launch an international consultation process to establish both a code of conduct and a grievance process for Rigpa. We fully recognize our responsibility to provide a safe and supportive environment for everyone who enters Rigpa, and believe that these policies will be an essential step in that direction. We will study examples of best practice and draw upon all our experience and expertise, as well as the advice of other Buddhist teachers and communities, to develop codes and procedures that are appropriate for Rigpa. Since the codes of conduct will be multiple and apply to students, staff and volunteers, as well as teachers, without exception, it is important that you, too, are consulted and have the opportunity to give feedback.
3. As swiftly as possible, we will institute a new 'spiritual body' to guide and advise Rigpa, as indicated by Sogyal Rinpoche in his letter.

These steps are being taken by the directors and management teams of Rigpa worldwide, in a true spirit of collaboration. Channels will be established so that any sangha member has the opportunity to express their wishes, views and concerns.

There is, of course, much pressure—both from outside and inside our community—for swift action. Whilst we recognize fully the seriousness and urgency of the situation, it is essential that adequate time is given for consultation with our professional and spiritual advisors, as well as for thorough dialogue with our worldwide directors, staff and sangha. We firmly believe that if these processes are handled in a measured and careful fashion, the end result will be far more satisfactory and complete for all concerned.



The responsibility to navigate the way through these challenging times now lies with us—the Rigpa Sangha. Please participate as best you can, so that collectively we can bring peace, healing and resolution to our community and to all those affected. Let us be spacious and non-judgmental so that we can truly listen to each other with our whole being, and with compassion and understanding.

We feel strongly that if we remain open and supportive as a Sangha, and true to our Dharma roots and practice, we will emerge from this stronger and wiser. Ultimately, through this process, we may find that Rigpa grows into an even greater vehicle for the profound teaching and practice of Dharma. This should be our goal.

Please stay close – let's keep our lines of communication open and keep talking.

With love,

The Rigpa Boards from all countries