

Shamar Rinpoche has passed away

An obituary

12th. of June, 2014.

Shamar Mipham Choegyi Lodroe Rinpoche has passed away because of heart failure at Renchen-Ulm Bodhi Path Center in Germany at half past seven on the 11th of June 2014. He had apparently a weak but passing heat-stroke on Sunday the 9th, but it quickly passed, so no one suspected a possible heart problem. I was there myself. The 14th Shamar Rinpoche became only 62 years of age. His clear, deep and sharp explanations and directions of Dharma will be greatly missed. Rinpoche was the evident manifestation of both absolute and relative Bodhicitta as well as truth and openness.

The life of Shamar Rinpoche was in many ways turbulent. Partly because - despite great resistance from various quarters - he had to reinstate and incorporate the ancient role of the official Shamarpa institution. The various governments of Tibet had since 1789 prohibited his official incarnations (!). It was the then Geluk government, which because of envy and power-lust enforced this prohibition. In the sixties, when the Tibetan exile government had lost all power in Tibet, it again became possible to establish the Shamarpa institution, and Rinpoche was enthroned in Rumtek Monastery in Sikkim then. Life was also turbulent for Shamar Rinpoche, because as so many other Lamas from Tibet, he had to flee from the Chinese occupation of the country in 1959 to save his life, health and the Karma Kagyu Transmission. He settled in Rumtek Monastery, Sikkim together with his uncle the 16th Karmapa Rangjung Rigpae Dorje, that took charge of his education and training as well as transferring the whole Karma Kagyu transmission to him. Finally, life was also turbulent to him, because the organisation of Situ Rinpoche conducted a coup against him in Rumtek, so they could alone decide and identify the new 17th incarnation of the Karmapa and take over the Monastery. Shamar Rinpoche was in that situation quite alone in his determination to find and inaugurate the "classical" (as Rinpoche himself calls his appointment) 17th Karmapa Thinle Taye Dorje.

(Situ Rinpoche's organisation has so far succeeded in taking over the Rumtek Monastery, but soon they must give it up to Karmapa Thinle Taye Dorje as the rightful owner and administrator. Thanks among others to Shamar Rinpoche's unremitting efforts to preserve the Monastery and the precious relics, that are stored there).

In spite of these difficult adverse conditions, Shamar Rinpoche has succeeded in saving a large part of the Karma Kagyu

Tradition from pollution and manipulation, as well as consolidating much of the extensive network of monasteries, shedras, retreat facilities and so on, that belongs to the Karmapa worldwide. He could of course not save them all, but quite a sizable part of the 16th Karmapa's network was secured for Karmapa Thinle Taye Dorje. He conducted the building and establishment of KIBI institute in New Delhi, India and later the facilities in Kalimpong as well. Shamar Rinpoche also came to play a decisive role in the establishment of the Dhagpo Mandala in France and Germany. He was the most important participant in the legal suit about Rumtek Monastery, that now is in the final phase at the High Court of West-Bengal, India. Rumtek Monastery will be given to Karmapa Thinle Taye Dorje soon. The case is almost settled. It is only a question of time.

After these successes Rinpoche started the establishment of the Bodhi Path Network. Until then, he had no organisation of his own. Also the monks of Yangpachen Monastery in Central Tibet decided to appoint him their supreme head, after many years of Geluk "occupation" and administration. That became possible, because the Gelukpas no longer hold any power in Tibet, and because the monks at Yangpachen always perceived themselves to be followers of Shamarpa. Rinpoche has then directed the reconstruction of the Monastery and established a new Shedra (an institution of higher Dharma learning) at the location. The Monastery at Swayambhu in Kathmandu, Nepal as well as his project of Sha Min Nub nearby, both have Rinpoche as their supreme head.

Rinpoche had just finished a seminar on Lojung in Renchen-Ulm Bodhi Path Center according to a book of the 5th Shamarpa Konchok Yenlak. This is a more condense text than Rinpoche's own book on the subject, "The Path to Awakening". He was tired and the strong heat of the day bothered him to some extend. On Sunday the 9th of June it was 37 degrees (Celsius) in Renchen-Ulm. Whether that was a contributing cause to his untimely death can not be established. Rinpoche was otherwise in great spirit the whole time during the seminar.

Shamar Rinpoche is my Root-Lama since 1982, and he has been absolutely crucial for my own development, education and training. It is almost incomprehensible for me, that he is now gone. Rinpoche is now in a state called thugdam in Tibetan, which is a very deep and profound samadhi. Soon, he will be gone completely.

A lot more could be said at this occasion, but that must follow later. Shamar Rinpoche's body will be cremated in India at a later date.

Lama Tendar Olaf Höyer.