

The 'alternative' or 'Chinese' Karmapa Ogyen Dorje suffer allegation of rape - plus a paternity and alimony demand

The accusation was voiced by a former nun in connection with a lawsuit in Canada, where she claimed that Ogyen Dorje is father of her child. She sued for paternity and alimony in May 2021. In the dossier of the court case the allegation of rape is mentioned, even the former nun did not seek reparations for sexual assault. The Canadian court has held three hearings in the case so far, the last one in October 2022. A settlement seems likely out of court. We might therefore never learn, what is true about this story.

by Lama Tendar Olaf Hoeyer, November 28, 2022.



Rape seems highly unlikely in this case; this allegation also was not necessary to carry the civil trial through. That did not stop the accuser, a previous nun, to complain about it; and many people believe rape may have happened and are deeply shocked about it

The 'alternative' or 'Chinese' 17th Karmapa Ogyen Dorje; photograph from 2021.

The 'classical' 17th Karmapa Thaye Dorje is a completely different person, and he was never accused of anything by anyone. He is happily married.

The previous nun and Canadian citizen Vikki Hui Xin Han claimed, that she was sexually assaulted by Ogyen Dorje during a meditation retreat in the retreat-center Karme Ling in the state of New York, USA, on October 14, 2017. On June 19, 2018, Vikki Hui Xin Han gave birth to a daughter in Richmond, British Columbia in Canada. The father of this child is allegedly the 'alternative' or 'Chinese' 17th Karmapa Ogyen Dorje.

Vikki Hui Xin Han also claimed, that she after the assault fell in love with Ogyen Dorje and this love was mutual. He allegedly provided her with \$700,000 during this time. For two years they in this way had a 'romantic' relationship, even they only met online, she claimed. But then in 2019, Ogyen Dorje allegedly dropped her and cut all communications with her. She then sued him in the Canadian Court of Vancouver for paternity. This was not noticed by the media, because this kind of trials normally are sealed for privacy reasons in English Law. But she added a demand for alimony in April 2021. Then the allegations went public.

Apparently, alimony was contested by Ogyen Dorje's lawyers; it seems likely that they wanted the new claim dismissed by the court. The court did not agree and allowed addition of the demand in May 2021, after a master's review. A 'master' in such a case is a specially appointed judge, who is not a participant in the case – and who examines the merit of a claim or the whole issue in general. The reason for a master's review here, seems to be the novelty of the alimony claim, where a couple never lived together. Could they then be spouses in a legal sense? And entertain legal responsibility toward each other in terms of alimony? This apparently made an exemption for sealing the review, because it is of a general interest for judicial consideration to any court in Canada. This review might influence jurisprudence in the whole Federation.

What ever the reason, the privacy seal was lifted, and the review was published on the Vancouver Supreme Court's website. Then various media took notice and published the story.

Tilogaards news service published the claims too, but only in Danish.

Read the Canadian court's master review here:

<https://www.bccourts.ca/jdb-txt/sc/21/09/2021BCSC0939cor1.htm>

Read also about the case in the news from Canada here:

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/woman-marriage-relationship-buddhist-1.6031624>

Closed hearings

A court hearing was set to take place in July 2021. For various reasons, this was postponed until April 2022. The hearing did not take place on that date though, but was postponed to May 19, 2022. The Court report about this is sealed; so we do not know what happened. But something did develop, causing a new hearing on October 13, 2022.

Meanwhile, Vikki Hui Xin Han had sued Karma Dharmachakra Triyana Monastery in New York state, USA, because the Monastery is the owner of the retreat center Karme Ling in the same state. Vikki Hui Xin Han's retreat in 2017 happened there, and it was also there that Ogyen Dorje allegedly raped her. So she claimed complicity by the Monastery to Ogyen Dorje's sexual assault, because they did not intervene when it happened. There is no information about witnesses nor known evidence to support this allegation. Anyway, this charge was dropped on October 11, 2022. We do not know the reason for that.

Read about the case here:

<https://tricycle.org/article/karmapa-case-discontinued/> (Tricycle Magazine)

Read the court documents here:

<https://iapps.courts.state.ny.us/webcivil/FCASSearch?param=P>

(Please note: when this web page opens, write: 'Vikki Han' - under 'What to search' and 'Party Name' - then under 'Party Represents' click the radio-button at: 'plaintiff' - and in 'Limit search' under 'Case status' click the radio-button at: 'all' - and under 'Return...' click the radio-button at: 'no')

The hearing in the Canadian court in Vancouver October 13, was also sealed. What happened here is therefore not known. Maybe a settlement without a trial was agreed; maybe the case in the USA was dropped in connection with a possible settlement in Canada. We do not know; but the dates of the two events are very close, so they might very well be connected. For instance a potential payment to Vikki Hui Xin Han on condition of her dropping the US charge, before the hearing in Canada.

If all of this had stayed secret, no problem for Ogyen Dorje's supporters and students would have manifested. But now the allegation of sexual assault has spread in the public sphere in a typical 'MeToo' fashion. The accuser is a verified person that is known to the Canadian court; and we also know her name. The story was reported in various Buddhist magazines on two continents. And there is more on social media. It is still just an allegation; but Ogyen Dorje has not responded in public.

To some people, that is an admission of guilt. But for a Tibetan, silence is normal because the situation is awkward and painful. It is a serious and humiliating loss of face. But in relatively open democratic societies, he has to answer the allegations as a famous spiritual leader. He is not in far away Tibet in a mystical medieval past; he lives in the present USA.

Please note the obvious observation: this charge of rape is very difficult to believe, even if that was your wish. Though the claimed spousal relationship between them started with rape, Vikki Hui Xin Han allegedly fell in love with Ogyen Dorje afterwards. She have stated, that the love was mutual between them, once she had fallen in love with the monk. For two years their relation was 'romantic,' she claimed; until Ogyen Dorje dropped her. Then she got cross, it would seem.

It is therefore quite correct to dismiss the allegation of rape, because a rejected lover might seek revenge in a fit of despair or jealousy. And since there is no evidence nor witnesses, the doubt must benefit the accused Ogyen Dorje.

Even Vikki Hui Xin Han does appear publicly in her own name, she does not carry through the allegations in public, talking to the media. **That is not '#MeToo.'** It seems, that also she tries to settle out of court in silence. Maybe only the money is important to her. But then again, she has to care for the child. Anyway, her charge of rape cannot be trusted.

‘Heal Our Sangha’

In consequence of this state of the affair, it has become somewhat of a taboo to talk about it in the monasteries and centers associated with Ogyen Dorje. Never the less, a lot of people from these centers believe in the allegations and are deeply troubled by all of it. But they are met with a wall of silence or a mistaken talk about ‘*samaya*.’ This is inappropriate, wrong and out of place. (Read about the meaning of **samaya** in the paper: www.tilogaard.dk/english/Samaya_means_to_connect_by_Tendar_Olaf_Hoeyer.pdf)

Because it is natural to doubt the dubitable and suspect the suspicious, this culture of silence has created conflict. Many people suffer. Therefore a group of Western Karma Kagyu Lamas and practitioners from these centers have organized a website in collaboration with two well known American universities. Here people may address their doubts and air their concern with somebody: www.healingoursanghas.org

The website will allegedly help such people to break the taboo and achieve a well functioning ‘*sangha*’ – that is a spiritual community. This is not likely to happen, no matter how many well wishing people that aim to help. There will be no improvement before Ogyen Dorje proclaims something in public about the allegations. But it is of course very good, that someone will listen, and that those in doubt may talk to somebody about it.

‘Heal Our Sangha’ only have the two representatives from the universities stepping up with their own names. The alleged Lamas and practitioners from Ogyen Dorje’s centers in USA have preferred to stay anonymous. This is cowardice and a definite weakness in the project.

Rape is a serious charge; though very likely, it did not happen. Another thing is the monk Ogyen Dorje having sex. If so, he broke his root-vow of renouncing erotic intercourse (coitus). And yet a third thing is, after becoming a father, trying to conceal it. These allegations constitute great damage to his reputation – and a definite end to being a monk, if true.

It has not been established as a fact, that Ogyen Dorje broke any vows. We also do not know, if he is the father of this girl. The only facts of this matter is, that Ogyen Dorje has paid a lot of money to Vikki Hui Xin Han. Why exactly he did so, is not clear, but it indicates that he took responsibility for the child.

He ought to answer the allegations, now they are known and he stand to be harmed by this. Also, his supporters suffer and people leave his monasteries and centers because of it.

You may argue, that this story is pure and simple slander; so I should not report it. But since a court of law did hear the case, it must have some merit, I suppose. So by not reporting, I would be judgmental too. By this logic, I wrote these words; but also to stress all the unknown factors in this case. And to protest against this detrimental culture of silence.