

THE 14TH SHAMARPA, MIPHAM CHOKYI LODRO (1952-2014)

It is with deep regret that Bodhi Path Buddhist Centers announce that the 14th Shamarpa, Mipham Chokyi Lodro, has passed away. On the morning of June 11th, 2014, Shamar Rinpoche experienced cardiac arrest and died at Bodhi Path Renchen Ulm, in Germany. For two days, Rinpoche remained in a state of meditative absorption (*tukdam*), during which he showed all of the traditional Buddhist signs of awakening. Shamar Rinpoche's meditative absorption ended on the auspicious full moon day of *Saga Dawa*, a date that commemorates the birth, enlightenment, and *parinirvāna* of Gautama Buddha.

Kunzig Shamar Rinpoche was born on October 27, 1952, in Derge, Eastern Tibet. At the age of four he was recognized by the 16th Karmapa, Rangjung Rigpe Dorje, as the 14th reincarnation of the Red Crown Lamas of Tibet, the Shamarpas. In the following years, Shamar Rinpoche received the entire cycle of teachings of the Karma Kagyu lineage from the Karmapa.

The Shamarpa lineage is the second-oldest lineage of reincarnate masters in Tibetan Buddhism, dating to the thirteenth century. In accordance with tradition, in 1994, the 14th Kunzig Shamar Rinpoche formally recognized Trinley Thaye Dorje as the 17th Gyalwa Karmapa, and personally saw to every aspect of his education, including the complete transmission of the lineage teachings.



After the 16th Karmapa passed away in 1981, Shamar Rinpoche focused on completing many of the Karmapa's projects, and began to develop new projects as well. In 1991, he co-founded and developed the Karmapa International Buddhist Institute (KIBI), an institute of higher education in New Delhi that now offers a Bachelor of Arts degree in Buddhist studies. He finalized the reprinting of the *Tengyur*, the 214 volumes in which prominent Indian and Tibetan masters elucidate the teachings given by the historical Buddha. Rinpoche continuously provided guidance to the monastic communities of Rumtek Monastery in Sikkim, the Shri Diwakar Buddhist Research and Educational Institute in Kalimpong, Shri Karmaraj Mahavihara at Swayambhunath in Kathmandu, and Yangpachen in Tibet.

In 2003, he established Shar Minub in the Kathmandu valley, a vast institution that includes a monastery, a *Shedra* school for traditional Buddhist studies, long term retreat facilities, several temples, and an institute for international students. One special feature of Shar Minub is the hermitage dedicated to restoring the quality of the Vinaya. The monks in long-term retreat there are committed to upholding all of the original vows of the authentic Buddhist bhikshu tradition during their practice cycle.

As these projects in Asia became established, Rinpoche traveled throughout the world giving teachings and transmissions at established Karma Kagyu centers.

In 1996, Rinpoche founded Bodhi Path Buddhist Centers, a network of Dharma centers based on a non-sectarian approach to Buddhism. Rinpoche developed a curriculum for Bodhi Path based on the vast and profound teachings of *Lojong*, or mind training. He believed that the meditation practices and philosophy belonging to the Lojong transmission are perfectly suited to guiding modern practitioners away from confusion and towards awakening. To date, more than forty Bodhi Path centers and groups have been established in Asia, Europe, and the Americas.

Shamar Rinpoche was active in many humanitarian projects. For example, he founded the Infinite Compassion Foundation and Shanti Path Foundation to promote animal rights, sustainability, the creation of hospitals and schools for underprivileged children, and other humanitarian activities.

Rinpoche left a unique written legacy, publishing books in many languages. *The Path to Awakening: A Commentary on Ja Chekawa Yeshé Dorjé's Seven Points of Mind Training* and *Boundless Awakening: The Heart of Buddhist Meditation* focus on meditation practice; *A Golden Swan in Turbulent Waters: The Life and Times of the Tenth Karmapa Choying Dorje* is an historical treatise. *Creating a Transparent Democracy: a New Model* addresses governance. He also wrote *The King of Prayers: A Commentary on The Noble King of Prayers of Excellent Conduct* and composed numerous practice texts and commentaries, including widely used books on *Chenrezig* and the *35 Buddhas (Three Heaps Sutra)*.

Shamar Rinpoche will always be remembered for his unique and multi-faceted personality. He was determined and courageous, spirited, contemporary and wonderfully nonconformist. The embodiment of awakened mind in every aspect of his activity, his infinite compassion towards all beings manifested in unsparing and selfless work. Rinpoche's intelligence and vision were that of a Bodhisattva of the highest level.

Kunzig Shamar Rinpoche's physical form is no longer with us, but his compassion, wisdom and phenomenal energy endure through his projects and the countless lives he touched and enriched during his lifetime. With the blessing and support of Karmapa Thaye Dorje, his legacy and vision will continue to blossom in Bodhi Path centers throughout the world.