



## Sogyal Rinpoche

11 August 2017

Dear Rigpa Sangha,

I address this letter to all my students and especially to those who hold positions of responsibility on the board of directors of the different Rigpa organizations worldwide.

You are of course aware of the allegations that have been brought against me which have now been made widely public on the internet. This has brought shock and consternation not only to me, but also to a great many of you who are my students and who serve Rigpa and its vision.

I have already communicated to you my decision to enter retreat and step back from the work of Rigpa, in view of the turbulence that these accusations have caused. This instinct has been confirmed to me by many of the masters whom I turn to for spiritual advice and by my most trusted students. I feel that in so doing, space will be created for the right kind of clarity to be brought to bear.

Furthermore, given my deep concern for you all and the work of Rigpa, which you have all contributed towards immensely, I feel the best course of action for me now is to formally announce my retirement as spiritual director of Rigpa. I do not wish the criticism that has been brought against me to jeopardise all that.

Therefore, with this letter, I state clearly that I will with immediate effect retire as spiritual director from all the organizations that bear the name of Rigpa and that have grown and developed in different countries around the world.

From the very early days of Rigpa, we have benefitted from visits, teachings and blessings from some of the greatest Tibetan Buddhist masters of our times. I think of Dudjom Rinpoche, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, Penor Rinpoche, Trulshik Rinpoche, Khenchen Jigmey Phuntsok, Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche and many, many others who uphold the profound Nyingma and Dzogchen lineage.

Equally, and in the spirit of *Ri-mé*, we have had the immense honour of inviting the most eminent masters of the other great Tibetan Buddhist traditions, and especially His Holiness the Dalai Lama, His Holiness Sakya Trizin and Gyalwang Karmapa. This is because I have always considered Rigpa as a vehicle for the enlightened intent of all of these great beings. I constantly feel their presence as a guiding light for our work and I pray to them now for their blessings. Whether or not I serve as the spiritual director of Rigpa, their vision of bringing the ultimate wisdom of the Buddha to the world must remain firm and continue to flourish.

As has always been my intention, I will now hand over the guidance of Rigpa to a body of my most trusted students, who are representative of our wonderful Sangha, and to a group of Lamas who have always held the best interests of Rigpa in their heart.

Please understand that I am not and never will abandon you! I will continue to share teachings with you and to guide you, while on my retreat, and beyond. I will keep you in my heart and prayers each and every day. I have a solemn commitment to help bring you to enlightenment and I will never renege on that!

I place my trust in you all to remain firm as a Sangha, to never stray from the true path of Dharma, and to keep compassion in your hearts at all times. As I said to you in my earlier letter, one day we will all have to die, including myself. When that moment comes, the work of Rigpa will need to continue, undiminished. I see the steps that I am taking now as a preparation for that day. It is nothing to be fearful of, rather something we should approach with courage, positivity and openness.

I thank you all for the trust and support that you have shown me, and your kind and heartfelt messages. I feel our spiritual bond is unshakeable. This instils in me a deep confidence for our collective future.

With my love and blessings, Sogyal Rinpoche

A handwritten signature in black ink, followed by a red square seal containing Tibetan script. The signature is fluid and expressive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right. The red seal is positioned below the signature, slightly to the right of the center.