



RIGPA

Rigpa Statement

January 2018

Spiritual Governance

Following the retirement of Sogyal Rinpoche from the role of Spiritual Director of Rigpa in August 2017, a 'Vision Board' has now been appointed to guide Rigpa into the future.

The Vision Board is made up of seven of Sogyal Rinpoche's long-standing students who share a deep understanding of the vision of Rigpa. Their task will be to oversee the culture of study and practice, care for the Rigpa community, nurture teachers, and strengthen links with other Buddhist teachers and organizations—all in the open and inclusive spirit that Rigpa has sought to cultivate over the last forty years.

The Vision Board is composed, alphabetically, of: Valerie Baker, Mauro de March, Seth Dye, Patrick Gaffney, Verena Pfeiffer, Philip Philippou and Vinciane Rycroft. Visit rigpa.org to read more about the Vision Board members.

To maintain the authenticity of Rigpa's work, the Vision Board will be advised by a number of Tibetan Buddhist lamas including Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche and Mindrolling Jetsun Khandro Rinpoche (both key figures in interpreting Tibetan Buddhism in the modern world) and Khenchen Namdrol (a great scholar and lineage holder of the Ngagyur Nyingma tradition). Other Tibetan Buddhist lamas will be invited to advise in the future. Visit rigpa.org to read more about the lamas advising Rigpa's Vision Board.

The Vision Board will commence its role from March 2018.

Although Sogyal Rinpoche is no longer the Spiritual Director of Rigpa, he has an ongoing responsibility as a teacher to his students. In the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, the sacred bond between student and teacher continues until enlightenment. At present, as Sogyal Rinpoche is in a period of retreat and undergoing medical treatment for colon cancer, he may only give occasional pre-recorded teachings to his students.

Rigpa Investigation

In August 2017, Rigpa pledged to set up an independent investigation by a neutral third party into the allegations made against Sogyal Rinpoche in July 2017.

Rigpa's heartfelt concern is for the wellbeing of its Rigpa community, including the authors of the letter of allegations, and to ensure that the positive qualities shared in the Rigpa community do not diminish.

The UK law firm Lewis Silkin, highly regarded in Europe for working with harassment complaints, has been appointed to undertake this investigation. Lewis Silkin will act as a neutral, third-party investigator conducting confidential fact-finding interviews, primarily with the eight individuals who wrote the letter of complaint.

The Boards of Rigpa understand that it is their duty to investigate the allegations made against Sogyal Rinpoche in the July letter, according to the laws in the respective countries. While no criminal charges have been made, it is essential that Rigpa follows through with engaging a neutral third-party who can listen objectively to the description of the events as described in the letter.

Concurrently, the Rigpa US Board has engaged *An Olive Branch*, a Zen-based reconciliation organisation, to help support the Rigpa community in US and in all countries with healing and reconciliation. We consider this to be a crucially important part of the process we need to go through together as community.

Code of Conduct and Grievance Procedure

Rigpa has also instigated a consultation process within its international community, through which a code of conduct and a grievance process for Rigpa are being established. The Rigpa community will have the opportunity to review and reflect on the first draft of these procedures in January.

Throughout this period of change, Rigpa continues to focus on its vision of: making the Buddhist teachings of meditation, compassion and wisdom available to the modern world. Rigpa's centres around the world continue to offer courses, programmes and retreats led by Rigpa teachers and, instructors, as well as and visiting teachers and lamas. For details visit rigpa.org.