

Nyare Khentrul (Gelek) Rinpoche has passed away

To our great sorrow we have learnt that the eminent Tibetan Master Nyare Khentrul Rinpoche, better known as Gelek Rinpoche, passed away yesterday at 6 am local time in the USA.

Rinpoche was one of the most important early trail blazers to establish Tibetan Buddhism in the West. He was brilliant at holding the balance between maintaining the undiluted traditional knowledge and the transfer to the west with all its own idiosyncratic conditions.

He still came from the generation of scholars born in old Tibet. 1939 he was born as a nephew of the 13th Dalai Lama. As a recognized incarnation he first experienced life in a monastery. He completed his studies in Drepung monastic university at a very young age with a geshe title.

In 1959 he escaped to India, along with many of his fellow Tibetans and returned his monks vows then. He was one of the first students of the Young Lamas Home School.

He came to the West early, to the USA, where amongst others he kept close contact with famous poet Allen Ginsberg and musician Philip Glass.

He founded the Buddhist organization Jewel Heart, which amongst others, has a sister organization in Holland.

Gelek Rinpoche is a close friend of our spiritual guide Dagyab Rinpoche. They knew each other since childhood. Due to this deep bond between them many students of one lama are also students of the other.

Gelek Rinpoche has also given teachings in Tibethaus and Chödzung, (the predecessor to Tibethaus). He will remain unforgettable. His teachings were carried equally by profound wisdom and great humor and were always relevant to daily life. He also wrote important books and commentaries.

Like many Tibetans of his generation Rinpoche had been suffering for some years from the consequences of heavy diabetes. As an ordinary person he would have had to die much sooner, but for years, carried by his great responsibility and compassion, he continued to visit and look after all his centers, although he could hardly walk any more and was in great pain.

It was a slow good bye, yet it is still very painful for his close students who have been with him for many decades.

Dagyab Rinpoche said yesterday, "I wish that all the heart wishes of Rinpoche, for which he has given his life on behalf of his students – and by extension, all sentient beings – will be fulfilled.

To all those who feel close to him, especially his students, I would like to give this advice: In future – just as has been said in the transmitted discussion between Geshe Potowa and Drom Tönpa – you should take Gelek Rinpoche's words as your teacher and rely on them."

Elke Hessel und Puntsok Tsering

Lama Chöpa Puja

Tomorrow, Friday, February 17, from 5 pm to 6.30 pm we will conduct a detailed traditional Lama Chöpa puja for Rinpoche. It is an open event that anyone can join. We look forward to you attending. Please bring a little gift (fruit, flowers or a donation)

Comment by Tibethaus Frankfurt, Germany — February 17, 2017