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The decontextualization of Vajrayāna Buddhism in international Buddhist Organizations by the example of the organization *Rigpa*

Anne Iris Miriam Anders



Rigpa is an international Buddhist organization (Vajrayāna Buddhism) with currently 130 centers and groups in 41 countries

(see Buddhistische Religionsgemeinschaft Hamburg e.V. c/o Tibetisches Zentrum e.V., Nils Clausen, Hermann-Balk-Str. 106, 22147 Hamburg, Germany : "Rigpa hat mittlerweile mehr als 130 Zentren und Gruppen in 41 Ländern rund um die Welt." in <https://brghamburg.de/rigpa-e-v/> date of retrieval: 5.11.2020)

Rigpa in Austria: centers in Vienna and Salzburg

see <https://www.rigpa.de/zentren/daenemark-oesterreich-tschechien/> date of retrieval: 27.10.2020

Rigpa in Germany: 19 centers

see <https://www.rigpa.de/aktuelles/> date of retrieval: 19.11.2019

Background:

globalization, commercialization and decontextualization of (Vajrayāna)

Buddhism

Impact: of decontextualization of terms and neologisms

is the rationalization of economical, emotional and physical abuse of people (while a few others – mostly called '*inner circles*' in context - draw their profits)



- I. timeline of crucial incidents in and around the organization *Rigpa*
- II. testimonies of probands from the organization *Rigpa* (in the research project *TransTibMed*)
- III. impact of decontextualizing concepts of Vajrayāna Buddhism and cross-group neologisms in international Buddhist organizations
- IV. additional citations in German language
- V. references



1. timeline of crucial events (starting 1994, 2017- summer 2018)
(with links to the documents)
2. analysis of decontextualized concepts, corresponding key dynamics and neologisms
3. continuation of the timeline (autumn 2018-2020)
(with links to the documents)



1. **timeline of crucial events (1994, 2017-2018)**

All words and paragraphs underlined in the following texts are my emphasis. They are those aspects from quotations that I have chosen to draw your attention to.



"It is a cloudy day in August 2008 in the Languedoc-Rousillon region of southern France. Hundreds of people dressed in their best party clothes line both sides of a narrow country road. Most of them hold a khata — a long white scarf, presented as a ceremonial offering to Tibetan dignitaries. A rainbow array of prayer flags flutter, and the breeze catches plumes of fragrant juniper smoke rising from pot-bellied stoves placed at intervals along the route. A ripple of excitement runs through the crowd as a procession comes into view. As it approaches some people wave, others bow with hands clasped in the prayer gesture, others offer their khatas, holding them at arm's length towards a small, elderly man wearing maroon monastic robes and a huge smile. Even at a distance he radiates charisma. He has acquired unique status on the world stage as the man who loves everyone — and many people nowadays accept that the joy on his face originates from a genuinely open heart. As he passes, Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet, reaches out to touch members of his adoring fan club. The Dalai Lama strides alongside Carla Bruni Sarkozy at the head of a cluster of monks, security men and journalists, towards a multi-coloured, ornate portico. A monastic band strikes up. Monks in their red and yellow robes and ceremonial hats play shawms — oboe-like instruments that wail like the wind in a Himalayan storm. They lead the proceedings that set in motion the inauguration of the largest, most grandiose Tibetan temple in the developed world. Sheltered by the portico, Carla Sarkozy stands apart from the crowd — tall and elegant in a dark couture dress. She too holds a khata. Another figure sidles up beside her. He is short, balding, obese and clothed in a floor-length mustard yellow robe — a chuba — lay rather than monastic Tibetan attire. His manner is obsequious, he is bowed in deference but his face tells the phalanx of TV cameras, forest of microphones and those present in person that this is his finest hour. Here he is, Sogyal Lakar from a remote region of Tibet, introducing the Dalai Lama to the First Lady of France."



"Sogyal is recognised as a tulku (re-incarnate lama) and is known as Rinpoche, which means precious one in Tibetan. He is the second best known lama on the Tibetan landscape and he too is idolised by thousands of followers who belong to Rigpa, his organisation active in France with six centres and six study groups and in 24 countries around the world. Carla Sarkozy appears somewhat awe-struck. With a shy smile she offers her khata to the Dalai Lama. His big smile broadens even further as, according to Tibetan custom, he accepts the scarf and then returns it to the donor — draping it tastefully around Carla's neck. A day of elaborate ritual follows, with the Dalai Lama tasting salt, tossing flower petals and cutting multi coloured ribbons draped across the temple doors, before entering to perform the consecration ceremony. Once inside, more celebrities step out to meet the world's A list holy man – French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner, Rama Yade, Secretary of State for Human Rights and former Prime Minister Alain Juppe. As the Dalai Lama moves inside the enormous building decorated with extreme oriental flamboyance, other public figures are on tenterhooks for their brief moment of eye contact with His Holiness. A famous actress here, an author there, more politicians – and a cluster of clerics, including Claude Azema, the auxiliary Bishop of Montpellier. The name of the place is Lerab Ling, which means Sanctuary of Enlightened Action. Sogyal Rinpoche chose this name in honour of Lerab Lingpa, a 19th century Tibetan Buddhist master Sogyal claims as his predecessor. So how did a 63 year old man in poor health, who left his native Tibet when he was only a small child, and had only a basic education in India, come to be the head of a multi-national organisation with tentacles in five continents? How did he manage to raise 10 million Euros to build a huge temple in southern France? And then persuade the wife of the President to provide the media focus for the opening day?"

see Finnigan, M. in <https://behindthethangkas.wordpress.com/2011/11/20/2-charisma-luck-chutzpah-and-a-lawsuit/> date of retrieval 14.1.2019



"one of Sogyal's victims who became known as Janice Doe, consulted a San Francisco lawyer and on 2 November 1994 a suit was filed in The Superior Court of California seeking reparations from Sogyal Rinpoche aka Sogyal Lakar and The Spiritual Care for Living and Dying Network for assault and battery, infliction of emotional distress and breach of fiduciary duty. The suit also charged that Sogyal had seduced many other female students for his own sexual gratification by preying on their vulnerability."

see Finnigan, M. in <https://behindthethangkas.wordpress.com/2011/11/20/11-after-the-lawsuit/> , date of retrieval 14.1.2019

I) 1. 1993 Western Buddhist Teachers conference
2011 film "In the Name of Enlightenment"



1993:

Western Buddhist Teachers conference (with the H.H. the Dalai Lama)

see <https://meridian-trust.org/category/conference/?sub-categories=the-western-buddhist-teachers-conference>

2011: film "In the Name of Enlightenment" on Vision TV in Canada

see <https://youtu.be/yWhIivvmMnk>



1. *Open Letter* by eight former *Rigpa* members at 17.7.2017

see <https://www.lionsroar.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Letter-to-Sogyal-Lakar-14-06-2017-.pdf>

publicly available, sent to dignitaries of the exile Tibetan monastic context

2. resulted in the immediate withdrawal of its leader Sogyal Lakar

3. *Lewis Silkin Report* (lawyer: Baxter, K.) on incidents at the organization *Rigpa* published at 22.8.2018:

see <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/580dbe87e6f2e16700cb79fe/t/5b8f7c1e1ae6cfb38491e668/1536130081917/Lewis+Silkin+report.pdf>

4. Property inspection by police at the center Lerab Ling/ France

see <https://france3-regions.francetvinfo.fr/occitanie/herault/herault-temple-bouddhiste-lerab-ling-roqueredonde-sa-communaute-perquisitionnes-1546754.html>, at 5.10.2018

5. Investigation of the *Charity Commission for England and Wales*

"New Charity Inquiry: Rigpa Fellowship Charity Commission investigates Rigpa Fellowship." published at 29.11.2018 (still ongoing today)

see <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-charity-inquiry-rigpa-fellowship>



2. analysis of decontextualized concepts, corresponding key dynamics and neologisms (cross-group dynamics)

that is, a kind of slang for new people who learn how a 'good Buddhist' is supposed to talk and behave, used also in other Vajrayāna organizations

the conceptualizations in this slang are far from the scientific approach -
the clear definitions of terms within traditional studies at monastic contexts

(emic perspective)

or the use of terminology in the field of Tibetology and Buddhist Studies

(etic perspective)

by the example of the *open letter* (2017) and the *Lewis Silkin report* (2018)



"We write to you following the advice of the Dalai Lama, in which he has said that students of Tibetan Buddhist lamas are obliged to communicate their concerns about their teacher:

If one presents the teachings clearly, others benefit. But if someone is supposed to propagate the Dharma and their behavior is harmful, it is our responsibility to criticize this with a good motivation. This is constructive criticism, and you do not need to feel uncomfortable doing it. In "The Twenty Verses on the Bodhisattvas' Vows," it says that there is no fault in whatever action you engage in with pure motivation. Buddhist teachers who abuse sex, power, money, alcohol, or drugs, and who, when faced with legitimate complaints from their own students, do not correct their behavior, should be criticized openly and by name. This may embarrass them and cause them to regret and stop their abusive behavior. Exposing the negative allows space for the positive side to increase. When publicizing such misconduct, it should be made clear that such teachers have disregarded the Buddha's advice. However, when making public the ethical misconduct of a Buddhist teacher, it is only fair to mention their good qualities as well. The Dalai Lama, Dharamsala, India March 1993"



Concerning the discrepancy between public and private behavior :

"This letter is our request to you to stop your unethical and immoral behavior. Your public face is one of wisdom, kindness, humor, warmth and compassion, but your private behavior, the way you conduct yourself behind the scenes, is deeply disturbing and unsettling. A number of us have raised with you privately, our concerns about your behavior in recent years, but you have not changed."

see Standlee, M., Sangye, Damcho, Pistono, M., Standlee, J., Price, G., Condon, M., Goldman, G. (2017). *Open letter to Sogyal Lakar*. <https://www.lionsroar.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Letter-to-Sogyal-Lakar-14-06-2017-.pdf>



- the concept of a stereotype called a '*good Buddhist*'
- rationalizing with the concept of '*crazy wisdom*'
- actions framed as skillful means and the neologism '*karma-purification*'
- actions framed as freeing from the so-called '*ego*'
- the high costs of '*guru yoga*'
- manipulating with '*Rigpa therapy*'



From a psychological perspective, this leads to constant *double bind* which makes people confused and rendered them mentally diseased over time. This was addressed:

Anders, A.I.M. (2019a). Psychological impact of power abuse in buddhist groups and essential aspects in psychotherapeutic interventions for the affected individuals. <https://www.en.transtibmed.ethnologie.uni-muenchen.de/publications/abuse-and-psychotherapy.pdf>

This article was published in German at SFU research bulletin in June 2019:
<http://journals.sfu.ac.at/index.php/sfufb/article/view/245/276>

Neologisms, just as the term 'karma-purification' as rationalizations to silence victims and cross-group key issues were analyzed in the following article:

Anders, A.I.M. (2019b). Silencing and oblivion of psychological trauma, its unconscious aspects, and their impact on the inflation of Vajrayāna An analysis of cross-group dynamics and recent developments in Buddhist groups based on qualitative data, *Religions* 2019, 10, 622; S. 1-23; doi:10.3390/rel10110622 <https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/10/11/622/pdf>

Anders, A.I.M (2020a). Psychological and Societal Implications of Projecting the Shadow on the Feminine in Tibetan Buddhist Contexts, in *Psychosomatic Medicine* (IntechOpen) <https://www.intechopen.com/online-first/psychological-and-societal-implications-of-projecting-the-shadow-on-the-feminine-in-tibetan-buddhist>

Anders, A.I.M & Utsch, M. (2020b). Missbrauch in religiösen Gemeinschaften anhand von Fallbeispielen buddhistischer Gruppen. *Persönlichkeitsstörungen Theorie und Therapie* 3/2020 Glaube, Religion und Sekten, 24(3), 222 – 238, Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta Verlag. DOI: 10.21706/ptt-24-3-222 <https://elibrary.klett-cotta.de/journal/ptt/24/3>
https://www.ezw-berlin.de/downloads/utsch_PTT_2020_Anders_Utsch.pdf



Sawerthal, A. (2018). Das Schweigen der Lamas: Missbrauch im Buddhismus 11.8.2018 <https://www.derstandard.de/story/2000084869577/das-schweigen-der-lamas-missbrauch-im-buddhismus>

Tenzin Peljor (2018). Sogyal Rinpoche: Antworten von Dagpo Rinpoche, Ato Rinpoche und Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo an Rigpa Studenten 27.11.2018 <https://buddhismus-kontrovers.info/sogyal-rinpoche-antworten-von-dagpo-rinpoche-ato-rinpoche-und-jetsunma-tenzin-palmo-an-rigpa-studenten/>

Finnigan, M. & Hogendoorn, R. (2019). *Sex and Violence in Tibetan Buddhism. The Rise and Fall of Sogyal Rinpoche*. Publisher: Jorvik Press.

Newland, T. (2019). *Fallout: Recovering from Abuse in Tibetan Buddhism*. Escarpment Publishing.

Vogd, W. (2019). *Der ermächtigte Meister: Eine systemische Rekonstruktion am Beispiel des Skandals um Sogyal Rinpoche*. Taschenbuch Carl-Auer Verlag GmbH.



"You use your role as a teacher to gain access to young women, and to coerce, intimidate and manipulate them into giving you sexual favors. [...] The ongoing controversies of your sexual abuse that we can read and watch on the Internet are only a small window into your decades of this behavior. Some of us have been subjected to sexual harassment in the form of being told to strip, to show you our genitals (both men and women), to give you oral sex, being groped, asked to give you photos of our genitals, to have sex in your bed with our partners, and to describe to you our sexual relations with our partners. You've ordered your students to photograph your attendants and girlfriends naked, and then forced other students to make photographic collages for you, which you have shown to others. You have offered one of your female attendants to another lama (who is well known in Rigpa) for sex. You have had for decades, and continue to have, sexual relationships with a number of your student attendants, some who are married. You have told us to lie on your behalf, to hide your sexual relationships from your other girlfriends. Publically you claim that your relationships are ordinary, consensual, and proper because you are not a monk. You deny any wrongdoing and have even claimed on occasion that you were seduced. [...] You and others in your organization claim this is how a Buddhist master of 'crazy wisdom' behaves, just like the tantric adepts of the past. We do not believe this to be so and see such claims as attempts to explain away egregious behaviors."

I) 2. example: **actions framed as skillfull means and the neologism
'karma-purification'**



"We trusted for many years that this physical and emotional treatment of students – what you assert to be your 'skillful means' of 'wrathful compassion' in the tradition of 'crazy wisdom' – was done with our best interest at heart in order to free us from our 'habitual patterns'. We no longer believe this to be so. We feel that we and others have been harmed because your actions were not compassionate; rather they demonstrated your lack of discipline and your own frustration. Your physical abuse – which constitutes a crime under the laws of the lands where you have done these acts – have left monks, nuns, and lay students of yours with bloody injuries and permanent scars. This is not second hand information; we have experienced and witnessed your behavior for years."

see Standlee, M., Sangye, Damcho, Pistono, M., Standlee, J., Price, G., Condon, M., Goldman, G. (2017, p. 3). Open letter to Sogyal Lakar. <https://www.lionsroar.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Letter-to-Sogyal-Lakar-14-06-2017-.pdf>



"Your emotional and psychological abuse has been perhaps more damaging than the physical scars you have left on us. When we have worked for you while organizing and setting up the infrastructure for you to teach at different places around the world (Europe, North America, Australia, and India and Nepal), your shaming and threatening have led some of your closest students and attendants to emotional breakdowns. You have always told us to be appreciative of the personal attention that you give, that you were 'pointing out our hidden faults' in our character, and freeing us from 'our self-cherishing ego.' We no longer believe this to be so."

see Standlee, M., Sangye, Damcho, Pistono, M., Standlee, J., Price, G., Condon, M., Goldman, G. (2017, p. 4). Open letter to Sogyal Lakar. <https://www.lionsroar.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Letter-to-Sogyal-Lakar-14-06-2017-.pdf>



manipulation with the name 'Rigpa Therapy' disguised as care:

"As more students verged close to emotional breakdowns because of your 'trainings', you introduced 'Rigpa Therapy' for your closest students. Trained, practising therapists (who are also your students) were given the task of dealing with the pain that was being stirred up in the minds of those who you were abusing physically, emotionally and psychologically. During one-to-one sessions, the therapist heard from the student of your 'crazy wisdom' methods and the trauma that it caused the individual. One such 'Rigpa Therapy' method for processing the trauma was to negate the validity of seeing you, the teacher and instigator, as the source of the trauma. Instead, we were instructed to see old family relationship histories as the issue."

see Standlee, M., Sangye, Damcho, Pistono, M., Standlee, J., Price, G., Condon, M., Goldman, G. (2017, pp. 4-5). Open letter to Sogyal Lakar. <https://www.lionsroar.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Letter-to-Sogyal-Lakar-14-06-2017-.pdf>



"We can no longer stay silent while you harm others in the name of Buddhism. Our deepest wish is to see Buddhism flourish in the West. We no longer want to indulge in the stupidity of seeing the Guru as perfect at any cost. The path does not require us to sacrifice our wisdom to discern, our ethics and morality, or our integrity, on the altar of 'Guru Yoga.'"

see Standlee, M., Sangye, Damcho, Pistono, M., Standlee, J., Price, G., Condon, M., Goldman, G. (2017, pp. 9). Open letter to Sogyal Lakar. <https://www.lionsroar.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Letter-to-Sogyal-Lakar-14-06-2017-.pdf>



From the perspective of exile Tibetan community and Buddhist dignitaries:

a few phrases from Tibetan community:

"feudal system"

"Sogyal is disgraced"

"These lamas, although they don't care about Buddha's teaching, they may care about their face"

commentary of H.H. the Dalai Lama in a public talk at 7.8.2017:

see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0wP4rsM7AZQ&feature=youtu.be> date

Long version of the Video:

see <https://youtu.be/S6yzH-1si8o?t=1h15m10s>



"I feel some of these lama institutions have some sort of influence of the feudal system. That is outdated and must end - that feudal influence. Then eventually a lama institution creates lama politics [DL laughs heartily]. That's very bad. An individual lama's disgrace doesn't matter, but it gives a very bad impression about a monastery or a monk. Very bad. So we must pay more attention. You should not say, "This is my guru. What guru says I must follow." That's totally wrong! Buddha himself mentioned, "You must examine my teaching". Similarly if one particular lama says something, you examine whether this goes well according to Buddha's teaching or according to the circumstances in society. Then you must follow. If the lama says something; if you investigate and it's not proper, then you should not follow the lama's teaching. Even Dalai Lama's teaching; if you find some contradiction you should not follow my teaching. As far as Gelugpa is concerned, Lama Tsonghkapa clearly mentioned; if a lama teaches something that is against the dharma it should be avoided and opposed. If the lama's teaching is in accord with the dharma it should be followed, if it is in discord with the Dharma it should not be followed. Many years ago in Dharmasala at a Western Teachers Conference, some Western Buddhist teachers mentioned some Zen masters and Tibetan Buddhist Masters had created a very bad impression among people. Then I told them them; these people do not follow Buddha's advice, Buddha's teaching. We cannot do. So, the only thing is to make it public, through newspapers, through the radio. Make it public! These lamas, although they don't care about Buddha's teaching, they may care about their face [points at his face, indicating shame]. I told them at that conference, almost 15 years ago I think. Now, recently Sogyal Rinpoche; my very good friend, but he's disgraced. So some of his own students have now made public their criticism."

see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0wP4rsM7AZQ&feature=youtu.be> , date of retrieval: 19.11.2019



"Findings I turn now to the specific allegations against Sogyal Lakar as set out in the Complaint, and my conclusions in respect of them.

The allegations broadly fall into the following categories:

a. Physical abuse.

b. Sexual abuse.

c. Emotional and psychological abuse.

d. Living a lavish, gluttonous and sybaritic lifestyle.

e. Tainting appreciation of Dharma."

Baxter, K. (2018, p. 16). Report to the boards of trustees of: Rigpa fellowship UK, and Rigpa fellowship US. Outcome of an investigation into allegations made against Sogyal Lakar (also known as Sogyal Rinpoche) in a letter dated 14 July 2017.

see:<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/580dbe87e6f2e16700cb79fe/t/5b8f7c1e1ae6cfb38491e668/1536130081917/Lewis+Silkin+report.pdf>



"Sexual abuse It is alleged that Sogyal Lakar:

- a. Used his role to gain access to young women and to coerce, intimidate and manipulate them into giving him sexual favours and has had decades of sexual relationships with students, including underage girls.
- b. Instructed students to strip, show him their genitals, take photos of their genitals and show them to him, give him oral sex, have sex with their partners in his bed and describe sexual relationships to him, as well as lying to cover up relationships with him.
- c. Groped students and asked one of his students to photograph attendants and girlfriends naked, forcing others to make collages of the images for him which were then shown to others.
- d. Offered a female attendant to another lama for sex."

Baxter, K. (2018, p. 23). Report to the boards of trustees of: Rigpa fellowship UK, and Rigpa fellowship US. Outcome of an investigation into allegations made against Sogyal Lakar (also known as Sogyal Rinpoche) in a letter dated 14 July 2017. Online:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/580dbe87e6f2e16700cb79fe/t/5b8f7c1e1ae6cfb38491e668/1536130081917/Lewis+Silkin+report.pdf>



"Allegation that Sogyal Lakar used his role to gain access to young women and to coerce, intimidate and manipulate them into giving him sexual favours and has had decades of sexual relationships with students, including underage girls

Sogyal Lakar is open about the fact that he has sexual relationships; he is not a monk and is not required to remain celibate. He is known to have often had girlfriends who are significantly younger than him and to have had more than one girlfriend at the same time. There is nothing wrong with this, if they are consenting adults. Sogyal Lakar is also known for being attended to by a number of beautiful young women, who form a significant part of the lama care team. Again, on the surface there is nothing wrong with this, however, several witnesses shared their experiences of this role with me and their evidence was very troubling. I am particularly concerned about the vulnerability of the individuals who gave evidence that they were called upon to provide sexual favours to Sogyal Lakar and the apparent abuse of Sogyal's power over them. It was again striking how many similar accounts were provided by different witnesses spanning a considerable time period – it supports a conclusion that Sogyal Lakar has a particular modus operandi when it comes to securing sexual relationships with his students; particularly young women."

Baxter, K. (2018, p. 23). Report to the boards of trustees of: Rigpa fellowship UK, and Rigpa fellowship US. Outcome of an investigation into allegations made against Sogyal Lakar (also known as Sogyal Rinpoche) in a letter dated 14 July 2017. see:<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/580dbe87e6f2e16700cb79fe/t/5b8f7c1e1ae6cfb38491e668/1536130081917/Lewis+Silkin+report.pdf>



"First-hand accounts Witness K shared the following information with me: 'When I was 18 or 19, he asked me to come and meet him at his personal shrine in his house. He said he had had a dream about me and it would be good if I worked for him as an attendant. He asked if I wanted to and I said yes. I understood it would be like a PA but the uber rich version, bringing him anything and everything he might need including food, laundry, cleaning and carrying his bags. He said it's really important that you never talk to anyone about anything that goes on while you're working, especially don't tell [a family member also in Rigpa] as it will damage [that person's] view and relationship with the dharma. I said OK. I didn't expect this to mean there would be anything awful, but I understood I would have information about what he spent his money on and what he did which he would want to keep private. I was very young and emotionally vulnerable; he knew this. One day he showed me some sexy photos of [another student] on the beach to see if I was shocked. I wasn't. Within three months of me arriving, I was helping him one evening to get ready for bed with [another student]. I had to bring his hot water. He suddenly asked me to lick and touch his genitals. He said it in a jovial way and I wasn't sure if he was serious. [The other student] smiled and said 'yes, do it'. I tried but I freaked out and he said 'oh, that's OK' and he dismissed me. The next day I felt very uncomfortable and said I was not well and stayed in bed. A couple of hours later I was called and told he wanted to see me in the garden straight away."

[continuation at the next slide]



"I went to the garden reluctantly and he started screaming abuse at me, saying 'you think I'm attracted to you, why would I be?' He was aggressive and it was terrifying, I was not used to being yelled at. I started to cry and felt panicked. I said I didn't think that, but felt bad because I had failed him and his test. He immediately turned nice and said 'oh no, you did well'. I felt shaken and was not OK with it. I had no one to talk to. I then went to [another country] with him [as part of the lama care team] and I was leaning over to give him something. He put his hand down my top and touched me. He said my nipples were young. I felt shocked. [Some time later], I attended a retreat and was feeling better and more on track. I was alone with him in the shrine room and he asked me to give him a blow job. I tried to be a good Buddhist and see it as a teaching. It was an out of body experience. I didn't want to do it but I did. I didn't do it for long and he then dismissed me. It felt like a power play, he didn't seem particularly aroused'."

Baxter, K. (2018, p. 24). Report to the boards of trustees of: Rigpa fellowship UK, and Rigpa fellowship US. Outcome of an investigation into allegations made against Sogyal Lakar (also known as Sogyal Rinpoche) in a letter dated 14 July 2017. see:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/580dbe87e6f2e16700cb79fe/t/5b8f7c1e1ae6cfb38491e668/1536130081917/Lewis+Silkin+report.pdf>



"Witness L recounted the following experience which took place when Witness L was aged around twenty: 'Sogyal asked me to take my clothes off. It was just before he was about to teach and I had been ironing his clothes in the lounge area of his hotel room. He was on the bed in his underwear and called me into his bedroom. I laughed and made a joke about not wearing nice underwear. I think my reaction made clear that I wasn't going to do it. I felt shocked, nervous and vulnerable. He dismissed me and I went back to ironing his robe, my heart was pounding and I wanted to run'."

Baxter, K. (2018, p. 24). Report to the boards of trustees of: Rigpa fellowship UK, and Rigpa fellowship US. Outcome of an investigation into allegations made against Sogyal Lakar (also known as Sogyal Rinpoche) in a letter dated 14 July 2017. see:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/580dbe87e6f2e16700cb79fe/t/5b8f7c1e1ae6cfb38491e668/1536130081917/Lewis+Silkin+report.pdf>



"I also received further, second hand accounts of similar, inappropriate sexual behaviour by Sogyal Lakar from Witnesses B, C, E, M and S, the details of which are set out in the confidential annexe because they relate to people who have not consented to that information being included in this report."

Baxter, K. (2018, p. 25). Report to the boards of trustees of: Rigpa fellowship UK, and Rigpa fellowship US. Outcome of an investigation into allegations made against Sogyal Lakar (also known as Sogyal Rinpoche) in a letter dated 14 July 2017. see:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/580dbe87e6f2e16700cb79fe/t/5b8f7c1e1ae6cfb38491e668/1536130081917/Lewis+Silkin+report.pdf>



Addressing the stake holders and dignitaries of exile Tibetan Buddhist context in

What Now? In the Wake of Spiritual Abuse in Rigpa. Tsoknyi Rinpoche Responds.
28.12.2017

"The email was sent to Jetsun Khandro Rinpoche, Dzigar Kontrul, Tsoknyi Rinpoche, Ringu Tulku, Jetsun Palmo, Kamdrul Rinpoche, Philippe Cornu, Alain Beauregard, Christine Longaker, and Pascale Tanant. We only received replies from Jetsun Khandro, Dzigar Kontrul, Jetsun Palmo and Tsoknyi Rinpoche. Jetsun Khandro and Dzigar Kontrul were decent enough to reply, but essentially only said that they were praying for the sangha. Jetsun Palmo was candid in her reply but did not want her comment made public"

see Newland, T. & members of the Beyond the Temple community (2018). *What Now? In the Wake of Spiritual Abuse in Rigpa. Tsoknyi Rinpoche Responds.* 28.12.2017

<https://whatnow727.wordpress.com/2017/12/28/tsoknyi-rinpoche-responds/> date of retrieval: 18.11.2020

Tsoknyi Rinpoche "I do value my long-term friendship with Sogyal Rinpoche and want to acknowledge that he has helped many people with teachings, books and the dharma to flourish in a good way around the world. At the same time and apart from my personal relationships with him as with many Rinpoches and lamas, the ethical core of dharma is what is most essential"

see Newland, T. & members of the Beyond the Temple community (2018). What Now? In the Wake of Spiritual Abuse in Rigpa. Tsoknyi Rinpoche Responds. 28.12.2017

<https://whatnow727.wordpress.com/2017/12/28/tsoknyi-rinpoche-responds/> date of retrieval: 18.11.2020

Mingyur Rinpoche agreed to by Tsoknyi Rinpoche: "the violation of ethical norms needs to be addressed. If physical or sexual abuse has occurred, or there is financial impropriety or other breaches of ethics, it is in the best interest of the students, the community, and ultimately the teacher, to address the issues. Above all, if someone is being harmed, the safety of the victim comes first. This is not a Buddhist principle. This is a basic human value and should never be violated."

Mingyur R. <https://www.lionsroar.com/treat-everyone-as-the-buddha/> 2.11.2017



An Email to Lamas: "We are writing to ask you to break the silence and provide a statement reassuring all Dharma students that the abusive behaviours outlined in the attached letter and confirmed by the Lewis Silkin report are unacceptable to you. Not only do students want to avoid being harmed themselves, but also they do not want to support or learn from a lama who harms others, or who supports harmful behaviour. We believe that the teachings from such a lama cannot be reliable and that a lama should provide an ethical example for adults and children alike. We also do not want to follow someone who might ask us to compromise our ethics by accepting abusive behaviour without complaint or criticism—as Sogyal Lakar expected."

see Newland, T. & members of the Beyond the Temple community (2018). What Now? In the Wake of Spiritual Abuse in Rigpa. An Email to Lamas. 21.8.2018. <https://whatnow727.wordpress.com/2018/10/21/an-email-to-lamas/> , date of retrieval: 18.11.2020

Replies with comment in German:

Tenzin Peljor (2018). Sogyal Rinpoche: Antworten von Dagpo Rinpoche, Ato Rinpoche und Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo an Rigpa Studenten, 27.11.2018 <https://buddhismus-kontrovers.info/sogyal-rinpoche-antworten-von-dagpo-rinpoche-ato-rinpoche-und-jetsunma-tenzin-palmo-an-rigpa-studenten/> date of retrieval: 18.11.2020



3. continuation of the timeline (autumn 2018-2020)



2018

1. Property inspection at Lerab Ling/ France
2. Withdrawal of people in leading positions
3. Opening of an investigation by the Charity Commission for England and Wales (currently ongoing)

2019

1. 8.4.2019: Analysing the leadership group in the organization *Rigpa* versus those abused by Pawula, S.
2. 12.4.2019 disqualification of Patrick Gaffney from acting as a trustee in all charities is for a period of 8 years until 12 April 2027 by the Charity Commission
3. 13.6.2019: Removal of another trustee, Susan Burrows by the Charity Commission
4. 28.8.2019: Death of von Sogyal Lakar
5. 4.9.2019: petition *Dharma Teachers: Please Retract Your Homages to Sogyal*.
by Carreon, C.

"They found a lot of cash and collected testimonies."

see <https://france3-regions.francetvinfo.fr/occitanie/herault/herault-temple-bouddhiste-lerab-ling-roqueredonde-sa-communaute-perquisitionnes-1546754.html>, at 5.10.2018

" Hérault : le temple bouddhiste Lérab Ling de Roqueredonde et sa communauté perquisitionnés

La quiétude de la communauté bouddhiste et du centre de retraite Lérab Ling à Roqueredonde dans l'Hérault a été une nouvelle fois mise à mal. Mi-septembre, les forces de l'ordre ont perquisitionné le site sur le Larzac. Ils ont trouvé beaucoup d'argent liquide et recueilli des témoignages.



"

see <https://france3-regions.francetvinfo.fr/occitanie/herault/herault-temple-bouddhiste-lerab-ling-roqueredonde-sa-communaute-perquisitionnes-1546754.html>, at 5.10.2018



Announcement of the withdrawal of people in leading positions at the German Rigpa Website:

"In den Empfehlungen des von Rigpa beauftragten Berichts gegen die Anschuldigungen von Rigpa und Sogyal Rinpoche heisst es unter anderem:

3. Die Rigpa-Leitung in jedem Land (die Vorstände oder gleichwertige Positionen) und das Vision Board sollten gegebenenfalls neu besetzt werden, um sicherzustellen,

a. dass deren Mitglieder Rigpa nicht mit den in diesem Bericht genannten schädigenden Ereignissen in Verbindung stehen und somit das Programm der erforderlichen Änderungen glaubhaft voranbringen können;

*b. dass sich deren Mitglieder alle öffentlich dem Prinzip verpflichten, dass innerhalb von Rigpa Missbrauch von niemandem und gegen niemanden (einschließlich der Lehrer*innen) toleriert wird, und*

c. dass, wo immer möglich, einige Mitglieder der Leitung nicht mit der Schülerschaft verbunden sind; in Großbritannien zum Beispiel würden Laintreuhänder als solche anerkannt werden"



"Als Folge dieser Empfehlung treten Patrick Gaffney und Philip Philippou aus allen Leitungsfunktionen innerhalb aller Rigpa-Organisationen zurück. Dies schließt ihre Mitarbeit im Rigpa Vision Board ein. Die aktuelle Zusammensetzung des Vision-Boards findet ihr hier. Dominique Side, Leiterin der Kongregation Lerab Ling, Rigpas Retreat-Zentrum in Südfrankreich wird sich aus dieser Position zurückziehen. Bei den anstehenden Wahlen im November wird sie nicht mehr kandidieren.

Philip Philippou ist aus dem Vorstand des Rigpa e.V. ausgeschieden. Auf der Mitgliederversammlung am 24. Oktober 2018 hat der Rigpa e.V. neue Vorstandsmitglieder gewählt (wir berichten darüber in Kürze).

Diese Veränderungen sind eingeleitet und werden bis Ende November vollzogen sein. Alle drei sind weiterhin entschlossen, die Sangha und Rigpas Vision auf jede Art und Weise zu unterstützen, die angemessen und hilfreich ist."

see <https://www.rigpa.de/langjaehrige-in-leitenden-rigpa-funktionen-sind-zurueck-getreten/> date of retrieval: 27.10.2020



29.11.2018: New Charity Inquiry: Rigpa Fellowship

"Charity Commission investigates Rigpa Fellowship. The Charity Commission, the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales, is today announcing that it has opened a statutory inquiry into Rigpa Fellowship (279315). The inquiry was opened on 8 November 2018. The charity, which is based in London, has objects to advance the Buddhist religion, and provides religious education, training and activities. The Commission has been engaging with the charity since August 2017 over serious concerns about adult safeguarding. The regulator's concerns have escalated in the course of this engagement, prompting the opening of a statutory inquiry. The inquiry will examine the charity's governance, policies and practices with regard to adult safeguarding, particularly in relation to:

- its response, general handling and disclosure to the Commission and other agencies in relation to serious adult safeguarding incidents
- its responsibility to provide a safe environment for its beneficiaries, staff and other charity workers in the delivery of its programmes"



"More generally the inquiry will examine the charity's:

- recruitment and supervision of its employees, volunteers and other charity workers
- financial controls and their application
- responsibility to maintain its reputation as a charity which can be entrusted with public support and the confidence of its beneficiaries, staff and volunteers

It is the Commission's policy, after an inquiry has concluded, to publish a report detailing what issues the inquiry looked at, what actions were undertaken as part of the inquiry and what the outcomes were."

see <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-charity-inquiry-rigpa-fellowship>, date of retrieval: 29.11.2018

D) 3. disqualification of Patrick Gaffney from acting as a trustee in all charities is for a period of 8 years until 12 April 2027



12 April 2019:

disqualification of Patrick Gaffney from acting as a trustee in all charities is for a period of 8 years until 12 April 2027

see "Register of removed Trustees":

http://apps.charitycommission.gov.uk/trusteeregister/result.aspx?namepart=gaffney&fbclid=IwAR2DnL2J6a1NkA20wx-dga1-iK4A4EIOtmiSULg9mxaqPWN__Yr__k4nQ2A



"Charity Commission disqualifies trustee from Rigpa Fellowship Trustee failed to protect people who came into contact with the charity" published 13 June 2019

From: The Charity Commission

"A trustee has been disqualified from all charities for a period of 8 years as a result of an ongoing Charity Commission inquiry into the Rigpa Fellowship charity. Patrick Gaffney was serving as a trustee of the charity, which is based in London and has objects to advance the Buddhist religion. Evidence uncovered by the Commission shows Mr Gaffney had knowledge of instances and allegations of improper acts and sexual and physical abuse against students at the charity. Mr Gaffney failed to take appropriate action in response to this information and is therefore responsible for misconduct and/or mismanagement in the administration of the charity. He was entered onto the list of disqualified trustees on 12 April 2019."

[continuation next slide]



"Amy Spiller, Head of Investigations Team at the Charity Commission, said: We are continuing to investigate concerns about this charity via our ongoing statutory inquiry. However, the safety and wellbeing of beneficiaries and those that come into contact with the charity, must always be a priority for the trustees and staff of a charity. This trustee has been disqualified with immediate effect for failing in his duty to protect those who came into contact with the charity. The public rightly expect charities to be safe places, where people are free from harm. Where we find charities that are failing in this essential duty, we will take action to remove those responsible. The Commission has been engaging with the charity since August 2017 over serious concerns about adult safeguarding. Concerns escalated during this engagement, prompting the opening of a statutory inquiry on 8 November 2018. It is the Commission's policy to publish a report at the conclusion of the case."

see <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/charity-commission-disqualifies-trustee-from-rigpa-fellowship> date of retrieval: 1.11.2020



"Charity regulator removes trustee from Rigpa Fellowship Trustee permanently removed from trusteeship after failing to protect people" published 23 September 2019 by The Charity Commission

"A charity trustee has been removed from her role and banned from trusteeship, after failing to respond appropriately to serious abuse within Rigpa Fellowship (registered charity number 279315). A statutory inquiry by the Charity Commission has found that Susan Burrows had knowledge of instances and allegations of improper acts and sexual and physical abuse against students at the charity, but failed to take appropriate action in response. Ms Burrows either failed to recognise or sought to downplay the seriousness of allegations, and is responsible for misconduct and/or mismanagement in the administration of the charity. Ms Burrows was therefore removed from her position by the inquiry and entered onto the list of removed trustees on 20 September 2019. She is also permanently disqualified from serving as a trustee or senior manager of any charity in England and Wales, under section 178 of the Charities Act. "

[continuation at the next slide]



"Amy Spiller, Head of Investigations Team at the Charity Commission, said: Serious failings in the leadership of this charity led to people it was supposed to help being harmed and let down. Trustees hold important positions of trust, and are rightly expected to take all appropriate steps to keep people safe. The appalling abuses and failings that occurred here run counter to everything people associate with charity. It is right that we have been able to hold those responsible to account. I hope this will bring some comfort to those so badly affected by what went on at Rigpa Fellowship. The safety and wellbeing of beneficiaries and those that come into contact with a charity must always be a priority for its trustees and staff. The Commission has been engaging with Rigpa Fellowship since August 2017 over serious concerns about adult safeguarding. Concerns escalated during this engagement, prompting the opening of the statutory inquiry in November 2018, and in April 2019 the inquiry disqualified former trustee, Patrick Gaffney. The inquiry continues. The Commission intends to publish a full report, setting out its findings and conclusions, in due course."

see <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/charity-regulator-removes-trustee-from-rigpa-fellowship>



"When I read the recent Rigpa International Newsletter, titled 'Sangha Connection,' I sense a profound disconnect between the leadership of Rigpa and those who feel concern about the abuse that has occurred in Rigpa—both victim/survivors and everyone else who felt deeply impacted. [...] All the while Rigpa celebrates itself, there are victim/survivors and other disenchanted former members who struggle in recovery. [...] especially the kind of trauma that occurs as a result of repeated abuse over a number of years—the kind of abuse that occurred to a number of students in Rigpa. If You Really Cared If you really cared about the students who were abused by Sogyal Rinpoche, you would know this. You would make an effort to become trauma informed. And once you were, if you really took the information in, out of respect for what they endured and knowing its long-term effects, you could never write a newsletter that begins as this one did. While I might seem like a killjoy, I would prefer to open a Rigpa International Sangha Connection newsletter and read, as the first entry, an announcement of how Rigpa teams worldwide had attended an in-depth training to learn about trauma, its impacts, and how to provide trauma-informed care. That would give me hope that real change is taking place in Rigpa [...] Making it easy to forget that abuse has ever occurred. This is the Rigpa modus operandi: Riding It Out."



In tiefer Trauer müssen wir mitteilen, dass Sogyal Rinpoche am Mittwoch, den 28. August 2019, aufgrund von Komplikationen im Zuge seiner Krebsbehandlung im Kreise naher Schüler*innen und Freund*innen verstorben ist.

Sogyal Rinpoche verweilt zur Zeit in Meditation (Thukdam), dem Zustand der Erkenntnis der Natur des Geistes, in dem verwirklichte Praktizierende über den Moment des Todes hinaus verweilen.

publicly framed to be 'thukdam' as of "highly realized beings".



Petition: *Dharma Teachers: Please Retract Your Homages to Sogyal.* (Carreon, C. 2019).

see <https://www.change.org/p/mindrolling-jets%C3%BCn-khandro-dharma-teachers-please-retract-your-homages-to-sogyal> date of retrieval: 4.9.2019



Presentation of testimonies of probands from the current research project *TransTibMed* and further analysis

Duration of the research project: August 2018- July 2021

Methods: qualitative and quantitative methods

German and English version of the Website differ in terms of the citations of probands:

probands who wrote in English: <https://www.en.transtibmed.ethnologie.uni-muenchen.de/testimonies/research-results/index.html>

Probands who wrote in German: https://www.transtibmed.ethnologie.uni-muenchen.de/zeitzeugenberichte/deutsch/deutsche_zitate_forschung/index.html



"Typical public methods at Rigpa: public humiliation, abuse, exposure, exaggerated false praise, promoting or degrading people in the 'Rigpa Ranking'. Promoting and exploiting intrigues, power games and denunciation among students. Encouraging a sense of value within the collective and for the individual by cleverly presenting the Lama and his organisation as unique, exceptional, significant, superior to others, more advanced, etc. and then reducing the pupils to pocket size by public speech. I have called this attracting and domestizing. Secrecy as a measure to create unofficial, subtle, non-formal structures within the so-called 'sangha'. Ideologically, this is justified by the selective use of specific parts of texts from the canon of Tibetan Buddhist texts, partly in a quite subtle and manipulative ways. Encouraging unhealthy ambitiousness and worldly interest by publicly displaying students' diligence, dedication, working enthusiasm, readiness to donate, etc. by setting up a gold standard in devotion. Great "devotion" = greater progress on the path, thus also greater appreciation by the collective, thus higher ranking. The longing for alternatives for family and social belonging is being exploited to a very great extent."



"Very often utterly incompetent individuals were employed, I got the impression the permanent chaos associated with that allows for better manipulation."

"There was a subtle pressure to only take teachings in the group. If people went outside and some did the teacher could mention them publicly at teachings. The people who did go outside the group for teachings just ignored the lama."

"I saw directly that while they present a very acceptable public image behind that is a lineage of pure violence. They believe they are accountable to no one and are quite capable of taking someone's head off believing they are above any law."

"My person [...] was ridiculed accordingly, portrayed as psychologically 'strange'. Generally, this happened with most 'dissidents', this was one of the reasons to leave, any form of ethics was missing completely. True was what was in the master's mind or what was considered so. One could call it a 'general refusal to dialogue'. "

see <https://www.en.transtibmed.ethnologie.uni-muenchen.de/testimonies/research-results/index.html>



"It was striking that Rigpa wanted to find out if and which other teacher I would turn to. [...] When I first came to a seminar, rather soon after I had left, I met a 'senior student' of Rigpa, we knew each other. He was a bit uneasy about me. He had already conveyed messages from Sogyal Lakar to other Lamas on several previous occasions, as I knew. Anyway, as Rigpas' representative, he paid his respects and handed over a letter. Then the Lama intensely looked at me, and upon parting he told me to come again, in a compassionate tone. I cannot prove it, but I know of similar cases where lamas were informed that student xyz would come, he/she would have difficulties, or too much lung or something similar. At this point I would consider that as a precaution against negative information about Sogyal Lakar which ex-disciples could tell."

"The lamas were already qualified by definition, the problem for me was that it had to be trust in advance, and thus also the door opener to blind trust. By definition, in this case: it was never questioned. Many lamas mention their time here and there with this and that master, this and that Geshe and other titles, but that is not verifiable, and therefore rather theoretical. [...] That of course is opening the gates to all charlatans."



"Everything is completely intransparent, and a lot happens because one knows the right people and is then integrated in a network of favors, obligations, etc. From a certain amount of donations, acquaintance level, there are certain privileges, with the danger of being brought back to normal zero."

"I left immediately I heard about the abuse because I knew one person who highlighted it and knew they were honest and reliable. No help with the decision, didn't need it. I was already separated from the group or organisation so leaving was easy."



Summery and Impact:

1. decontextualized terms and concepts established as Buddhism in the West
2. which are crucial concepts that are currently driving the dynamics with key phrases, e.g. '*pure view*', '*karma-purification*', '*guru yoga*' and '*crazy wisdom*'
3. used as rationalizations for abuse and violence
4. have had huge effects on individuals and groups for about 40 years
5. resulting in societal, legal and medical challenges
6. financial and power profits for a few individuals, who consider themselves chosen elites ('*inner circles*') or teachers in context
7. lack of consequences towards nonprofessionals in key positions there who publicly slander healthy individuals one wants to get rid of with the term '*rlung disease*' (being mentally sick, psychotic)
8. transgenerational trauma in these international organizations



"Bei Rigpa wurde - ich setze das als bekannt voraus - die 'verrückte Weisheit ' praktiziert, in einer durch Sogyal Lakar modifizierten, von Chögyam Trungpa entlehnten Variante. Alles was der Meister tut, gilt als Arbeit mit dem Ego des SchülerIn. Der Meister ist allwissend und omnipotent und was auch immer er tut ist die Anwendung geschickter Mittel. Damit ist rasche Erleuchtung zu erlangen, so wird suggeriert. Um so besser die Person dies versteht, also hingebungsvoll sich unterwirft, umso fortgeschrittener darf sie sich fühlen. Übliche öffentliche Methoden bei Rigpa: öffentliche Erniedrigung, Beschimpfung, Blossstellung, übertriebenes falsches Loben, Personen im 'Rigpa-Ranking' befördern oder degradieren. Intrigen und Machtspiele und Denunziantentum unter Schülern fördern und ausnutzen. Erzeugen von Wertgefühlen fürs Kollektiv und den einzelnen durch cleveres Darstellen des Lamas und seiner Organisation als einzigartig, herausragend, bedeutungsvoll, erhaben über andere, weiter fortgeschritten usw. einerseits, dann wiederum Reduzieren der SchülerInnen auf Taschenformat durch entsprechende öffentliche Ansprachen. Anködem und domestizieren habe ich das genannt. Geheimniskrämerei als Maßnahme zu Schaffung inoffizieller, subtiler, nichtformeller Strukturen innerhalb der sogenannten 'Sangha'. Das wird durch gezielten Einsatz ausgesuchter Teiltexthe aus dem Kanon tibetisch-buddhistischer Texte ideologisch begründet, zum Teil sehr subtil und manipulativ. Anfachen von krankhaften [m] Ehrgeiz und weltlichem Interesse indem durch SchülerInnen öffentlich zur Schau gestellte Fleiß, Eifer, Arbeitswut, Spendenbereitschaft usw. als Goldstandart für Hingabe installiert werden. Große 'Hingabe'= großer Fortschritt auf dem Pfad, somit auch größere Anerkennung im Kollektiv, dadurch höheres Ranking. Der Wunsch nach Ersatzstrukturen für Familie [Familie] und soziale Zugehörigkeit wird in sehr starkem Maße ausgenutzt. Offensichtliche Bedürfnisse nach Anerkennung und Identität zur Kompensation von Mangelgefühlen werden instrumentalisiert und als Antriebsquelle genutzt, allerdings weniger um Buddhismus ernsthaft zu praktizieren sondern um Menschen gut zu manipulieren. Hingabe als Maßeinheit wird durch die übliche Gruppenmechanismen zu jedem SchülerIn transportiert, bis ganz nach unten zum Neuschüler. Wer eher gruppenkonform ist übernimmt dies bald, oder er/sie wird die Gruppe bald verlassen, da inkompatibel. Autorisierte Vertreter gibt es, die Anwendung der 'besonderen' Mittel bleibt allerdings stets beim 'Meister', das wird auch kontrolliert durch die gut funktionierende Buschtrommel. Allerdings neigten bei Rigpa die höheren Würdenträger durchaus zu autoritärem Gehabe und Despotismus [Despotismus] solange keine Gefahr bestand damit aufzufliegen. In anderen Traditionen wird eher verhalten mit Schüler gearbeitet, weniger direkt." (LY22Z)



"Verweigerung jeglicher Diskussion seitens Rigpa, ich empfand die Situation als hoffnungslos festgefahren. Meine Person als Kritiker wurde entsprechend lächerlich gemacht, als psychisch 'eigenartig' dargestellt. I.d.R geschah dies mit den meisten 'Dissidenten', das war mit ein Grund zu gehen, irgendeine Form von Ethik fehlte völlig. Richtig war das was im Sinne des Meister war oder dafür gehalten wurde. Generelle Dialogverweigerung könnte man es nennen. Andere Organisationen: Selbst wenn der Lama okay ist und keine SchülerInnen missbraucht, entstehen leider immer verschiedene Phänomene: Anbetung des Lama auf westliche, blinde und scheinnaive Art und Weise, vollkommen undurchsichtige Strukturen bezüglich Geld, Macht, Entscheidungswege. Fixierung auf Karriere in der Rangordnung in der 'Sangha'. Willige Adaptation autoritärer Strukturen. Wer sich da nicht einfügen will oder kann, fällt da früher oder später raus, der soziale Druck ist oft subtil aber sehr hoch. Vermischung von dem ganzen subkulturellem Mischmasch aus Hippietum, New Age Kleinideologien, grünalternativen Verhaltensweisen mit dem traditionellen Ballast aus Asien: Feudalistische Strukturen, spezielle Hierarchien, überkommene Interpretationen usw. Versuche psychologische Methoden mit Buddhismus zu vermischen." (LY22Z)

"Alles komplett intransparent, und sehr viel passiert, weil man die richtigen Leute kennt und dann eingebunden ist in ein Netz aus Gefälligkeiten, Verpflichtungen usw. Ab einer gewissen Spendenhöhe, Bekanntschaftsgrad gibt es gewisse Privilegien, verbunden mit der Gefahr wieder auf Normalnull gebracht zu werden. Sehr oft wurden komplett inkompetente Personen eingesetzt, ich habe den Eindruck, das das damit verbundene dauerhaft leichte Chaos es ermöglicht, besser zu manipulieren. Insbesondere bei 'Care' waren meistens krasse Fehlbesetzungen dabei. Letzen Endes wurden alle Positionen von Bedeutung aus der Führungsspitze um P.Phillipou getroffen, und Sogyal Lakar spielte da nach Lust und Laune herum." (LY22Z)

"Damals habe ich getan, was ich für richtig hielt. Von allem, wo ich kein gutes Gefühl hatte, habe ich mich fern gehalten. Z.B den 'inner circle'. Ich war zu weit weg von den Top 100, um wirklich in direkte Befehle involviert zu werden. Intuitiv wollte ich da auch nicht hin. Da war mir offengesagt, viel zu viel krank." (LY22Z)

"Ich war mehr als 15 Jahre bei Rigpa, bin dort ausgestiegen, da ich Rigpa als zunehmend als Sekte empfunden habe, bevor Rigpa, ausgelöst durch den mittlerweile in 'Fachkreisen' bekannten 'Brief', als zumindest kultähnlich wahrnehmbar war." (LY22Z)



"Sogyal Lakar übte beinahe jegliche Art von psychischer Gewalt aus, angeblich zum Besten der SchülerInnen. An dem Tag, als ich kapiert habe, das das völliger Blödsinn ist als Lehrmethode, und sich alle, die sich darauf einlassen, irgendwie geistig blockiert sind, habe ich meinen Austritt erklärt. Ein Lama wie Orgyen Tobgyal war zu seinen Mönchen einfach brutal und despotisch." (LY22Z)

"Die Lamas waren ja schon per se qualifiziert, das Problem lag für mich darin, das [dass] es Vertrauen auf Vorschub war, und somit auch der Türöffner zum blinden Vertrauen. Per se : in diesem Fall: es wurde nie hinterfragt. Viele Lamas erwähnen irgendwo ihre Zeit hier und da mit diesem und jenem Meister, diesen und jenen Geshe und sonstigen Titel, das ist ja unüberprüfbar, und somit eher theoretisch. Speziell im Vajrayana und Dzogchen/Mahamudra zählt nur die 'Realisierung' , die akademisch unüberprüfbar ist, und vom Altmeister bestätigt wurde. Das öffnet natürlich allen Scharlatanen Tor und Tür. Und wenn jemand ein 3jahresretreat abgeschlossen hat, mit welchem Ergebnis? Reichen eloquentes Auftreten und ein gutes Gedächtnis schon? Für mich qualifiziert sich ein Lehrer durch das Paket aus Verhalten, Wissen, Vermögen Wissen zu vermitteln usw. Titel müssen nicht unbedingt viel bedeuten." (LY22Z)

"Öffentliche Brandmarkung, auch namentlich, auch Bekanntmachung wenn Person XYZ einsichtig wird. Es kann bei vermögendere Personen schon ein grosser sozialer Druck entstehen, zu spenden. Wer will schon markiert und ausgegrenzt werden. Wer möchte schon öffentlich als 'faul' gedisst werden, oder als Problemfall bemitleidet werden. Die wenigstens[wenigsten]. Allein über die Maßnahme 'soziales Ranking' kann sehr gut gesteuert werden." (LY22Z)

see https://www.transibmed.ethnologie.uni-muenchen.de/zeitzeugenberichte/deutsch/deutsche_zitate_forschung/index.html



"bei einem Rigpaseminar wurden die 'Stewards', (man steht z.B an den Türen, sammelt Geld ein usw.) instruiert, das 'Rinpoche' von einer Frau verfolgt würde, die durchgeknallt wäre. Sie hätte es auf ihn abgesehen, und wäre aus Frustration eventuell zu allem möglichem bereit. Wir sollten wachsam sein und jede eigenartige Person melden! Strikte Geheimhaltung! Heute weis [weiß] ich, das [dass] damals ein Rechtsverfahren gegen Sogyal Lakar irgendwo im Entstehen war, und die Sangha schon mal darauf vorbereitet wurde, jegliche Äußerungen gegen in [ihn] als Werk von durchgeknallten und frustrierten Frauen zu betrachten. Ständig wurden solche Gerüchte gestreut, und somit in der Folge ein ernsthaftes Prüfen von Vorwürfen möglichst unterbunden. Auch wurde über ältere Schüler, die auf einmal weg waren, ein Siegel der Verschwiegenheit konstruiert, es war Standart [Standard] nicht darüber zu reden, wer es trotzdem tat wurde von lokalen Funktionären auf die eine oder andere Art zurechtgewiesen. Die höheren Funktionäre [Funktionäre] fühlten sich einer Art 'Omerta' verpflichtet, das war sogar ein Zeichen, weiter oben zuzugehören (Weisst du, ich darf leider nicht darüber reden) Lamas, die sich von Rigpa abwendeten, wurden nie mehr erwähnt, wer nach Ihnen fragte, wie z.b nach Sogyal lakars Bruder, Dzogchen Rinpoche, oder Dodrupchen Rinpoche, wurde strikt ermahnt sich auf die Praxis zu konzentrieren." (LY22Z)

"Bei Rigpa: Je höher die Position, um so höher der Grad an Blindheit. Und der Fisch stinkt immer vom Kopf. Wer in einem autoritärem Gefüge ganz oben steht, und durch seine Position als Lama per se über besondere Fähigkeiten verfügt sollte auch für die Folgen seines Tuns die verantwortung übernehmen. Verantwortung in Gruppen haben in der Regel ältere SchülerInnen, die unter Umständen entsprechend indoktriniert sind und das notwendige Geschick mitbringen. Soziologische Untersuchungen könnten eventuell ergeben, das 80% der Führungskräfte in westlich-buddhistischen Gruppierungen weiblich sind, bis auf die Positionen ganz oben. [...] Rigpa- Care: fast nur Frauen." (LY22Z)

"Als ich von Rigpa weg und zu einem anderen Lama gegangen bin, habe ich die Erfahrung gemacht, das man sich schnell isoliert, wenn man nicht blinden Eifer demonstriert, sich vollkommen allem unterordnet, und sich auch von den Funktionären einiges gefallen lassen soll. Man wird unter Umständen als 'Samayabrecher ' diskiminiert" (LY22Z)



"Als der Groschen bei mir fiel, habe ich mit meiner Frau gesprochen, die auch bei Rigpa war, und ihr gesagt, das ich gehe. Ich treffe leicht Entscheidungen und bin konsequent. Meine Frau ging etwas später. Mein mentaler und äusserer Prozess dauerte ca. 6 Wochen, bis ich offiziell draussen war - ich wollte noch dem Meister meine Meinung sagen, was mir nicht geglückt ist. In bestimmten Bereichen [...] habe ich zur Aufklärung über Rigpa [...] beigetragen, da durchaus mindestens 1 fanatische Rigpaanhängerin mir wenigstens Kot an die Haustüre geschmiert hat und ähnliches. Hätte ich Beweise gehabt hätte ich sie angezeigt. Das hat sich irgendwann gelegt. Diverse 'Rigpafreunde' konnten meine Entscheidung nicht verstehen und i.d R Regel wollte sich keiner mit meinen Gründen auseinandersetzen. Für einige war sogar klar, das jemand wie ich, der Rigpa kritisiert, psychische Problem haben muss. Es gab 'Hilfsangebote' seitens Rigpa, die ich nichtdankend ablehnte, ich kannte das Rigpa-Care Department ausreichend gut, um darin garantiert keinen Sinn zu sehen.[...] Das der Rigpaboss dann öffentlich schlecht über mich sprach, bestätigte mich nur in meiner Entscheidung. Erst sollte verschwiegen werden, das ich ging, als das nicht funktionierte wurde halt die 'Sangha' entsprechend 'informiert'. Und ich war wirklich ein kleines Licht bei Rigpa..... und es gab ja immer wieder Wellen von Aussteigern. Andere Organisationen: Wenn ich feststelle das ein Lehrer oder Lama oder Roshi grundsätzlich offenen Dialog verweigert, die Verantwortung für alles weniger Gute in seinem Laden ausschließlich den SchülerInnen zuschreibt, finanzielle Intransparenz herrscht, einseitige Machtstrukturen herrschen, kulturelle Ignoranz gegenüber weltlichen Menschen herrscht, insgesamt ungesunde Strukturen überwiegen z.B blinde Anbetung, starker Aberglaube, Selbstaufgabe als Beispiele, dann bin ich weg. Auffallend war, das Rigpa unbedingt rausbekommen wollte, ob und welchem anderen Lehrer ich mich zuwenden würde. Es war durchaus einer mit klingenden Namen. Als ich das erste Mal zu einem Seminar kam, recht bald nach meinem Austritt, traf ich dort einen 'Seniorschüler' von Rigpa, wir kannten uns. Er war mir gegenüber etwas unsicher. Er hatte schon öfter Botschaften von Sogyal Lakar an andere Lamas transportiert, wie ich wusste. Jedenfalls machte er als Representant [Repräsentant] Rigpas seine Aufwartung und übergab einen Brief. Anschliessend musterte mich der Lama intensiv, und bei der Verabschiedung teilte er mir mit, ich solle wiederkommen, in mitleidsvollem Ton. Ich kann es nicht belegen, weis aber von ähnlichen Fällen, wo Lamas infomiert wurden, SchülerIn xyz würde kommen, er/sie hätte Schwierigkeiten, oder zuviel Lung oder ähnliches. Ich würde dies heute als vorbeugende Maßnahme gegenüber negativen Informationen über Sogyal Lakar betrachten, die Ex-SchülerInnen erzählen konnten." (LY22Z)



"Rigpa zu verlassen war eine Befreiung. Allerdings hatte ich mich über einen langen Zeitraum engagiert und vor allem auch täglich länger geübt. Insofern fiel zum einen ein beträchtlicher Teil meines sozialen Lebens weg. Damit konnte ich gut umgehen. Vor allem war ich von den ganzen stillschweigenden Konventionen innerhalb der 'Sangha' befreit, also den Verhaltensweisen die sich innerhalb Riggas durchgesetzt hatten. Die Insidersprache, die vorausseilende Beflissenheit usw. Für meinen Beruf und die Familie wirkte sich das positiv aus, da ich endlich wieder mehr Zeit hatte. Besonders mein Berufsleben hatte mich immer auch geerdet gehalten. Es entstand ein gewisser Wechsel, da ich auch Praxisgewohnheiten änderte. Für mich war das positiv. Ich überprüfte, was Konditionierung war und was tieferes Verständnis war." (LY22Z)

"Manches bedaure ich sehr: Ich habe mich zum beflissenen Trottel gemacht, wider meine Intuition. Ich habe nicht widersprochen, wo ich es hätte tun können. Ich war so überzeugt, das [dass] ich Sogyal Lakar gegen Vorwürfe verteidigt habe, ohne nachzuforschen. Ich habe mich von Charisma und Chuzpe blenden lassen, statt mir ein solides Fundament in den Grundlagen des Dharma zu verschaffen. Für tibetische Zwecke habe ich jegliche Spende eingestellt. Grund: Intransparenz." (LY22Z)

Diese Person bezeugt: "Grobe öffentliche Demontage einer mir als ehrlichen und seriösen bekannten SchülerIn, die viel Verantwortung trug und vor allem dafür sorgte, das viel authentisches Dharmamaterial bei Rigpa einfluss, sie wurde lächerlich gemacht, ohne jeden Grund, und viel später hörte ich von einem Exschüler, der gut informiert war und kein Lügner war, das sie auch immer wieder zu 'Blowjobdiensten' aufgefordert wurde. Gruppe: darüber wurde generell nicht gesprochen. Vorfälle dieser Art gab es häufig, und alle wussten ja, das dies crazy wisdom sei. Meine Frau, als sie das mit dem ganzen sexuellen Missbrauch bei Rigpa hörte, war tief schockiert." (LY22Z)

see https://www.transtibmed.ethnologie.uni-muenchen.de/zeitzeugenberichte/deutsch/deutsche_zitate_forschung/index.html



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