

The Teacher Is in Them

Dear Bobby,

Although my interest or engagement with Shambhala has been mild over the years, basically confined to reading a couple of Trungpa Rinpoche's books, I was shocked, upset, and even angry to learn recently of the long-running, credible and now public reports of sexual abuse against Shambhala's spiritual leader, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, and other teachers in the Shambhala community. This hurts the global Buddhist community, not just Shambhala.

Love,
Ames

Dear Ames,

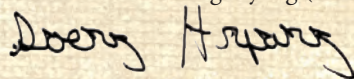
Thank you for emailing us. For us, we feel sad and grateful. Sad because so many people around the world, and not just Buddhists, are hurt and confused about this. It undermines trust and respect for the organization and the practice. We feel grateful that the truth has been released and that now they all have an opportunity to look at what they do trust and what their practice actually is. Each person, whether they have a religious teacher or not, must learn to believe in themselves and while they are learning this, they must never give away their own strength or power to a person in authority.

A teacher's authority rests only in their clear and authentic teaching and example. It cannot and should not rest on their title, personality or place in a hierarchy. The Buddha taught, "we already have it." Each one of us has the innate ability to find our way and understand the truth. A teacher's job is to help point the way. It is not to ask for devotion from students. A student's job is to listen to the teachings, do the practices and see if the path they have chosen is helping them to become strong and clear. When we are strong and clear, we can see our mistakes and the mistakes of the teacher.

We congratulate the Shambhala sangha for seeing and exposing their current struggle. We trust that through their pain, disappointment and sadness that they will only grow stronger, realizing that the teacher is in them. They did not lose the teacher; they cannot lose the teacher. Hierarchy only works from the bottom up. May they continue to practice diligently and allow the correct leadership to naturally appear.

Sincerely,

Zen Master Soeng Hyang (*Bobby Rhodes*)



Zen Master Wu Kwang (*Richard Shrobe*)

