RECOLLECTION & REMEMBRANCE

Lama Doboom Tulku

January 29, 2025

Committee Room-1, India International Centre (Annexe) New Delhi

Exactly a year before, on this day, the Founder Managing Trustee of World Buddhist Culture Trust, Lama Doboom Tulku Rinpoche passed. World Buddhist Culture Trust gathered a small group of people who have known Rinpoche closely. They met at India International Centre to recollect and remember him and his works.

Sudhamahi Regunathan who co-authored Lama Doboom Tulku's memoirs spoke about her experience of writing his memoirs. She said he had vivid memories of events in his life and rarely had to refer to sources to confirm dates etc. She then invited everyone to join in to share their memories of Lama Doboom Tulku. She said the story of his life before he came to India can only be told by his old companion, Sonam Dhundup and invited him to start.

Sonam Dhundup, Lama Doboom Tulku's childhood companion and later his care-taker spoke of his time with Rinpoche in Tibet. He recalled that Rinpoche from childhood loved food and playing in water. He was very smart in studies. When he came to India, he amazed everyone by being able to speak few words of Hindi here and there. He used to come first in his class in Varanasi every year. Once at the debate courtyard of Drepung Loseling monastery in South India, he amazed everyone with his brilliant answers on Buddhist philosophy.

Maya Joshi said she first met Rinpoche in 1978 when he came to see her father who was a Buddhist scholar. That was before Rinpoche became Tibet House Director. He was young, very affectionate and humorous and liked children. Her second meeting was in 1983 when he visited her father in the United States where he travelled with Geshe Palden Dakpa. The house they lived in was known to be haunted; it was in Pennsylvania. In the morning, Rinpoche said he felt some energy in the room through the night and had not been able to sleep. The next morning Rinpoche performed some prayer at the house. Later Rinpoche involved her in editing Tibet House bulletin and engaged her in many activities of Tibet House. She said Rinpoche had amazing memory. He had interesting relations with people. He connected with people on multiple levels. Although he was very learned Buddhist scholar, he would never teach Buddhist philosophy to her but nevertheless she learned many other things from him. Rinpoche's old friend Shri Ravinder Varma would also complaint that he would never teach. She said she owes her mind's expansion through this long acquaintance with Rinpoche. He connected with galaxy of very unusual people who are pioneers and sustained a kind of ecosystem of diverse people from different fields which is so enriching. It seems he had an intuitive grasp of genuine practitioners of all traditions and they seem to be all close to him.

Zuleikha, the Story Dancer said she first met Rinpoche during a healing conference in Bangalore. He told her to visit Tibet House the next time she was in Delhi. And when she did visit Tibet House, he asked her what was keeping her busy in Delhi. She replied that she was working with selfcare and wellness in body at poor places with women and children. The relationship continued and Rinpoche invited her to interact with village children in Gurgaon

and also got her involved in few of his other activities. She said he helped her a lot and supported her work. He had her perform in many places in India.

Ranjan Rellin shared his chance encounter with Rinpoche at IIC whom he subsequently and most fondly calls him guruji. He has no association with Buddhist community apart from his trips to the Tibetan Community in Delhi to drink the famous chang (Tibetan home brewed liquor) during his college times. At IIC, he found Rinpoche and few others pouring over an architectural document and wondering where the entrance was. He offered his help being an architect by qualification and learned guruji was trying to study the architectural drawing of his project in Telangana. After four months, he met him again at IIC and continues to meet him whenever he is in town. He marvels guruji's ability to combine different phases of activity in the same day and bring into equilibrium. He said guruji was a multifaceted person who had his bearing so strongly grounded yet he was able to reach out to different level of professions and skills. He was like everywhere at the same time.

Kiran Ganguli said he was acquainted with Rinpoche for a very long-time during Rinpoche's time in Tibet House and there after too. He does not remember what a very good memory he had. He always calls him to remember all sorts of things which he does not remember. People say Rinpoche is a learned Buddhist scholar and knows about art but he never learned any of those things from him. What he learned from him and continue to follow was the practice of drinking hot water for health benefits. Rinpoche did have a great sense of humour. At the same time, he can be very firm when needed.

By then it was time for lunch and everyone were asked to help themselves with the food laid on the table and discussion continued as well. Madhuri Sondhi, a 90-year-old, retired from civil service said Rinpoche was the first Tibetan she met. He introduced Tibet and spirituality to her. In fact, she and her husband Mr. Sondhi got married because of Tibet. Her husband was very much interested in Tibet. She is very appreciative of Rinpoche's long friendship.

Sadhana Srivastav fondly remembers her association with Rinpoche and so does her father, PP Srivastav. She said Rinpoche was the sweetest and most caring person. Professionally, Rinpoche involves her in his activities with His Holiness and had her to do the compering. Once she went to Rinpoche with her sleep issue. She is very grateful to Rinpoche for getting a small Tara statue consecrated by His Holiness for her.

Varsha Das said she once visited Tibet House to see an exhibition. Thereafter, she had the opportunity to attend His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Birthday celebrations organised by Tibet House every year. It was when she joined National Gandhi Museum as the Director that she had more interaction with Rinpoche. Rinpoche organised a Tree Planting event at National Museum on His Holiness's Birthday. Later, she was also invited to Rinpoche's other events including his Birthday celebrations. Once at an interfaith programme, she was reciting a Jain mantra and happened to missed a line. She noticed Rinpoche's facial expression changed and she realised that Rinpoche knew the Jain mantra.

Debbei Smith spoke of how Rinpoche got her involved in taking care of sick goose of Buddha Jayanti Park which sort of became a project for her. She was drawn to him by his soft and gentle character.

Sonam Wangchuk Shakspo said he first met Rinpoche in Mongolia during ABCP conference 1979. He remembers Rinpoche as a down-to-earth Buddhist monk who is highly learned Lama with a great sense of humour. He is one of the few Buddhist monks who managed to build a strong connection with Indians. Kushok Bakula Rinpoche who he served as secretary was a Trustee of World Buddhist Culture Trust founded by Doboom Rinpoche. Later, Rinpoche invited him to be a member of the Trust.

Trungsar Rinpoche said he had a long connection with Doboom Rinpoche. During his last meeting with him at IIC, Rinpoche told him that his time is coming and do not know when the next meeting will be but will meet definitely. That he said he took as a sign that he will be back amongst us and he looks forward to a young Doboom soon.

Sudhamahi then called the meeting to an end by remembering what Rinpoche once told her that one should know when to put an end no matter how good or bad in context with people's desire for him to continue the World Festival of Sacred Music and make it a regular feature.

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