Tibetan Buddhism and Global Ethics for a Troubled World: A Dialogue with Venerable Samdhong Rinpoche

Thursday, April 16, 2015
2:00-4:00 pm
Room 9205
The Graduate Center, CUNY

Panelists:

Samdhong Rinpoche, Former Prime Minister, Tibetan Government-in-Exile

Robert Thurman, Jey Tsong Khapa Professor of Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Studies, Columbia University

Tashi Rabgey, Research Professor of International Affairs, Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University

Moderator:

Ming Xia, Professor of Political Science, College of Staten Island/ The Graduate Center

Professor Venerable Samdhong Rinpoche, an advisor to the Dalai Lama, is regarded as the most renowned philosopher on Tibetan Buddhism today. He is an eminent and distinguished scholar-teacher and a life-long campaigner for Gandhian principles, especially those of non-violence or peaceful resistance. The 14th Dalai Lama said of him, “Samdhong Rinpoche is someone I hold in high regard.”

Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche was born Lobsang Tenzin in 1939 in the Tibetan province of Kham. At age five, he was recognized and enthroned as the reincarnation of the fourth Samdhong Rinpoche. He began his monastic studies at age 12 and eventually obtained the Geshe degree (a Doctorate in Buddhist sciences) at the Drepung Monastery in 1970. He served as the Principal (1971-1988) and then the Director (1988-2001) of the Central Institute for Higher Tibetan Studies in Varanasi, India. In 1991, he was appointed by the Dalai Lama as a member of the Assembly of Tibetan People’s Deputies and was later unanimously elected as its Chairman (Speaker). He served two terms (1991-2001) in this post. In 2001, Rinpoche was named Kalon Tripa (Prime Minister) of the Tibetan Exile Government, the first political leader to be directly elected by the people in exile. Samdhong Rinpoche’s main ideas in English can be found in Samdhong Rinpoche: Uncompromised Truth for a Compromised World: Tibetan Buddhism and Today’s World, edited by Donovan Roebert (Bloomington, Indiana: World Wisdom, 2006).

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