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PRESS RELEASE

EU/Tibet/Lama/Buddhism/Environment/social justice/sustainability/Green Buddha

The 17th Karmapa Face and voice of 21st century Tibetan Buddhism visits Europe

It is with great joy that Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike await the arrival in Europe of His Holiness the 17th Karmapa, Ogyen Trinley Dorje. The young and charismatic leader of the Tibetan Buddhist Karma Kagyu school will visit Germany between 28th May and 9th June, 2014, on his first ever journey to Europe. The most important stops on this tour will be the European seat of the Karmapas in Langenfeld/Eifel, and the German capital, Berlin. The guiding theme of his fortnight-long programme is "The future begins now!"

During his German tour his programme will include both traditional Buddhist teachings and secular events concerning current social issues such as Buddhism and the environment, the significance of compassion in a globalised world, and an encounter with artists exploring the theme of freedom of thought. This youthful and charismatic Lama wants to address the young people of his own generation, in order to engender hope and faith in their future, at a time when the problems facing the world may often seem insurmountable and solutions rare.

The Karmapa is far from seeing himself as a religious missionary; rather he sees himself as a voice representing a source of ancient wisdom from the East in an intercultural dialogue with the modern world.

The 17th Karmapa is regarded by many as the future hope of the Tibetan people. He is venerated as the third most significant representative of Tibetan Buddhism, after the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama. Granted refugee status and hospitality by the Government of India, the 28-year old Karmapa lives in the immediate vicinity of the 14th Dalai Lama's exile seat in Dharamsala, North India, and shares a very close relationship with the Tibetan spiritual leader. Fully supporting the Dalai Lama's 'middle way' policy of keeping dialogue open with China, the Karmapa himself maintains an apolitical stance, taking no part in active politics. His focus, rather, is on how Buddhist principles such as wisdom, compassion and interconnectedness can be brought to bear on everyday life in the 21st century. He is critical of the culture of consumerism which dominates much of the world today, urging personal responsibility and active engagement for sustainability, and protection of the environment in light of climate change. He is an advocate of social justice and gender equality and a commentator on other pressing issues in society at large. Having heard of its reputation as an environmentally conscious country, he is especially eager to visit Germany. He is also looking forward to an exchange of views and experiences on major issues confronting society with members of other faiths, particularly Christian leaders. He hopes to exchange views and share experiences that could be beneficial for the daily lives of Tibetans, in exile as well as in Tibet itself.

Throughout the world, the Karmapa has attracted respect and support because he is known to be someone who "walks the talk", not only advocating change but taking active steps towards the realisation of his vision. He has spoken out frankly about the destruction of the environment and the effects of climate change in his homeland, urging the international community to work together to protect Tibet's fragile environment, since at least a third of the world's population depends on water from the Himalayan region. This active commitment earned him the title of 'Green Buddha' when he visited the headquarters of the WWF in Washington in 2011. As leader of one of the most important lineages in Tibetan Buddhism, the 17th Karmapa embodies 900 years of tradition, yet his focus is increasingly set on the global challenges of the 21st century.

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International Quotes:

Times-Magazin: The World's Next Top Lama, Karmapa Ugyen Trinley Dorje: the hip-hop lama ready to lead the Tibetan struggle,

Times Asia: A rising Star,

GEO: Der neue Dalai Lama - Ein Erleuchteter in Ausbildung,

GEO: Der einzige Plan B der Tibeter

Le Monde: Le karmapa, le protégé du dalaï-lama,

WWF: The green Buddha

Cinema-Doku: Living Buddha