

Akong

A Remarkable Life



Drolma Lhakhang

TIBET

Tuting

INDIA



In 1959, a dramatic ten month escape from Tibet through the Himalayas would change the course of his life - and the lives of many thousands of people around the world.

AWARENESS MEDIA PRODUCTION IN ASSOCIATION WITH HART KNOWE TRUST PRESENTS AKONG - A REMARKABLE LIFE DIRECTED BY VIN HARRIS PRODUCED BY JORC WAGNER AND CHICO DALL'INHA EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS MARILYN HARRIS

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A Remarkable Life

is a documentary film that tells the story of Akong Tulku Rinpoche, Tibetan Buddhist master, compelled to flee his homeland at the height of Sino-Tibetan tensions and forced into exile into unknown lands. Later he would become, along with Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, one of the key pioneers of Tibetan Buddhism in the West.

At a young age, Akong becomes the Abbot of Dolma Lhakang monastery in Eastern Tibet and the path of his life seems fixed. However, political turmoil changes everything as in 1959 he is reluctantly forced to flee his homeland on a dangerous journey whose end is uncertain.

During the ten month escape across the Himalayas to India, Akong comes close to death, being one of only 13 of 300 compatriots to survive the arduous journey. As he lay, near death, in a cave in the Himalayas, he makes a promise that, if he survives, he will devote his life to helping others.

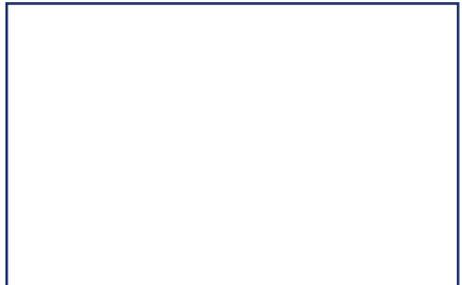
He makes it to India only to battle life-threatening tuberculosis. There Akong meets an Englishwoman, Freda Bedi, who runs a refugee camp in harrowing conditions. Together they create a home for young refugee Lamas, which Akong manages for three years until Freda arranges for him to travel to Britain along with his friend Trungpa Rinpoche.

In 1967 they co-found Samye Ling, in Scotland, the first Tibetan Buddhist monastery in the West and in 1992 he is chosen as a member of the search party seeking the rebirth of the His Holiness, the Gyalwang Karmapa, head of one of the main lineages of Tibetan Buddhism.

Akong increasingly turns his mind to the suffering and hunger of people and embarks on numerous projects to help. Most notably he co-founds an international humanitarian charitable organisation called “ROKPA”, the Tibetan word for help. He works incessantly founding schools and orphanages, providing home and education for former street children, as well as providing food, shelter and essential medical supplies in countries such as Tibet and Nepal and in Zimbabwe and South Africa.

Akong’s fundamental message of compassion-in-action shines through and his example inspires thousands of people to work to make the world a better place. A number of those he inspired recount his story in the film.

Akong Rinpoche was in Chengdu, China in October 2013, about to embark on the latest of many humanitarian missions to Tibet, where he was murdered, senselessly, along with an attendant and his nephew. Despite this sad and shocking end to a remarkable life, the film ends on a message of hope.



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