

“ TO MEET THE CHALLENGE OF OUR TIMES, HUMAN BEINGS WILL HAVE TO DEVELOP A GREATER SENSE OF UNIVERSAL RESPONSIBILITY. EACH OF US MUST LEARN TO WORK NOT JUST FOR HIS, OR HER, OWN SELF, FAMILY OR NATION, BUT FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL MANKIND. ”



HIS HOLINESS
THE DALAI LAMA

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP
THROUGH UNIVERSAL RESPONSIBILITY



HIS HOLINESS
THE DALAI LAMA
— A RETROSPECTIVE —

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World Tibet Network News

Sunday, August 18, 1996

1. Sect disrobes British monk

The Guardian - London
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Madeleine Bunting
Religious Affairs Editor

SENIOR monk in Britain's fastest growing Buddhist sect, which led a campaign against the Dalai Lama last month has been disrobed and banned from the sect.

Gen Thubten Gyatso - originally Neil Elliott - is widely seen as having been the driving force behind the rapid expansion of the New Kadampa Tradition (NKT) since its founding in 1991. With headquarters at Ulverston, Cumbria, it now has more than 20 affiliated residential centres and 200 branches around the country.

Speculation over the cause of Gen Thubten's departure will further rock the credibility of the sect after its international campaign to discredit the Dalai Lama, whom it accused of religious intolerance and hypocrisy.

Gen Thubten, a Buddhist monk for 16 years, became interlocutor for Geshe Kelsang, a semi-reclusive Tibetan monk, who barely speaks English, shortly after his arrival in Cumbria in the late 1970s.

Kelsang set up the NKT in 1991, and Gen Thubten was known as his successor or "heart disciple". He is described by former members as having been the "power behind the throne"

Former members understand that Gen Thubten was disrobed because of a breach of his monastic vows. He was deeply revered by the 3,000 NKT members for his knowledge of Buddhism and his charismatic teaching.

The NKT confirmed that Gen Thubten had been disrobed earlier this month

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and removed from the programme of its two week annual summer festival, which ends this weekend. He had been due to speak at the event.

"Neil Elliott has resigned as an NKT teacher," said Jim Belither, NKT secretary. "Issues about monks disrobing are a matter between the monk and his spiritual teacher. I don't know whether he went of his own free will or if he was forced to go. We have no comment."

Speculation has been rife within the NKT sect since Gen Thubten resigned as Kelsang's successor in January, claiming he was tired and needed time for meditation.

Gen Thubten was head of the Madhyamaka Centre in York, one of the affiliated residential centres, The centres have acquired a series of substantial properties, including a castle, estates and several stately homes in the past five years. One of the main sources of income was has been the rent charged to the 300-odd residents in receipt of housing benefit.

Mr Elliott, described as the first qualified English Tantric meditation master in Britain, is understood to have returned to his parents in Kent.

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