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### Fundamentalism in Buddhism

As in any other religion Buddhism and Buddhists are also faced with Fundamentalism.

Where is the Fundamentalism in the New Kadampa Tradition, the Western Shugden Society, and among many Shugden Followers coming from?

- A very short analyse -

The main force for fundamentalism - from a Buddhist point of view - is grasping to an idea and holding on it as "the truth". In NKT the main idea is the conception of "purity". Robert Jay Lifton recognized in his researches that fundamentalist groups share as a common sign the conception of "purity". Once the conception of purity is established, based on the mind's dualistic thinking, it follows there must also be impurity.

A Zen master once said: Purity is what is beyond purity and impurity.

If a Buddhist teacher establishes a conception of purity and grasps to it as truly existent or "a truth", the concept of impurity is also established without any need to mention it. If this teacher strongly emphasizes purity then fear against what may be possible impure is induced indirectly. If such a teacher establishes further the need of "not mixing" the "pure tradition", because it will bring forth that the "pure tradition" loses its "essential purity", then beings are bound by fear (of mixing) and the clinging on the concept of "purity" increases. This clinging on purity is an attachment towards ideological ideas / concepts, and aversion or a subtle hostility against everything which may be possible "impure" is the consequence of this attachment.

In the NKT there is a strong emphasize on "purity" and "not mixing". Resarcher Kay observed: "in order to obtain spiritual realisations and to ensure that the pure tradition of Tsongkhapa remains in the world, NKT students are encouraged to 'practise purely'. This means that they must not mix their spiritual practice — their study, meditation, or sadhana recitation and visualisation exercises — with worldly or political activities or with other, non-NKT spiritual teachings. The books and sadhanas prepared by Geshe Kelsang upon which all NKT practice is based, and the infrastructure of the NKT organisation itself, are considered to have placed a boundary around Tsongkhas's pure tradition, the survival of which depends entirely upon a widespread diligence in boundary maintenance. As part of the emphasis on pure practice, students within the NKT are discouraged from attending teachings or reading books by other Buddhist teachers and authors". From the clinging on the purity of the New Kadampa Tradition and the teachings of Geshe Kelsang, a strong attachment to the presentation of NKT, its leader, his books and hostility and fear against anything which corrupts this established "purity" arises.

These mind poisons and superimpositions are projected to those persons one feels they are "mixing" (like His Holiness the Dalai Lama) or are "keeping purity" (like Geshe Kelsang Gyatso). Through the power of these mind poisons of attachment and aversion the mind loses its clarity and ability to discriminate correctly and this gives cause to the manifold projections NKT members direct now openly in public towards the Dalai Lama.

Among many Shugden followers there is not only a strong conception of purity/not mixing, but

also a very literally taken emphasize on the Guru. What the Guru says, one has to do (Guru obedience). Although genuine and experienced Buddhist teachers are seen in general as authorities, they are not unfailing, that's why the student must be aware and avoid to follow the faults the Guru may have or to accept faulty teachings he may have taught. The requirement for such a critical attitude is established in the Buddhist teachings and by the Buddha himself, and it is expected from a Buddhist to be able to discriminate between wrong and correct teachings of the Dharma. However the majority of Shugden followers seem to grasp on a more literally approach: 'You have to do what the Guru said'.

Because the Dalai Lama rejected a teaching of one of his teachers, the Dorje Shugden practice, which was taught him by Trijang Rinpoche, he has done from their point of view the most evil sin. He has "broken with his root-Guru", therefore he is completely wrong. He is someone who from their point of view is misleading people. Once such a view is established it works like sun glasses, one will see any action of the Dalai Lama in the mode of the colour of the glasses. So he can only be wrong, his actions can only be wrong. Such sun glasses are also the basis for the accusations against the Dalai Lama by the Chinese Communist Party, Trimondis or Goldner.

I hope in the future there is more research about these topics.

For the time being I can advise the following article & book:

1. Canonicity and Divine Interference: The Tulkus and the Shugden-Controversy by Prof. Dr. Michael von Brück [www.info-buddhismus.de/dorje\\_shugden\\_controversy.html](http://www.info-buddhismus.de/dorje_shugden_controversy.html)

2. Money, Sex, War, Karma: Notes for a Buddhist Revolution by Prof. Dr. David R. Loy [www.amazon.com/Money-Sex-War-Karma-Revolution/dp/08617155...](http://www.amazon.com/Money-Sex-War-Karma-Revolution/dp/08617155...)

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### Who is the dictator?

In the NKT everything is based on Geshe Kelsang Gyatso's sole authority: only his books are studied; only his followers are allowed to teach, and only his teachings matter. He installs & removes the NKT resident teachers as he likes to do, without relying on any democratic process. Former members refer to NKT mostly as a cult, and INFORM has received many complaints about the NKT.

Religious freedom now for all NKT members!

Because NKT monks and nuns want just stand up for human rights, and have only concern for the welfare of others, I made a list of suggestions for their demonstrations for human rights in front of the Manjushri Institute, the head centre of NKT, gained by a legal loophole from the FPMT, from which they split away.

Dear Ven. Geshe Kelsang Gyatso!

We urge you to  
 STOP banning the veneration of the Dalai Lama in our centres  
 STOP banning his pictures in our centres  
 STOP banning Getsul and full ordination for monks and nuns

STOP banning the Vinaya, the democratic system of the Buddha for ordained members  
 STOP banning us from using other books than yours to teach the holy doctrine of the Buddha  
 STOP to misinform us and bring us to spread semi truths and untruths about the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan community  
 STOP victimizing ourself and blaming others  
 STOP expelling members of our community because they do not 100% agree with you  
 STOP to forbid close disciples to receive teachings from other Buddhist teachers and to go to other Dharma Centers, than those of NKT  
 STOP sexual and spiritual abuse of your successors  
 STOP covering up their destructive deeds and threatening those who asked since years for help, to solve these abuses  
 STOP abusing inferior ordained NKT members, who do not even belong to the order and shouldn't wear the yellow upper robe, to go in public against fully ordained members of the monastic order and the decisions of the Sangha Community  
 STOP banning other Buddhist teachers, Geshes, Tulkus, Rinpoches, properly educated and realized beings to teach in our NKT centres, and installing instead low educated inexperienced Western teachers

LET'S respect the Dalai Lama  
 LET'S respect the decision of the Sangha Communities in India  
 LET'S offer those six monks a place in our community  
 LET'S respect the Vinaya  
 LET'S install the Vinaya in NKT  
 LET'S stop spiritual and sexual abuse in our own tradition  
 LET'S invite properly educated and experienced Buddhist teachers of our school, the Geluggas, Geshes, Rinpoches, Tulkus and fully ordained monks and nuns to teach us properly the holy doctrine of the Buddha  
 LET'S do something for harmony in the Sangha, the Tibetan community, Tibet & the world  
 LET'S give up a practice, out of compassion and wisdom, which has created so much schism, fear, disharmony, splits & quarrels for ourselves and others  
 LET'S use the ending lifespan of your life as a monk and Buddhist teacher in the West, to do something good, genuine  
 LET'S try to see things from a broader perspective of welfare for all

Thank you!

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### New Kadampa Tradition vs Dalai Lama

For a NKT-insiders the allegations against the Dalai Lama as being a "dictator", "hypocrite", "liar" etc. are seen as the projection of the actual situation in the NKT itself. The protests came up after a big internal scandal, regarding the former NKT successor, Gen-la Samden, which was covered up and when it became public, open discussions were repressed by the NKT leadership.

Instead of helping the victims of the internal scandals and do some self-introspection about the own faults, NKT leadership used the way of bringing the confused members together again by a hostile group action against the Dalai Lama, in the name of religious freedom. Whereby who really lacks religious freedom are NKT practitioners themselves. It looks like the NKT, who is now operating under the label Western Shugden Society, started a competition about what

religious fanatical group is the best in projecting the own inner situation onto others. It may be the case they win and can have a place in the Guinness Book of World Records, the book 2009 is not yet published...

NKT-monks and NKT nuns are no real monks. They are neither novice Buddhist monks (tib. Getsul) nor full ordained Buddhist monks (tib. Gelong), therefore they are also no members of the Buddhist order of monks according to the Vinaya. The Vinaya (code of conduct for Buddhist monks and nuns) with its democratic basis and rules, established by the Buddha, is not installed in the NKT.

What the members of the NKT completely neglect is the fact, that monastic communities can make decisions about how they are run, this is their right to do that. The majority (98%) of the monks in the Gelug monasteries is against this practice, they see it as harmful, and many fear it. It is a democratic decision and according to the Vinaya if the majority, the Abbots and discipline masters ask those few doing it (6, 2, 300) from 10.000 not to do it at their places. Everyone can do it privately outside the monasteries. Everyone has this freedom. But when those very few monks disagree with the majority and create split and shism, they can be expelled. There is nothing wrong with this.

No NKT member is in any way repressed by the Dalai Lama or any other Buddhist authority, because NKT members accept nobody as a spiritual authority, besides their own leader Geshe Kelsang and his 22 books. There is no outer "persecution" or "subtle fear and repression", as they claim.

John J. Makransky about the cross-cultural confusion in the Dorje Shugden issue:

"A stunning recent example of this: some Tibetan monks who now introduce Westerners to practices centred on a native Tibetan deity, without informing them that one of its primary functions has been to assert hegemony over rival sects! The current Dalai Lama, seeking to combat the ancient, virulent sectarianisms operative in such quarters, has strongly discouraged the worship of the "protector" deity known as Dorje Shugden, because one of its functions has been to force conformity to the dGe lugs pa sect (with which the Dalai Lama himself is most closely associated) and to assert power over competing sects. Western followers of a few dGe lugs pa monks who worship that deity, lacking any critical awareness of its sectarian functions in Tibet, have recently followed the Dalai Lama to his speaking engagements to protest his strong stance (for non-sectarianism) in the name of their "religious freedom" to promulgate, now in the West, an embodiment of Tibetan sectarianism. If it were not so harmful to persons and traditions, this would surely be one of the funniest examples of the cross-cultural confusion that lack of critical reflection continues to create."

(Makransky, John J. (2000). Buddhist Theology: Critical Reflections by Contemporary Buddhist Scholars, John J. Makransky, Roger Reid Jackson, p. 20, in Introduction to Contemporary Academic Buddhist Theology; Its emergence and rationale)

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The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying "http://www.westernshugdensociety.org/en/protest-at-colgate-university-ny-april-22-2008". The page content includes a sidebar with "Articles" such as "Lamas protest denial of entry to Serastashi Buddha temple" and "Letter to the Dalai Lama of Tibet". The main content area features a large photo of a man in a red shirt holding a pink umbrella, with text below it stating: "On April 22 2008, 450 Western practitioners of the Deity Dorje Shugden – including 100 Tibetan practitioners resident in the West – protested outside the Dalai Lama's visit to Colgate University in Hamilton, NY." To the right, there is a "Sign the Petition" box with the text "Ask the Dalai Lama to give religious freedom" and "Total Signatures - [802]". Below that, there is a "Latest News" section with a sub-heading "Protest at Colgate University, NY, April 22 2008" and a "Videos" section with a small video player. At the bottom, there is a "Downloads" section with a link to "The Tibetan Situation Today - Surprising Hidden N...".

## A Little Knowledge Is A Dangerous Thing

Behind the actual smear campaign against the Dalai Lama is mainly a new religious movement called the New Kadampa Tradition (NKT). Some few Tibetans support the Western Shugden Society (WSS). The leader and sole authority in the New Kadampa Tradition is

Geshe Kelsang Gyatso who was expelled in 1996 by 15 Abbots and Geshe from his monastic community, because the monastic community felt his conduct as not being in accordance of that of a Buddhist monk.

That the Western Shugden Society (WSS) was probably funded by the New Kadampa Tradition (NKT), an UK charity trust, is indicated by these signs:

- press speaker: Kelsang Pema (NKT)
- frontman and leader in the USA: Kelsang Khyenrab (present successor of Geshe Kelsang)
- frontwoman and leader in USA: Kelsang Dekyong (NKT USA representative)
- frontman and leader in Germany: Kelsang Ananda (NKT representative in Germany)
- Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, founder of the New Kadampa Tradition, has asked all his students by email to participate the demonstrations. Lucy James (USA), who did not encourage her students thoroughly enough, was immediately removed by Geshe Kelsang from her position as a NKT resident teacher. So there is pressure to local NKT resident teachers to convince their members to go to the protests.
- the identity of the website of the Western Shugden Society is made hidden via proxyserver, however some media datas in the files refer to "Tharpa", a NKT enterprise, which publishes only Geshe Kelsang Gyatso's books, and to a translator of his books in Spain

At the image above one can see Ven. Gen Kelsang Khyenrab, present successor of Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, and the future spiritual leader of the NKT. (If it will not disintegrate.)

What has the Western Shugden Society to tell about the Dalai Lama?

"According to some sources, you were born in a Muslim family. When you were a child who did not know anything, some ignorant Tibetans acting as representatives of the Tibetan Government chose that boy as the reincarnation of the Tibetan Dalai Lama. Since that time, that boy wore saffron robes, and the local people jokingly nicknamed you as 'The Saffron Robed Muslim'. In this way, you received the position of the Tibetan Dalai Lama. Because of this, many people now keep your photograph on their shrines and worship you."

"You have received a higher education in Buddhism from your kind teacher Trijang Rinpoche. However, the sad situation is that after you arrived to India your behaviour changed. You were continually against the intention of your Root Guru, Trijang Rinpoche, who is the lineage holder of Je Tsongkhapa's doctrine. You strived strongly to destroy Trijang Rinpoche's spiritual tradition, which is the pure tradition of Je Tsongkhapa's doctrine. Since 1996, you have regarded Trijang Rinpoche's followers as your enemies and you are now giving orders to the ordinary people and monasteries to expel them from their society. Following your views and your orders, many people believe that Trijang Rinpoche's followers who practise Dorje Shugden are their enemies."

"...All these horrible situations have developed through the power of your evil actions. This is our valid evidence to prove that you are not Buddhist. Because of this, we also believe that you are the saffron robed Muslim. Throughout your life you have pretended to be a Buddhist holy being giving Buddhist teachings that you have stolen from Trijang Rinpoche. By doing this, you have cheated people throughout the world. In summary, it is clear that your real nature is cruel and very evil. Copyright © 2008 WesternShugdenSociety.org. All Rights Reserved. The Western Shugden Society is only the community or confederation of Wisdom Buddha Dorje Shugden practitioners -- it has no leader nor registered office."

The Chinese Communist Party, Victor and Victoria Trimondi, and Colin Goldner will rejoice in this.

Although the Western Shugden Society softened this statement above after receiving complaints by Shugden-Lamas who felt their reputation will suffer damage forever, this statement was made and reveals the underlying mind. Anit-CNN was happy to publish the statement. [www.anti-cnn.com/forum/en/viewthread.php?tid=1301](http://www.anti-cnn.com/forum/en/viewthread.php?tid=1301)

About 10 years ago The Independent wrote on the first Media Campaign of the New Kadampa Tradition (who operated that time under the name of Shugden Supporters Community):

"But the dispute over Dorje Shugden makes no sense in terms of practical politics in the West. It has already directed a great deal of media attention on the NKT and its elastic ways with truth. Some of the mud being flung at the Dalai Lama will probably stick. The reputation of Tibetan Buddhism as a uniquely clean and rational religion will certainly be damaged. The only lasting winners from the row will be the Chinese, who have mounted a fresh campaign of repression inside Tibet this spring."

The basis for the present accusations of the Western Shugden Society against the Dalai Lama are some events in India. The information they offer are a mix of semi-truths and untruths. For a background of the events in India one can read this well-informed article:

"Sowing dissent and undermining the Dalai Lama" by TibetInfoNet:  
[www.tibetinfonet.net/content/update/116](http://www.tibetinfonet.net/content/update/116)

To receive neutral information about NKT one can contact INFORM, founded in 1988 by Professor Eileen Barker with the help of British Home Office funding and the support of the mainstream Churches: [www.inform.ac/index.html](http://www.inform.ac/index.html)

It may be also helpful to read the press articles about the NKT's first Media Campaign (1996-1998) against the Dalai Lama in The Independent and The Guardian again:

The Independent, London: Battle of the Buddhists by Andrew Brown  
[www.tibet.com/dholgyal/CTA-book/chapter-5-5.html](http://www.tibet.com/dholgyal/CTA-book/chapter-5-5.html)


The Guardian - London: Shadow boxing on the path to Nirvana by Madeleine Bunting  
[www.tibet.com/dholgyal/CTA-book/chapter-5-4.html](http://www.tibet.com/dholgyal/CTA-book/chapter-5-4.html)

A collection of related articles from Wikipedia, before the WSS put there their spin on the facts, can be read here:  
[info-buddhismus.de/new\\_kadampa\\_tradition.html](http://info-buddhismus.de/new_kadampa_tradition.html)

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