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Spirit worship is not Buddhist

By TG Staff in [Faith and Religion](#)

Published: Thursday, 12 June 08 - 10:43 AM (GMT)

Last Updated: Sunday, 22 June 08 - 09:03 AM (GMT)

Towards the end of May 2008 His Holiness the Dalai Lama gave five days of teaching in Nottingham. As usual this proved a very popular event. However, various protesters appeared outside the Nottingham arena. One significant group comprised Chinese students protesting against what is portrayed as the Dalai Lama stirring up trouble in Tibet. Another group, the [Western Shugden Society](#), composed mainly of members of the New Kadampa Tradition (NKT), waved banners stating that the 'Dalai Lama stop lying', and similar sentiments.

The Western Shugden Society has undertaken a global publicity campaign against the Dalai Lama, sending out glossy leaflets to selected Buddhists, publicising protests on various websites, giving interviews, and sending letters to Buddhist organisations.. This dispute appears to have originally surfaced in March 1996 when the Dalai Lama declared that propitiating the deity, variously known as Dolgyal, Dorje Shugden, or plain Shugden, was to be banned amongst his followers, since it was a 'worldly' deity and not a true Buddhist 'refuge'.

However, the roots to this conflict lie in political and sectarian disputes going back some four centuries. Shugden had been worshipped by some Tibetan Buddhists (of the Gelug school) for around 350 years. Shugden is a Gelugpa wrathful protector deity, seen as a rebirth of Drakpa Gyeltsen, (1618-55) who was involved in rivalry with the fifth Dalai Lama. Drakpa Gyeltsen subsequently committed suicide, and after his death and over time, was seen as a minor 'Dharma protector' deity responsible for protecting the Gelugpas against their enemies. Eventually, for some, he was raised to the position of chief Dharma protector, after championing of him by Pabonka Rinpoche, 1878-1941 and his student Trijang Rinpoche, 1901-83.

The present 14th Dalai Lama dreamt of a battle between Shugden and Nechung, the main Dharma-protector of the Tibetan government-in-exile, so he publicly requested that Tibetans should cease worshipping this deity, and that it was a not a true Buddhist refuge.

Most Gelugpa Lamas then renounced this practice. The most public exception to this has been Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, founder of the New Kadampa Tradition in the UK in 1991. Some supporters of Shugden in India have accused the Dalai Lama of suppressing their religious freedom, and the conflict seems to have led to the murder of

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To question the value of Human Rights can seem quite shocking - almost like declaring oneself an atheist a few hundred years ago. However, in a paper published on Monda...

a key supporter of the Dalai Lama.

Lying behind the issue is that Shugden is seen as a special protector of the Gelug school only, while the present Dalai Lama, although also of this school, takes an ecumenical outlook. NKT supporters consider themselves as 'preserving the pure teaching' of its founder Tsong-kha-pa and of Ati'sa, founder of the Kadampa school on which it is built.

The Dalai Lama has recently issued a detailed [restatement](#) of his position regarding Shugden (Dolgyal). This identifies his concern as being the sectarianism associated with Shugden, the weakening of the Tibetan Government in exile caused by Shugden practice, and the potential degeneration of Tibetan Buddhism into spirit worship:

'The problem with Dolgyal practice is that it promotes a tendency to consider spirits like Dolgyal (Shugden) as Dharma protectors and moreover to take them as more important than the Buddha himself. If this trend goes unchecked, ... the danger is that the rich tradition of Tibetan Buddhism may degenerate into the mere propitiation of spirits.'

For those wondering what deity or spirit worship has to do with mainstream Buddhism, the answer is— little or nothing. In early Buddhism, the *nikayas* (early Buddhist scriptures common to all mainstream Buddhist schools) do not encourage or promote deity or spirit worship. The Buddha's teaching included no rituals to propitiate deities. However, a tolerant attitude has been maintained towards those in Buddhist countries that did (or do) make offerings to deities. Such practices are not regarded as 'Buddhist' but as relics from earlier indigenous—sometimes shamanistic, magical or superstitious — practices.

The UK hosts a diverse range of Buddhist traditions, many of whom have no connection with Tibetan Buddhism and yet still hold the Dalai Lama in high esteem. He is [seen](#) to have coped with very difficult circumstances in a patient, humble and wise way. He is a charming and intelligent speaker and writes popular books. He is the patron of the Buddhist Society (a non-sectarian and widely-respected British organisation) and of other UK Buddhist organisations. He has also dealt with the NKT/WSS protests in a dignified and patient manner.

Consequently many UK Buddhists (and non-Buddhists) regard the public protests against the Dalai Lama with dismay and incomprehension. The timing of the protests during a period of renewed unrest in Tibet also leads to suspicion of a deliberate policy of striking at the Dalai Lama when he is preoccupied with other issues.

The majority of those witnessing the protests do not appreciate the reasons behind them, and after some study of the complex history, view them with little sympathy. The protests are damaging to Tibetan Buddhism in general, and NKT supporters in particular. They make Buddhism appear just another sectarian religion more obsessed with doctrine and power than with applying the tenets of their faith. It is unfortunate that Tibetan power politics using an arcane and peripheral religious pretext are being played out in a Western context and drawing in Western Buddhists. Such disputes have no place in the UK and no place in Western Buddhism.

Those sincerely interested in Buddhism would be well advised to avoid Buddhist teachers who feel driven to import, support or recreate Asian conflicts in a British or

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Buddhist Climate Project

In the run-up to the crucial U. N. Climate Treaty Conference in Copenhagen in December 2009, the Buddhist Declaration on climate change will present to the world's media a uni...

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Buddhists voting on the 4th June?

Attached to this news item is information about road shows publicising the forthcoming European Elections on the 4th June. Part of the responsibilities and rights of being a Britis...

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Western setting. We have too much of this already. Those Westerners who want to practice the essential teachings of Buddhism should also avoid spirit worship or propitiation. This is not the path or teaching of the Buddha ... nor of Tsong-kha-pa or Ati 'sa

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Title: Right Speech?

Author: Chris

Date Posted: 16 Jun 2008 04:41 PM (GMT)

The following is an edited reposting (leaving out a reference to another missing comment) of a previous comment which was lost recently.

The report does not assume that the NKT and the WSS are one and the same, but it is clear that NKT supporters form a large proportion of those protesting. I suspect that if NKT supporters stopped attending the protests and helping the WSS, then the WSS would not function. The report is also observing that propitiating Dorje Shugden is not a practice advocated in the *nikayas* (the early teachings of the Buddha and common to all mainstream Buddhism) or by key early founding teachers of the Tibetan traditions and hence cannot be regarded as specifically 'Buddhist'. Put another way, the cessation of deity worship does not compromise or prevent someone from practising core Buddhism or from following the path to awakening established by the Buddha. This observation makes no particular judgement on deity worship other than that it is not essential to Buddhism. Hinduism, for example, does include deity and spirit worship and these are essential to most forms of Hinduism. I was drawn to Buddhism because it did not include a lot of superstitious 'mumbo-jumbo' of the sort found in Western religious traditions. Buddhism in its early and mainstream forms is refreshingly free of the need to believe in all sorts of superstitions or to establish relationships with personal gods. I do not think it is helpful for deity worship to be emphasised so strongly. The current protests give such a high profile to Shugden worship that they make it appear that it is a (or the) central part of the Buddha's path rather than a relatively recent addition which could be relinquished without in any way compromising core Buddhist practice. This debate is partly about who has the authority to advise upon or criticise religious practices. There is also an important question of how public protests by those declaring themselves to be 'Buddhist' are carried out. Is it demonstrating 'right speech' and compassion to carry placards displaying insults and abuse? How does this affect the public perception of other Buddhists who are not part of the Tibetan tradition?

I think that many see the public display of insults as Buddhist hypocrisy and this adversely affects all Buddhists.

Whether or not Shugden supporters or the Dalai Lama are 'right' this conflict is only going to be resolved by some generous, open-hearted and compassionate gestures. And such generous behaviour is what really lies at the heart of Buddhist practice; not deity worship. Best wishes Chris Ward

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Title: Who has the authority to decide...

Author: Tenzin Peljor (<http://info-buddhism.com>)

Date Posted: 17 Jun 2008 09:18 AM (GMT)

I agree in general with the article and especially with what Chris is commenting here.

There are two points I wish to pick up from Chris Ward's comment:

1. "This debate is partly about who has the authority to advise upon or criticise religious practices."

Exactly, this seems to be the main point of the conflict. The followers of Shugden think HHDL can not decide or advise on this and it is up to Trijang Rinpoche, one of his tutors, to judge. This conflict is unique to Tibetan Buddhism and it is well-researched in von Brück's paper: "Canonicity and Divine Interference: The Tulkus and the Shugden-Controversy" see:

http://info-buddhism.com/dorje_shugden_controversy_von_Brueck.html

2.

"Whether or not Shugden supporters or the Dalai Lama are 'right' this conflict is only going to be resolved by some generous, open-hearted and compassionate gestures."

What gesture can this be? I have no idea.

From my pov/understanding there is a lot of fundamentalism involved in this issue, and I do not know how to solve fundamentalism. In general fundamentalism is based on lack of understanding and clinging to ideas/ideology systems. Such attitudes can only change a person who is inflicted by it. But one can not force a person who is inflicted by dogmatism/fundamentalism to change his or her views. This would be violence in itself. So the only what can be done is to tolerate their pov and discourage others to follow it.

From my pov, this is exactly what HHDL is doing.

The Bristol-based Buddhist specialist Paul Williams remarked in a Guardian interview on the Shugden controversy in 1996:

"The Dalai Lama is trying to modernize the Tibetans' political vision and trying to undermine the factionalism. He has the dilemma of the liberal: do you tolerate the intolerant?"

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Title: Politics?

Author: Tenzin Peljor (<http://info-buddhism.com>)

Date Posted: 17 Jun 2008 09:45 AM (GMT)

I finished my comment with the quote of Paul Williams and one may wonder what has this "spiritual issue" to do with "politics" or if HHDL does politics at the cost of spirituality?

But the problem I see is that Tibetan Lamas in general seem to have (mis-) used practices for politics, and more over the Shugden Controversy is a difficult web of personal religious beliefs, politics, loyalty etc. e.g. Researcher Kay stated that Pabongkha Rinpoche "married the cult of the protective deity Dorje Shugden to the idea of Gelug exclusivism and employed against other traditions as well as against those within the Gelug who had eclectic tendencies".

Moreover the issue was used from the very beginning to undermine the activities of the institution of the Dalai Lamas.

[Alexander Berzin](#) pointed out as the essential elements of the present conflict:

There are commitments on the level of friendship, allegiance, loyalty, and bonds, between the students to their teachers as well as to their group. These commitments are established by tantric empowerments and last for the complete life. According to Berzin, "the essential difference between Shugden followers and almost all other Tibetan Buddhists is the fact, that the followers of the 'Shugden cult', whom is given an empowerment, is taught that it is impossible to give up this 'protector' or this 'practice'. But according to an old explanation of the master Ashvaghosa, it is possible to put an end to the teacher-student-relationship, even when one received an empowerment. For closing a teacher-student-relationship, there can be different reasons: one has failed to investigate the own teacher carefully beforehand or one goes to a critical distance to him and his methods. It has been said, that it is possible to create a respectful distance to such a teacher but one should avoid to speak badly about him and his practice."

However the Follower of Shugden hold this view:

The Dorje Shugden Devotees Religious and Charitable Society, New Delhi, Nov 1996 wrote in a letter to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, that he has created "a great deal of anguish among a large number of Tibetans and the followers of several prominent Lamas who spread the Dharma to thousands of non-Tibetans around the world", because his ban of the Shugden practice "is forcing almost all of the Gelugpa Lamas who have spread the Dharma to the West to break their vow and commitments to either to His Holiness or to their root Guru, who is also the root Guru of His Holiness, Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche."

So there is a lot of clinging to views and some uncommon features involved in that issue which makes it really hard to judge this. I collected the essence of different researches here:

http://info-buddhism.com/dorje_shugden_controversy.html

I am happy about every comment which helps to get a better understanding or corrects my pov, moreover I am happy to hear how a Theravadin would solve such issues.

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Title: Comment deleted

Author: Name withheld

Date Posted: 18 Jun 2008 10:04 AM (GMT)

Edited on: 19 Jun 2008 12:11 PM (GMT)

This comment was deleted by an Administrator on June 19, 2008 at 12:11 PM (GMT). It was violating this site's [Terms and Conditions](#).

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Title: Sweet Fruit

Author: Chris (<http://triplegem.terapad.com/>)

Date Posted: 19 Jun 2008 12:14 PM (GMT)

The TripleGem think tank was not created to focus primarily on intra-Buddhist conflicts or to take sides where there is a dispute, but to examine the implications of such conflicts, especially where they takes place in the 'public square' or are attempting to sway public opinion.

That is why I am interested in how Buddhists can justify the display of insulting placards as an example of right speech. Right speech is about avoiding lies and deceit but also about avoiding harsh words and ones which create division and discord.

It would not be appropriate for any external tradition to offer a solution to the Shugden conflict. This is for those directly involved to determine. I simply made the point in my post that the heart of Buddhist practice is about generosity and compassion and that any solution would come from these virtues, not from 'righteousness'.

I would also add that Theravada is not entirely free from tensions between different schools, it is just that these are not so prominent and not played out in the UK in such a public way as the Shugden dispute.

It does seem though, that the divisions within Tibetan Buddhism are more entrenched and have a lot of history. Presumably this reflects political and cultural conditions within the original Tibetan context. The point was made in the original article, 'why should Western Buddhists seek to perpetuate conflicts from other cultural contexts in the UK'? Is it not time to let these things go and focus on the essentials?

I recall some words from Ajahn Chah something along the lines of 'Buddhism in Thailand is like a large and impressive tree, which however, bears small amounts of fruit which is often bitter, whilst Buddhism in the West is like a young sapling which can bear much sweet fruit'.

Let us strive to create the conditions for sweet fruit here in the UK and the West.

Chris

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Title: Buddhism is very new in the West... I

Author: Tenzin Peljor (<http://info-buddhism.com/>)

Date Posted: 19 Jun 2008 05:01 PM (GMT)

Yes Chris. I agree in general.

As far as I can see the Buddha had always very different approaches. e.g. the Buddha in his former lifes, as a Bodhisattva, was generous to the five demons and pacified the potential conflict that way. By offering his very blood and flesh he transformed the situation into something very positive which supported his attainment of enlightenment. Later these five Rakshasas became his first five disciples.

Then in the life where he attained full enlightenment, he had the constant confrontations with the jealous Devadatta. In that case he was very strict, e.g. he named Devadatta (quite harsh) a "truckler", he didn't hesitate to name him as what his character was. Further he advised that his disciples spread the message that Devadatta's teachings are not the Buddhadharma into the ten directions. (Of course he had also different approaches to Devadatta, depending on the setting or specific circumstances.)

So now the Dharma is in the West. Less people have experience; there is a lot of not-knowing. This gap of knowing (ignorance) forms a natural basis for wrong developments. It looks now the Shugden dispute was exported to the West and now the Westerners – especially where Lamas insist on that practice – are confronted with this. As long as those Lamas wouldn't encourage their followers to participate the protests, there wouldn't be much action in the West. The Tibetans said clearly the Westerners should not get involved they are used to such conflicts and have their own ways to work it out for themselves (see: [It's Dalai Lama vs Shugden](#) by Deepak Thapa).

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Title: Buddhism is very new in the West... II

Author: Tenzin Peljor (<http://info-buddhism.com/>)

Date Posted: 19 Jun 2008 05:01 PM (GMT)

What I learnt from the Theravada is that if a monk was expelled from his order and forms an own order, nobody would take this person usually very serious. There were not many who would follow such a person. The same is among Tibetans, people who are used to live in Buddhist countries, have their ways to work out such issues. And I think here in the West, where the Dharma is so new, we have not find a way to face and deal with controversial issues.

From the Forest Tradition (in UK) I learnt, when they expelled a monk, and he started to settle down elsewhere, the community wrote a letter to his new followers, that this monk was expelled and lacks the support of the community. So they informed people. Now guess what happened when this monk would have told to his followers that the community expelled him due to their bias, jealousy and so on, and would encourage his followers to protest against the community until he is re-established in the order? Would lay people or monks from Buddhist countries do that?

So I think the actual situation is much more based on a lack of knowledge of Buddhism than anything else. So the solution could be to give this knowledge. That's why I am so interested to learn how other school work through such situations. It can give me an idea or inspiration what could be done or what shouldn't be done...

The sweet fruit can be tasted when the fruit is ripened and you have peeled it.

Many Regards, Tenzin

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Title: Dealing with dissension

Author: Chris (<http://triplegem.terapad.com/>)

Date Posted: 19 Jun 2008 10:53 PM (GMT)

I think you are right, Tenzin, Buddhism is very new in the West and there is a great deal of ignorance. I think that many lay-people simply accept the authority of a charismatic or assertive teacher, rather than investigating or really appreciating issues of lineage and the need for a teacher to be accepted and supported by their broader Buddhist community. There are a number of examples of teachers in the West who have broken with or been expelled from communities and yet have managed to establish their own separate organisation.

In many cases such people have exploited the ignorance of Western people about Buddhism and abused their trust. I think that somehow those new to Buddhism have to understand that they bear a responsibility to check the credentials of those that claim or appear to be accomplished 'masters' or meditation teachers. If this responsibility is not understood and shouldered, then Buddhism in the West will be compromised.

Perhaps Western followers should be far less ready to follow or have confidence in 'maverick' or isolated teachers who do not have healthy relationships with well-established and respected traditions. Maybe we need to publish some guidelines on 'how to spot a good Buddhist teacher' and 'how to identify a not so good teacher'.

You would need to communicate with monks and nuns in the Forest Sangha to find out how such issues have been dealt with in this tradition. I do not know what the vinaya rules have to say about such matters.

best wishes

Chris

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Title: Guidelines

Author: Tenzin Peljor (<http://info-buddhism.com/>)

Date Posted: 20 Jun 2008 09:57 AM (GMT)

Yes Chris. I think this makes sense:

Maybe we need to publish some guidelines on 'how to spot a good Buddhist teacher' and 'how to identify a not so good teacher'.

In the Tibetan Tradition it is expected and completely left on the shoulders of the seeker to check beforehand properly. To give some guidelines and make people sensitive to this subject is a helpful solution I think.

After a long time of restrain the German Buddhist Union has finally accepted that they have also the duty to offer some guidelines to people interested in Buddhism. In a process of about 2-3 years they have finally published a set of guidelines.

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Title: Is it right to criticise?

Author: Adam

Date Posted: 22 Jun 2008 09:16 PM (GMT)

I would like to thank both Chris and Tenzin Peljor for their comments. They both come across as people of good-will who have every wish to deal with this issue in a fair and balanced manner.

As a member of the NKT and a supporter of the WSS I am concerned that we should be presenting our case as clearly as possible. To some extent misunderstanding may be unavoidable as many people will take offence simply at our protesting against the Dalai Lama's actions. However, we can make efforts to explain ourselves as well as possible and I think that we should do so.

The issues covered could be summarised as 1. Is the Dalai Lama doing anything wrong? and 2. Is the WSS doing anything wrong?

Ok, so obviously there is a difference of opinion over whether Dorje Shugden is a Buddha or a spirit. Those who would like to learn a bit more about the point of view that he may be a Buddha can consult the Western Shugden Society web-site and its links. However, no one is protesting about the Dalai Lama's own personal opinion on this matter. The Dalai Lama is free to rule on this one as he chooses, but what right does he have to try to force others to abandon a practice given to them by their Spiritual Guide?

Right now Tibetans in India are being told that if they refuse to sign a pledge agreeing to give up their practice of Dorje Shugden they will have no right to live with other Tibetans, to shop in Tibetan shops, to access medical facilities available to Tibetans, to send their children to Tibetan schools. People's homes are being broken into and ransacked for images of Dorje Shugden. Tibetan society is being divided into those who support the ban and hate those who continue their practice of Dorje Shugden, and those who wish to continue their practice and are experiencing very real persecution. Furthermore, all of this is the work of the Dalai Lama and his government.

Do you believe this or are these a series of false accusations? If you have an interest and concern in this matter you should try to investigate this.

One of the aims of the WSS has been to get journalists to go to India and Dharmasala to investigate this matter for themselves. There is a Swiss documentary about this matter which can be downloaded from YOUTUBE, although it should be borne in mind that the documentary was made ten years ago and that things are now very much worse.

Assuming for a moment that these outrageous sounding accusations are true - is the WSS wrong to protest against the Dalai Lama? Certainly it looks ugly, but is it as ugly as what is presently taking place in India?

While he was imprisoned in Birmingham Martin Luther King was shown a newspaper article containing an open letter from Church leaders criticising him for his "extremism." In response he wrote his famous Letter from a Birmingham Jail of which I will quote a paragraph:

"You deplore the demonstrations taking place in Birmingham. But your statement, I am sorry to say, fails to express a similar concern for the conditions that brought about the demonstrations. I am sure that none of you would want to rest content with the superficial kind of social analysis that deals merely with effects and does not grapple with underlying causes. It is unfortunate that the demonstrations are taking place in Birmingham, but it is even more unfortunate that the city's white power structure left the Negro community with no alternative."

I invite anyone reading this to try to learn a bit more about the conditions that brought about these demonstrations. The Swiss documentary might be a good starting point.

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Title: What is the basis of the criticism? II

Author: Tenzin Peljor (<http://info-buddhism.com/>)

Date Posted: 23 Jun 2008 10:58 AM (GMT)

Why I see the protests as not appropriate with Buddhist behaviour?

The WSS protests are based on delusions as expressed in the core teaching of the WSS: [21st Century Buddhist Dictator - The Dalai Lama](#) which was loudly read by Kelsang Khyenrab during the USA protests and probably written by Kelsang Gyatso himself. This WSS teaching and other statements of GKG about HHDL reveal from my pov a heavy hostility. This hostility now colours the mind of his followers and the protesters and influence the perception of events in India (based on hearsay).

If the NKT/WSS states in public HHDL is a "liar", "hypocrite" and does not give "religious freedom", then what are the facts? Lying means to say consciously something wrong, where did he do this? Hypocrisy means to pretend something one does not have, what is this? His perception of Shugden practice as being harmful and advising against it is no hypocrisy; it is in accordance with his wish to protect others, and based on his thoroughly and long-term investigations. Who knows the history of NKT and Shugden knows that exactly this practice is the opponent of religious freedom.

Accusing someone who does not lie of being a liar, accusing someone of being a hypocrite who is not is not correct from a Buddhist point of view. Accusing someone who puts restrictions on a practice which is based on religious fundamentalism of being an "evil oppressor" is also not in accordance with Buddhist teachings.

Regarding the events in India. The WSS spoke in the past about an oath, now they speak of a pledge but in fact HHDL asked for a vote and made clear, that if more than 60% is supporting the Shugden practice he will never *speak* about this topic again.

In the Tibetan exile community there is a lot very different from what you heard in NKT / WSS and state here. For that reason *I agree very much that the press should investigate*. During the past campaign they did, and they found nothing remarkable. See The Independent and The Guardian.

The Swiss-documentary is a Sunday breakfast-TV broadcast and the broadcast station was faced with so many complaints by the exile Tibetan community in Swiss that they were forced to make after that broadcast a series of further contributions to balance what they have claimed in the first broadcast, because it was to one-sided.

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Title: Unskilful criticism

Author: Chris (<http://triplegem.terapad.com/>)

Date Posted: 23 Jun 2008 10:53 AM (GMT)

Thanks Adam. I agree that it is important to be clear about the issues in a factual and fair way. Unfortunately the WSS campaign loses sympathy because it uses personal abuse, opinion, and insult rather than sticking to facts and actions.

The WSS website gives the impression of a hate filled and vituperative personal campaign against the Dalai Lama, rather than a compassionate and careful marshalling of evidence and argument. It does not demonstrate Buddhist virtues and it loses the moral high ground.

Precepts and actions are important. Harsh, abusive and divisive words generate anger, fear, and associated negative emotions. That is why there is so much guidance given in Buddhism about being careful with speech and words.

What you are arguing is that the end justifies the means; that precepts are disposable if one feels strongly enough about some perceived injustice. The trouble with this is that we can all get indignant about our own particular favourite form of unfairness in the world and there is always an impulse to use any means at our disposal to put this right. This is righteous indignation and acting upon this leads to bad results. (What have the results been from the Shugden campaigns of 10 years ago, and the recent ones?)

When the end justifies the means we are on a slippery slope.

You quote from Martin Luther King. Do you actually think that the oppression suffered by Shugden supporters is of the same order as that suffered fifty years back by black people in the US?

I sympathise with those who feel forced to change their particular form of religious practice but there is nothing one can do about one's race.

Best wishes

Chris

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Title: What is the basis of the criticism? I

Author: Tenzin Peljor (<http://info-buddhism.com/>)

Date Posted: 23 Jun 2008 10:54 AM (GMT)

Dear Adam, your post, which reached me via email, raises the question to me, if I should ignore it or respond to it. I decided to not engage in this endless dispute any more and I was happy to find an article & thread here which is free from the spins on that subject. It looks like ignoring your post would be the best. However, I have a doubt, so I will add some thoughts.

In Buddhism the first thing is to check one's own view one has to an object. There are wrong views and there are correct views. There are views related to the conventional level of reality and there are views related to the ultimate level of reality. If one wants to understand this conflict one has to understand the views of those parties involved and one has to check which view is in accordance to reality and which is not.

When one traces the conflict back to that then it is very easy to understand the underlying forces and what the respective parties involved present as their facts. Every view – may it be distorted or correct – has its specific line of reasoning. Also anger and hostility can be based on reasoning. But the underlying force is destructive emotion and distorted perception.

Every war has its set of reasoning. And every war has its way of manipulation and interpretation of events. I think this should be kept in mind here.

Now if one looks about the reasoning of HHDL. He said that he has investigated the issue on the outer, inner and secret level, and came to conclusion DS is no object of Buddhist worship. According to researcher Kay: "he is widely supported in it by representatives of the Gelug and non-Gelug traditions." Moreover he and many others see the practice as spiritual harmful and damaging to people. So he felt he has to say this and to advise against it.

If you look on the reasoning of the Shugden followers: They believe in that practice because it was taught by Trijang Rinpoche, and he received it from Pabongkhapa Rinpoche. They argue on the basis: "this is the (pure) tradition".

This is exactly a setting for spiritual controversy. Now what follows depends on the parties involved. Everyone has to check and judge this for himself. If you ask here about the appropriateness of the protests, I say:

They are not appropriate at all.

Why?

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Title: nkt

Author: KATH

Date Posted: 26 Jun 2008 03:02 PM (GMT)

Dear Tenzin, I have read your comments with much interest. I recently withdrew from the NKT after studying with them for 6 years. Recent events have caused me much heart searching and I have looked at the situation from both sides. This has involved many hours of research on the internet reading article after article and I must say some vitriolic statements.

As Buddhists, I believe we should never resort to such aggression and wrong speech. We are all in the position of trying to attain a pure mind and this can never happen whilst such actions are taken. I can never condone what the WSS has done and I feel one only has to look at the history and then into one's heart to find what is really happening.

Peace and goodwill

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Title: Looking in the own heart and mind

Author: Tenzin Peljor (<http://info-buddhism.com/>)

Date Posted: 26 Jun 2008 04:32 PM (GMT)

Dear KATH,

"I feel one only has to look at the history and then into one's heart to find what is really happening."

I agree very much with this. Besides investigating the history, the best is to look in the own heart and mind what is going on there. This is the Buddhist approach. However, for this courage, openness and much honesty is needed.

Based on a honest and fearless self-introspection, one can recognize what's really happening and finally release heart and mind from the bondages.

I think, one can say it is quite helpful for actual NKT members that the protests take place because they help some to open their eyes and to find a distance.

Without the direct confrontation of GKS's personal behaviour I wouldn't have been able to awake from my situation within NKT. I am happy that I had this opportunity.

I wish you all the best and I congratulate you for your courage to withdraw. (I assume it was not an easy step.) Many Regards, Tenzin

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Title: Thanks

Author: Adam

Date Posted: 23 Jun 2008 06:40 PM (GMT)

Chris and Tenzin:

Thanks for your intelligent and thoughtful responses. I am impressed by your willingness to consider the issue from different angles and also your restraint from using vitriol!

I certainly agree with some of the points that you have both made, including the importance of "right speech."

I will respond to your points in more detail in due course, but will try to take my time in composing my response in order to present myself as clearly as possible.

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Title: The case for protests 1

Author: Adam

Date Posted: 24 Jun 2008 06:14 PM (GMT)

Chris and Tenzin:

Where do we start? Well, perhaps let's start with points of agreement. Chris you say "the conflict is only going to be solved by some generous, open-hearted, and compassionate gestures." There are three possibilities as to what can happen. Firstly, the Dalai Lama lifting the ban and the discriminations that go with it. Secondly, all Dorje Shugden worshipers recognising the terrible "mistake" that they have made and taking the pledge:

"I swear on the name of the Dalai Lama and glorious Maxor Gyalmo to never venerate and worship Shugden and to never have any relation on material or other levels with those who worship Shugden."

Thirdly, for Dorje Shugden worshipers in India to try to obtain Indian citizenship and to banish themselves from Tibetan society, including members of their own family, in accordance with the Dalai Lama's decree.

Which of these would seem the more desirable to you?

You further say "Unfortunately the WSS loses sympathy because it uses personal

abuse, opinion, and insult rather than sticking to fact and action." Clearly it must do, as you appear to be a case in point. I can understand this. Tenzin, you specify the 21st Century Buddhist Dictator article as something you found offensive.

On this point I heartily agree with you. I think that the inclusion of this article was a complete mistake and have e-mailed the WSS several times with the request that it should be removed. I do not know who wrote it although I would imagine that it was a Tibetan living in India. It doesn't sound like Geshe Kelsang in style. It does not look like my request is going to be granted.

Chris, you further state: "The WSS web-site gives the impression of a hate-filled vituperative personal campaign against the Dalai Lama, rather than a compassionate and careful marshalling of evidence and argument."

I take your point. I can see how it could appear like that. It clearly doesn't work for you. How can I explain?

Firsly, you have to understand that the NKT practitioners who are involved in the WSS are just simply not interested in the Dalai Lama. We just don't care what he does - mending watches, teaching from the Christian gospels, pleading with the Chinese to stop moving into Tibet, or whatever else - we just don't care. Our only wish is that he should stop persecuting Dorje Shugden worshipers. We don't revere him and we don't hate him.

The whole thing is very simple as we are just making one simple request - forcefully! What the WSS web-site does not do is to show any sort of sensitivity towards people who may be thinking "What has this got to do with Tibet?" or "How could such a lovely man do anything mean?" or "Isn't the Dalai Lama supposed to be the head of all Tibetan Buddhists?"

Perhaps some day a clever psychologist will come along who will explain the living, walking, talking, contradiction of vaules that is the Dalai Lama. In the mean time the WSS will simply make the point that he is doing wrong.

The second point that you have to bear in mind is that this is an end-point reached after many years. Many respectful letters have been sent to the Dalai Lama on this matter. Also, during the first lot of protests our placards said things like "Dalai Lama Please Give Religious Freedom" and we still got slated for our supposed fanaticism!

The third point that I would like to make is that if you a looking for Dorje Shugden worshipers who have a more respectful and deferential attitude towards the Dalai Lama you can certainly find them - in the links provided by the WSS web-site. Some of the Tibetan Dorje Shugden worshipers appear to still hold the Dalai Lama in high regard. Check out www.dorjeshugden.com and www.shugdensociety if you would like to see evidence of nice polite Dorje Shugden worshipers!

As for the evidence side of things please refer to the Chronicle of Events from the booklet The Tibetan Situation Today downloadable from the WSS web-site, (although please remember to avoid the aforementioned first article!)

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Title: The case for protests 2

Author: Adam

Date Posted: 24 Jun 2008 06:23 PM (GMT)

The Dalai Lama's persecution of Dorje Shugden worshipers is a very serious instance of discrimination and oppression, every bit as serious as that faced by black people in America fifty years ago, although very different in many respects. I agree with you that racial persecution is perhaps more heinous than religious persecution on account of its completely intractable nature - no one can change their race - but both are profoundly wrong. Our knowledge of this persecution is first-hand as supporters of the WSS include those experiencing this persecution, NKT members who have travelled to India to try to help those affected, as well as those of us who wish to support a cause that we have learnt about and believe in.

The protests are a bold and loving statement of opposition to religious persecution. They seek to highlight and draw attention to the plight of Dorje Shugden worshipers so that it can no longer be ignored. It is the earnest hope and prayer of all supporters of the WSS for the protests to bring about discussions that will lead to an end to the present discrimination and oppression and usher in an era of peace and tolerance among Tibetans.

Best Wishes,

Adam

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Title: Does the Media Campaign follows Buddhist principles or not?

Author: Tenzin Peljor (<http://info-buddhism.com/>)

Date Posted: 24 Jun 2008 09:46 PM (GMT)

Dear Adam, I think you bring the discussion now in a direction of justifying the WSS and to prove that they did act correctly and that HHDL is wrong. OK, this is the view of GKG/ NKT/WSS.

But the main question is and was: is the way WSS addresses their concerns – especially their speech and the character of their Media Campaign following Buddhist principles or not?

For the investigation for those open to it I suggest a three step-mode:

1. To get a clear understanding of Buddhist principles, e.g. one can read, contemplate and meditate the excellent teachings of Bhikkhu Bodhi on right speech: <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/bodhi/waytoend.html#ch4>
2. to examine the WSS website and the website of HHDL regarding their speech. And to undertake an analyse if they follow right speech or not based on a clear, unbiased mind and an open heart.
3. to judge if WSS / HHDL follow Buddhist principles or not.

Buddhist teachings are very complex and they are very easy: if the action is based on hatred, ignorance or attachment, the action is a destructive action and is to be abandoned.

But am I able to recognize, in what state my mind is? Am I correct in how I judged my mind-states or do I cheat myself about the states of my mind? Do I take hate for compassion, ignorance for wisdom, and attachment for love? To be able to recognize the own mind correctly there is a lot of knowledge, mindfulness, introspection and meditation needed, that's why Buddhists tend towards to do less outer actions and to focus mainly on introspection (study, contemplation and meditation).

If I am not able to recognize and judge my own mind and actions, how can I judge other's mind and actions?

Regarding the events in India I have very different and more differentiated information then you offer here. They give a *very different picture* of the events. Mainly you repeat here the arguments of the WSS/NKT/GKG/Kundeling.

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Title: Analyse of outer phenomena I

Author: Tenzin Peljor (<http://info-buddhism.com/>)

Date Posted: 24 Jun 2008 09:54 PM (GMT)

In the Shugden-dispute, there seem to be two main points from a Buddhist perspective:

- a) is he a (harmful) spirit or a Buddha (whose perception is valid)
- b) how do the persons holding different views address their views and how does the environment responds to it

If a person perceives blue as yellow and his environment do not, then this view will bring the person into conflict with his environment and vice versa. How a potential

conflict, based on different views, develops depends on the actions of both sides. How do both sides issue their POV and why they issue it? The motivation and means they apply form the basis for the developments of the potential conflict based on different views. (One should consider religious persons tend to project their mind poisons (ignorance, hate and attachment) onto their own and others religious system(s), teachings and views, which nourishes the potential conflict.)

To find out if the actions of HHDL or the WSS are in accordance with Buddhist principles one can just visit their respective websites which represents their very thoughts and views on it (based on thoughts and views actions arise). In a later step one can try to get independent information about the actual facts in India and the complex and difficult to comprehend issue of the Dorje Shugden Controversy in general. Then one can put this all together to have a more complete picture.

Maybe before such an investigation can be undertaken it is good to look deeper on the patterns behind the GKG/WSS/NKT protests and the mind sets of those in charge.

The leitmotif seems to be 'HHDL is evil.' The other motive 'GKG is pure' or HHDL destroys the pure Buddhadharma 'as taught by his root Guru', whilst GKG 'has restored the essential purity of Buddha's doctrine and shown how to practice it in extremely impure times'.

There seems to be a perception and struggle of good against the evil or the struggle of the "pure David" (GKG) against the "ruthless dictator" Goliath (HHDL). (For a better understanding of the self-perception of GKG see Kay's research or this short extract: [NKT-History](#), and read GKG's open letters).

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Title: Analyse of outer phenomena II

Author: Tenzin Peljor (<http://info-buddhism.com/>)

Date Posted: 24 Jun 2008 10:05 PM (GMT)

I think, GKG has a mission similar to G.Bush, by order of God or by order of the pure tradition they must defend the good against the evil or the pure against the impure. "Evil" is a term which is often used at the WSS website and in the speech of GKG. (I know different letters and emails of GKG...)

The Media Campaign of WSS has for me much of a Media War and the principles of

war. As Bush was forced to justify his material war (chemical weapons and laboratories in the possession of S. Hussein which threads the world), GKG/WSS have to justify their Media War too: power abuse and persecution by HHDL and which create so much suffering and so on As Bush pinpointed Hussein as the root of evil, GKG/WSS pinpoint HHDL as the root of evil. What Bush or GKG and their followers recognize and how they put different information together or how they deal with them depends very much on their mind setting up to the point that they may perceive things which do not exist at all.

There are two sides to be investigated: the mind-sets or personalities of those involved and the facts. This includes as well to investigate the mind-setting of HHDL and Kundeling and their presentations of the facts. The investigation of mind-setting and facts are difficult points but it is possible with effort and thoroughly, unbiased analyse and understanding. The mind expresses itself in speech, that's why observing the speech (websites, public & internal statements) will help to understand the mind-settings.

To investigate the events in India, one must take time to get the complete picture to balance the information, to weight them, to put them into perspective etc. and to check if they follow a common pattern or if they are accidently etc. Because this takes time and needs much effort, all German Buddhist experts refused to state something about the validity of the WSS claims. (I did some research and indeed the actual situation in India is again – like during the last NKT campaign – very different from the picture which WSS/NKT draw. Bunting named it "shadowboxing", one creates images over situations which do not accord with reality and fights them...)

From my understanding the WSS sells now a story based on a good-versus-evil dualism as it is sold in wars. To the participants of the protests this may give some meaning to their life, however I understand the underlying forces as being very simplistic and naïve they are based on ignorance and hostility. I felt the last Media Campaign of NKT already as being a war, (I was an active part of it.) it reminded me strongly on my times in the East German Army and how they sold stories to us to enforce our fighting force... the terms WSS & you Adam use: "persecution, oppression.." support the fighting force but not peace. That's my pov.

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Title: A truce?

Author: Adam

Date Posted: 26 Jun 2008 10:21 PM (GMT)

Tenzin:

I feel as though things are heading in a somewhat negative direction here. I know that some people don't like the character of the NKT and that's fine, but no one is forced to be involved with the NKT or to worship Dorje Shugden.

The issue at stake is whether people should be forced not to worship Dorje Shugden. WSS is trying to defend the rights of people with this particular faith. It is a human rights issue.

None the less, I think that there is an element of truth in your comments. I accept that it may be possible for people to buy into this sort of thing in an emotional way, coming to see GKG and DL as symbols of good and evil respectively. That wouldn't help much.

This theme has been explored in depth by an American psychologist called Robert Jay Lifton, in particular in his first book *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism*, a book about Chinese "Brainwashing" published in 1961. He has also written a very good book exploring the psychology of George. W. Bush called *Superpower Syndrome*. I would recommend these books if this is something that interests you.

I suggest we call a truce as I don't think we're going to get much further beyond this point. Thank you for your comments, and also for the links that you have provided which I plan to take a look at at some point. I don't think I have anything further to say on this issue as I think we all need to just decide for ourselves what we think and where we stand.

I am interested in the Triple Gem project in general, and may very well be contribution to other unrelated discussions.

Best Wishes,

Adam

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Title: Thank you.

Author: Tenzin Peljor (<http://info-buddhism.com/>)

Date Posted: 26 Jun 2008 11:43 PM (GMT)

Thank you Adam. 😊 We can leave it as it is. Thank you for your recommendation, I find Lifton in general very helpful and thoughtful. The book about G. Bush I didn't know until now. Thank you also for taking time and your contributions at TripleGem. I appreciate TripleGem and Chris' balance and Buddhist approach very much. Best regards, Tenzin.

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Title: Helpful Debate

Author: Chris Ward SITE ADMIN (<http://triplegem.terapad.com/>)

Date Posted: 27 Jun 2008 09:45 AM (GMT)

Many thanks to all for a very helpful debate and some useful links.

best wishes

Chris

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Title: Precept

Author: Chris (<http://triplegem.terapad.com/>)

Date Posted: 25 Jun 2008 04:38 PM (GMT)

Thanks Adam,

The problem with breaking right speech guidelines is that you lose trust. Those looking at the WSS web site see that it clearly breaks basic buddhist guidelines. Not only is it deliberately abusive it also misuses the word 'liar'. As Tenzin pointed out in a previous comment, HHDL is publishing his current opinion about Shugden; now his opinion may be considered wrong by others but cannot be properly portrayed as lying. Misguided, perhaps by those who disagree with him, but not lying.

So those looking, realise that the WSS site uses wrong speech. This leads to a sense of doubt about all of the material. If it confuses opinion with lying and intentionally deploys personal abuse, maybe other material on the site is exaggerated or misleading? If those putting up this material are careless about one precept, perhaps they do not care about the others either? This then leads to conclude ' If they are deliberately trying to mislead, what are their real motives?

It is essential if you want to gain sympathy for this cause that you operate to the highest ethical standards. One of the results of breaking precepts is that others do not trust you.

It strikes me that one of the defining characteristics of what is called 'fundamentalism' is that attachment to an ideal or cause exceeds a willingness to abide by basic moral standards. Once this happens then any behaviour becomes justifiable.

best wishes

Chris

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Title: right speech

Author: Adam

Date Posted: 26 Jun 2008 06:17 AM (GMT)

Chris:

As I have made clear in my previous postings I also believe that some of the WSS material breaks right speech guidelines. Furthermore I also acknowledge that it shows little sensitivity to people who may be wondering "How could a nice person like the Dalai Lama ever do anything mean?"

To some extent this is unavoidable as you can't really protest and explain at the same time! I felt only understanding and compassion for the people who shouted "stop lying" back at us, and even for the man in Nottingham who did two V-signs and chanted "Chinese Agents, Chinese Agents"!

As I have tried to explain, contrary to what people may think, none of us feel any anger towards the Dalai Lama as such. Certainly we feel none towards people who appreciate his message and for whom he serves as an important figure. Many of them were open to our message and asked in astonishment "What is this all about?" They were horrified to learn about the families who are being torn apart and children who are being kicked out of school through the actions of this supposed man of peace.

In a phone discussion with a friend prior to the UK demonstrations I discussed my reservations about the booklet. We had serious doubts about the presentation of the booklet as we felt that it would cause some people to doubt the legitimacy of our cause.

Frankly, if we can't manage to win the sympathy of someone who declares themselves as non-partisan and who wants to champion open debate and discussion, then I am inclined to regard the whole campaign as a bit of a failure! It could be argued that your publication of an article that openly supports the Dalai Lama and attacks the WSS means that you have taken sides already. However, I am inclined to take a tolerant view of this as the DL enjoys such main-stream acceptance that this probably didn't seem unreasonable, and besides which without this article I wouldn't be able to contribute to this discussion.

The request "Stop Lying" is not an insult however, and I do not regard this chant as being at error. The Dalai Lama is not making a sincere mistake, in my opinion, but is

being disengenious. He is clearly a reasonably intelligent fellow and surely doesn't really believe that Dorje Shugden is an evil Chinese spirit who is damaging his health and damaging the cause of Tibetan independence.

If however he really does believe this then he really is bonkers and perhaps we should have been chanting "Get Diagnosed, Get Diagnosed" or "Take your Medication, Take your Medication"!!!

As with the whole campaign, the problem we have is the unbelievability of the friendly, charming Dalai Lama ever doing anything mean.

I can only request that you take another look at some of the material on this issue, rather than judging the issue itself by the presentation of the WSS. Check out the Dorje Shugden society at:

<http://www.shugdensociety.info/newsEN.html>

Best Wishes,

Adam

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Title: Comment deleted

Author: Name withheld

Date Posted: 27 Jun 2008 09:38 AM (GMT)

Edited on: 29 Jun 2008 09:31 AM (GMT)

This comment was deleted by an Administrator on June 29, 2008 at 09:31 AM (GMT). It was violating this site's [Terms and Conditions](#).

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Author: Chris Ward SITE ADMIN (<http://triplegem.terapad.com/>)

Date Posted: 29 Jun 2008 09:30 AM (GMT)

(I have rededited this posting)

Adam,

Thanks for your contributions to this debate. A good example of right speech; avoiding personalisation and abuse and aiming to explore this conflict in a calm way in the light of buddhist virtues and practice.

I would strongly advise those behind the WSS campaign to think again. I agree with

your view that the recent activity has been counter-productive.

Recent informal conversations that I have had with buddhists from other traditions in the UK, (and there are many of them), suggest a unanimous condemnation of the actions of the WSS.

I do not believe the basic problem with the WSS campaign is 'the unbelievability of the friendly, charming Dalai Lama ever doing anything mean'. The real problem is that apparently sincere buddhists can believe that it is skilful to deliberately and publically demonstrate wrong speech. This is always going to be counter-productive, karmically unskilful, and a contradiction of basic buddhist values, whoever it is directed against.

Let us work at showing how buddhists can resolve such conflicts through compassion and wisdom and through meeting and discourse, rather than public discord.

You are welcome to submit comments to TG or perhaps a news item or article. I cannot guarantee to publish everything, but if it comes from the right place then it stands a good chance

best wishes

Chris

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Title: Unfortunate

Author: Adam

Date Posted: 29 Jun 2008 10:40 PM (GMT)

Chris:

I can't pretend that I don't regard this outcome as extremely unfortunate! I have no wish to demonstrate a blithe disregard towards anyone's sensibilities. However, it isn't always right to try to avoid offending them at all costs either. Furthermore, Chris, I also agree with many of the general comments that you have made about right speech, whilst not agreeing about them in reference to the activities of the WSS, except with respect to the article that Tenzin mentioned which I also thought unskilful.

I do not know why it is exactly that these Buddhists wish to condemn the activities of the WSS, but I would suspect that it is a combination of factors - sympathy for the Dalai Lama, lack of sympathy for the plight of Dorje Shugden worshippers based on a lack of knowledge of it, a concern about Tibet and a belief that the Dalai Lama helps Tibetans in Tibet, and that by criticising him the WSS somehow damages their cause, antipathy towards shouting and holding up signs with a blunt message as a method of protesting, and antipathy toward protest in general.

So.... looking at it in terms of "end" and "means" I would guess that these people think that we are wrong in terms of both - that trying to protect people's right to worship Dorje Shugden is a ridiculous "end", and that shouting at the Dalai Lama is a profoundly wrong "means". I can understand that!!!

It never was going to be easy. I do not know whether the message has been conveyed as skilfully as it possibly could. I have no influence whatsoever over the activities of the WSS beyond the choice of whether or not to attend the protests.

One point deserves mentioning though and that is the extent to which many Buddhist organisations already accept the authority of the Dalai Lama. The Buddhist Society has the Dalai Lama as its president. The FPMT is actively implementing this ban by making it a requirement of all of its teachers that they don't worship Dorje Shugden. [Incidentally, this has caused a bit of a controversy within the FPMT as Lama Yeshe was a devout Dorje Shugden worshipper]. In no way, therefore, is it likely that people from these organisation are likely to be capable of an objective assessment of this situation. I would not even hope or expect their sympathy.

The situation is a bit different with people from other Traditions such as the Theravada traditions and the FWBO, and it is disappointing if we are not able to win sympathy from them. The FWBO in particular, I believe, have an active interest in protest and "non-violent resistance" as a means of trying to effect social change, I believe, and so I would guess that if they lack sympathy it is mainly because they consider our "end" unworthy.

How things progress is difficult to say, but in addition to protests the WSS is also involved in trying to fund-raise in order to re-house Shugden followers in India who have been exiled from Tibetan society. If the protests are completely unsuccessful it may be that this will become its principle aim. Presumably people won't be so upset about that but will just regard it as an irrelevance.

For my part, with regard to Triple Gem I am hoping to contribute postings to unrelated articles both because this is a project that interests me in its own right, and also, I must admit, to try to demonstrate through example that NKT people are not quite so narrow-minded and sectarian as some may portray us, and to try to maintain good relations with people from other Traditions.

I am wondering if there is a feature whereby one can sign up for notification of new articles as they appear. I think this would be a good idea if it were possible.

Best Wishes,

Adam

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Title: Other traditions

Author: Chris [SITE ADMIN](#) (<http://triplegem.terapad.com/>)

Date Posted: 30 Jun 2008 11:18 AM (GMT)

Adam,

I cannot pretend that I have carried out a proper survey, simply that I attended a large gathering of Buddhists over the weekend and nobody I spoke to who mentioned it thought the WSS action skilful.

Two comments I will pass on. One was that 'the NKT have shot themselves in the foot again' . And this is interesting. Most buddhists see a close relationship if not identity between the NKT and the WSS, so whatever the WSS does affects the reputation of the NKT and the person I was speaking with was concerned about the NKT getting a bad reputation. So concern for the NKT and those in it is one reason for criticising the WSS actions.

The second discussion with a Zen monk was basically pointing out that the general public simplify things; a buddhist monk or nun is a buddhist monk or nun. If they wear different coloured robes this is probably just a hierarchy of some sort. So public protests by robed monastics can easily tarnish the reputation of monastics from other traditions. The feeling is that the protests were undertaken without any prior discussion or consideration of other UK traditions.

It is increasingly important at this time when 'religion' gets a lot of bad publicity that all UK buddhist organisations consider the effect that their actions may have on the others. We are interdependent.

I would strongly encourage NKT/WSS members to actively engage with buddhists from other traditions. Perhaps TripleGem can organise a small gathering of senior members from a range of UK traditions to meet and speak together about right speech and action in the public 'square' and about the recent protests. I would be happy to initiate this.

I would think that if the WSS raised funds to support those in need, this would be widely seen as acting well. This is generosity and compassion in action.

If you wish to be notified of new TG postings, there is an RSS feed..the small orange rectangle on the front page.

best wishes

Chris

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Title: different and broader perspectives I

Author: Tenzin Peljor (<http://info-buddhism.com/>)

Date Posted: 30 Jun 2008 07:51 PM (GMT)

Dear Adam,

There are different things which I recognize when reading your posts. There is the acknowledgement of possible wrong speech and action in how WSS addresses their issue, there is a wish to engage for those who are seen as being 'religious persecuted', there is the wish to be fair, there are no personal attacks etc.

On the other hand I recognize in your posts also that you are strongly influenced by that which former NKT members label as 'NKT propaganda'. The influence of NKT includes from my and others' understanding not to be able to see the conflict in a broader perspective, e.g. to see that the Gelug Monastic Communities in India, as well as the FPMT have the right to decide what their monastery community rules are and what is seen by them as Buddhist practice and what not; and also to be able to see the advises of HHDL in a broader perspective based on the complex controversial history and setting of that subject. This includes to remember the brutal killing of Buddhist monks by Buddhists (accused are Shugden followers for having killed them), and who are still searched by Interpol (see: [Interpol on trail of Buddhist killers](#))

Moreover outside of NKT all Buddhists I know, and this includes not only monks and nuns from different Buddhist schools but also the highest respected masters from different Buddhist Traditions as well as religious persons of different faiths or atheists, all those people can see and acknowledge the qualities of HHDL whereas those in NKT mostly can not. Most of NKT members guess those Buddhists and the world in general are 'fooled' by HHDL's 'charming smile'. There are many negative and surfaced views about HHDL in NKT/WSS. Your approach of 'WSS are just simply not interested in the Dalai Lama. We just don't care what he does - mending watches, teaching from the Christian gospels, pleading with the Chinese to stop moving into Tibet, or whatever else - we just don't care.' is for me an 'ignorance approach': *if you do not care, you can not understand.* **Understanding is the key for the solution to solve conflicts.**

If one really wishes to help, one has to understand the complex setting of the Tibetan Exile community, the Vinaya, their histories, cross-cultural issues, and how monasteries are traditionally run, as well as one has to understand NKT/WSS and their background. NKT/WSS make the things for themselves and others unclear and blurred by not taking into consideration the decisions and the rights of the monastic communities in India, by ignoring the Vinaya, by ignoring the sensible and complex state and setting of the Tibetan Exile community and their painful relation to China and by ignoring the complex history of the Shugden Controversy, Tibet's and NKT's controversial history, and by choosing a non-Buddhist approach of putting all the blame onto a single

person (HHDL) who is honestly motivated by the concern to bring the welfare to the majority while trying to avoid to ignore the individual needs. The protests of the WSS appear to me as the cry of a baby which doesn't understand anything. I think if NKT/WSS seek dialogue they should be able to open themselves for the complex issues and taking into consideration not only maybe 400 monks which they do not even know but also 10.000 other monks who are happy that the Shugden practice is not performed anymore at their monastic places, because they see it as harmful, and as a violation of Buddhist principles. They do not wish for that this practice is performed at their monastic dwelling place. They have the right to put restrictions on it.

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Title: different and broader perspectives II

Author: Tenzin Peljor (<http://info-buddhism.com/>)

Date Posted: 30 Jun 2008 07:53 PM (GMT)

If you're interested to get a broader perspective I suggest to read those five articles:

- [Provocations of the Gyalpo](#) by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche (2005)
- [A Spirit of the XVII Century](#) by Raimondo Bultrini (2006)
- [Interview with HH the Dalai Lama](#) with Raimondo Bultrini (2005)
- [Sowing dissent and undermining the Dalai Lama](#) by TibetInfoNet 2008
- [Western Shugden Society - unlocked](#)

In the latter you can find also the view of a monk who was present at Sera, and how he/they see this issue. (I researched that issue & have more information on it). I think, even if there is a conflict in India, it shouldn't be imported to the West by people (NKT) who have severed any connection to the Tibetan exile community, the Tibetan monastic community and the Gelug school in general, who do not accept their spiritual authorities, who lack understanding of the difficult situation of the Tibetan Community and their culture, history and how they function; people who have a lack of interest in the wellbeing of the Tibetan Community ('we do just not care'), who lack understanding of the Vinaya and the ways how monastic communities deal with controversial issues. I think, so much lack of understanding and lack of sensibility, so much self-preoccupation, and self-righteous clinging for the own issues, while being unable to change the perspectives can just not work. The solution I see is in opening for the views of those which are to be seen by you and WSS as acting wrongly, and trying to understand them. The suggestion of Chris to 'organise a small gathering of senior members from a range of UK traditions to meet and speak together about right speech and action in the public 'square' and about the recent protests.' has my full support and I appreciate his and other's concerns for the NKT/WSS. I am happy to read that you accept this suggestion and maybe by finding dialogue things can be developed better. Many Regards, Tenzin

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Title: thanks

Author: Adam

Date Posted: 30 Jun 2008 03:04 PM (GMT)

Chris:

thanks,

this is an interesting offer and I hope the WSS will take advantage of it. I can't speak on behalf of the WSS but I would have thought that it may be more meaningful to speak with representatives of groups that aren't directly aligned with the Dalai Lama and therefore, hopefully, have a neutral stance on the issue itself. Otherwise it might become too acrimonious.

I will send an e-mail to WSS and be back in touch with you if and when they reply.

Best Wishes,

Adam

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Title: What about discrimination?

Author: Curious to Know

Date Posted: 04 Jul 2008 05:22 AM (GMT)

I skimmed through your whole debate and found it very interesting that a bunch of "Buddhists", who in theory care for all living beings, really don't seem to discuss the "elephant in the closet":

While we sit comfortably in the west typing our opinions out to our heart's content, there is some very real discrimination happening for ethnic Tibetan Shugden practitioners.

Maybe Dorje Shugden is a spirit. Maybe he's not.

Maybe the NKT and WSS are using right speech. Maybe they're not.

But while you debate these things ad nauseum, people are being expelled from their monasteries, denied medical care, threatened, ostracized, etc. This is not "propaganda" but very real discrimination that has been proven again and again by non-NKT and non-WSS sources.

When will your compassion grow to include this unfortunate, disenfranchised group of people? When will there be long internet debates discussing what the best thing is to do to help these people, rather than whether or not those trying to defend them are being impolite?

Do you honestly think it is more important to ask questions about "right speech" than it is to ask why this discrimination is being allowed to continue? Personally, I think all this discussion about the "means" is like a group of firemen debating whose turn it is to climb up the ladder while a house with people still inside is burning down.

Adam: Thank you for trying to make this point earlier.

Since some anti-NKT and WSS sites have been presented in previous posts, how about this one for balance: newkadampatruth.org.

Thank you for listening.

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Title: Dito

Author: Adam

Date Posted: 04 Jul 2008 06:33 PM (GMT)

Thanks for that!

to all extensive purposes this is my view also.

For example - I felt a little upset about the apparent suggestion in the first article of the booklet produced by the WSS that the Dalai Lama's reputation as a Buddhist was in some way tainted by his having been born into a Muslim family; but to regard THIS as more important than the issues under discussion would be a feat of self-cherishing and self-importance of which even I am not capable!

For me "right speech" in this context basically means "how can we reveal the truth as effectively as possible." In this sense I DO regard right speech as important.

I feel a little embarrassed by the fact that dear Tenzin appears in a sort of NKT FBI's Most Wanted part of this site - I hope this is Ok with you? I guess that they had this information and thought it helpful to include it.

I would say that the information on this site is, for the most part, balance and fair.

Best Wishes,

Adam

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Author: Tenzin Peljor (<http://info-buddhism.com/>)

Date Posted: 04 Jul 2008 07:06 PM (GMT)

Dear Adam, thanks. For me it is ok. The website owner is the NKT leadership:

Domain ID:D153088919-LROR
Domain Name:NEWKADAMPATRUTH.ORG
Created On:25-Jun-2008 22:18:50 UTC
Last Updated On:25-Jun-2008 22:45:54 UTC
Expiration Date:25-Jun-2009 22:18:50 UTC
Sponsoring Registrar:eNom, Inc. (R39-LROR)
Status:CLIENT TRANSFER PROHIBITED
Status:TRANSFER PROHIBITED
Registrant ID:6a70526357c
Registrant Name:NKT Secretary
Registrant Organization:New Kadampa Tradition
Registrant Street1:Conishead Priory

I respect NKT's right to defend themselves. About my personal background I left in the past a short [profile](#) at [E-Sangha](#).

It's up to people to check, verify and finally judge the information provided. How former NKT members see that site one can read at the [New Kadampa Survivors' Forum](#). (It has actual 692 members.)

I hope in the future there is more dialogue and Prof. Bluck's remark in his research *British Buddhism*: "until recently the NKT's supporters and critics have largely ignored each other" is not valid anymore.

It would be great if we all can learn more from each other and a constructive dialogue in UK among British Buddhists and NKT can take place.

Thank you and every one for his/her effort.

Warmest Regards, Tenzin

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Title: mind-boggling

Author: Adam

Date Posted: 04 Jul 2008 09:10 PM (GMT)

Tenzin:

I find this whole thing mind-boggling. I'm relieved that you feel Ok about this. I hope the others also don't find this threatening, and likewise respect the NKT's right to defend itself.

I would also like to see dialogue between the NKT and other Buddhists. However, it is rather difficult in the circumstances. I'll do a separate post on this.

Adam

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Title: Right speech - some clarification

Author: Adam

Date Posted: 04 Jul 2008 09:49 PM (GMT)

Chris:

I'm vaguely aware of a contradiction in my position. I agree with the comment made by Curious to Know in the sense that it is perhaps a little perverse to demand of a victim of persecution (or even someone demonstrating on their behalf) that they should engage in right speech towards their persecutor, rather than to first ask the persecutor to stop harming them.

The text-book answer on this matter, I think, is that raising one's voice and even giving the appearance of anger, is not necessarily incorrect from the point of view of Tibetan Buddhism, as this can be an instance of wrathful compassion. Indeed, one of our Bodhisattva Vows is "Not engaging in wrathful actions when appropriate" and so the NKT position with regards to members protesting against the Dalai Lama would be that this was not an instance of wrong speech, but wrathful compassion, and that to NOT have engaged in such an action would have been to have broken our Buddhist moral discipline.

I think that our position is at least a consistent one, as if the Zen Buddhist monk you spoke to had associates in Japan who were being accused by a Japanese official of causing other people to get cancer through their practice of Zar-Zen, and being banned from practising Zar-Zen and persecuted against on that basis, then we would support him in the action of chanting "Stop Lying" as a protest against the official concerned if all other attempts at negotiation had failed.

This is a perfectly valid comparison, and in no sense an exaggeration.

However, I agreed to your idea of a proposed meeting because I agreed with the MEETING part of the idea! I also think that it is at least valid to discuss the idea of right speech also, but I think that the explanation above clearly states what the NKT/WSS position would be on this one.

The WSS have not responded to my e-mail and I think it safe to assume that they are unlikely to do so. They would probably be unlikely to respond to anything short of a sympathetic invitation to give a presentation of their case, and only then if they thought it worth-while.

It would please me greatly if the WSS were to do some sort of Free Public Talk in

London to try to make the issue intelligible for people at some point in the future. Whether anything like this will happen, and whether it would be practical or feasible I don't really know. Maybe it's just my idea.

As regards a meeting with Buddhists of various Traditions concerned about this issue, from whatever angle, this is something that I would be interested in participating in, and if you wanted to organising something like this I would be happy to attend in an informal capacity, to try to help people to understand this issue.

Best Wishes,

Adam

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Title: wrathful compassion

Author: Chris Ward SITE ADMIN (<http://triplegem.terapad.com/>)

Date Posted: 05 Jul 2008 11:46 AM (GMT)

Thanks Adam and others

It is almost impossible in a lengthy debate of this sort conducted over the internet to maintain complete consistency. Words are conditioned and memory is impermanent. It would be more helpful now for people to meet in person as these debates become polarised and interminable. If we can consider some form of meetings I would prefer these to be informal rather than set piece public debates.

Just a few points from recent postings. The trouble with 'wrathful compassion' is that it would appear to justify any action. I am sure that jihadist suicide bombers would immediately be drawn to this idea as fully justifying their actions.

You say that right speech means 'how can we reveal the truth as effectively as possible'. Well, possibly, but my feeling is that the current WSS and previous campaigns have been ineffective and have done more harm than good. What evidence can be offered to show that the protests, websites, and so on have in any way helped? It is surely not helpful to lose public sympathy or the understanding of fellow Buddhists

Perhaps a better plan over the past ten years would have been for some group to quietly establish thriving shelters or refuges for those who are suffering.

The fireman metaphor is interesting. Firemen spend a lot of time assessing a fire before they act to minimise the risk and maximise the benefit to all. They know that hasty or ill-judged action often leads to unnecessary suffering.

Many Buddhists and people of goodwill are involved now, in trying to alleviate the suffering associated with growing numbers of global tragedies (Burma, Darfur, floods, earthquakes, Zimbabwe, and so on). But alongside any action we take (or plan) we need to try to be clear about motives, intentions, and the quality of our actions

otherwise the practical / karmic results will be poor or at best mixed.

best wishes

Chris

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Title: Ok?

Author: Adam

Date Posted: 05 Jul 2008 09:37 PM (GMT)

Chris:

I find your attitude astonishing. Imagine if Martin Luther King had adopted your advice and confined his activities to organising charitable works among black people rather than challenging the system that oppressed them.

He wouldn't have achieved a fraction of what he did, and, it could very well be argued, this would have amounted to complicity with segregation - a profoundly evil and oppressive system.

However.... I'd be happy to meet up with people interested in this issue. I believe you have my e-mail so please let me know if you have any ideas. I am Brighton based so can make it to London quite easily.

Best Wishes,

Adam

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Title: End of debate

Author: Chris Ward SITE ADMIN (<http://triplegem.terapad.com/>)

Date Posted: 07 Jul 2008 09:11 AM (GMT)

Dear All,

I have removed several recent postings - they are taking the debate down well-trodden and unhelpful tracks. I suggest that all those involved or interested read the debate carefully, they covered a lot of ground and made some helpful points.

I would like to think that TG can host future discussions and articles about the way that 'Buddhists' engage with society. For me, such engagement is unavoidable and potentially both helpful and skilful. What distinguishes

Buddhist 'right action' from 'wrong action', and how do we apply Buddhist training rules, precepts and guidance?

best wishes

Chris

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Title: Comment deleted

Author: Name withheld

Date Posted: 06 Jul 2008 08:18 PM (GMT)

Edited on: 07 Jul 2008 08:51 AM (GMT)

This comment was deleted by an Administrator on July 07, 2008 at 08:51 AM (GMT). It was violating this site's [Terms and Conditions](#).

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Title: Comment deleted

Author: Name withheld

Date Posted: 06 Jul 2008 08:20 PM (GMT)

Edited on: 07 Jul 2008 08:52 AM (GMT)

This comment was deleted by an Administrator on July 07, 2008 at 08:52 AM (GMT). It was violating this site's [Terms and Conditions](#).

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Title: Comment deleted

Author: Name withheld

Date Posted: 06 Jul 2008 11:13 PM (GMT)

Edited on: 07 Jul 2008 08:52 AM (GMT)

This comment was deleted by an Administrator on July 07, 2008 at 08:52 AM (GMT). It was violating this site's [Terms and Conditions](#).

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Title: Comment deleted

Author: Name withheld

Date Posted: 06 Jul 2008 10:58 PM (GMT)

Edited on: 07 Jul 2008 08:51 AM (GMT)

This comment was deleted by an Administrator on July 07, 2008 at 08:51 AM (GMT). It was violating this site's [Terms and Conditions](#).

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Title: Comment deleted

Author: Name withheld

Date Posted: 07 Jul 2008 03:58 AM (GMT)

Edited on: 07 Jul 2008 08:52 AM (GMT)

This comment was deleted by an Administrator on July 07, 2008 at 08:52 AM (GMT). It was violating this site's [Terms and Conditions](#).

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Title: Australian Sangha Association statement

Author: Tenzin Peljor (<http://info-buddhism.com/>)

Date Posted: 22 Jul 2008 12:30 AM (GMT)

The Australian Sangha Association issued a statement regarding the protests at the teachings of HH the Dalai Lama.

see: [Australian Sangha Association statement](#)

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Title: Thanks

Author: Adam

Date Posted: 22 Jul 2008 04:48 PM (GMT)

Tenzin:

thanks for this. I have sent an e-mail the the Australian Sangha Association explaining my own reasons for supporting the demonstrations.

I feel extremely sorry for you and the extent to which you have managed to deceive yourself, and now seek to deceive others, with regards to the reality of this situation. Have you read the research of Ursula Bernis regarding this situation, which although out of date, is perhaps the most extensive document discussing this matter?

I hope and pray that you will come to see through the fogs of confusion that presently envelop you, and come to develop appropriate compassion for Dorje Shugden worshippers, and appropriate censure for the actions of the Dalai Lama.

We are not enemies, just people with different persepectives. This is not meant to sound smug, but is just what I think.

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Title: Deception & Sources & some additional thoughts

Author: Tenzin Peljor (<http://info-buddhism.com/>)

Date Posted: 22 Jul 2008 06:52 PM (GMT)

Regarding the protests they do not only violate Buddhist principles, they are violating many of the rules for Buddhist monks & nuns. That's why many ordained members of the order see the protests as a threat for the Buddhist order, it discredits it & harms others & Buddhism.

Self-deception is a risk for every Dharma adept, including me & you. I do not think I deceive myself. I know both sides: 6 1/2 years with Shugden Lamas & followers (I know the scenery & how they operate quite well) & six years without Shugden Lamas (and their influence) under the guidance of mainly Kaguye & Gelug, but also Sakya, Nyingma & Theravada teachers. Shugden I studied thoroughly and I asked many different masters about it, so I have some certainty about what I say. If someone sees it different this is his choice.

The last indep. research is [McCune's thesis](#), she states: "[Dreyfus's work](#) has been the most thorough. It asks the most insightful questions and employs the most diverse means of answering these queries..." As far as I can see Barnis is not used in any academic research – unlike Dreyfus or Kay, whose work and person is portrayed by NKT wrongly as "heavily biased 'academic' book" and someone "who had his own disgruntled history with the NKT".

I wish not to deny that there happened things which are injustice or that in some cases people over reacted. But on the other hand this is also true for those who were threatened by followers of Shugden, e.g. the Abbot of Sera Je or the three killed monks. There is no one-way in that issue. Things happen due to many causes, conditions & circumstances, they are dependent arising. It is impossible to blame one person, HHDL, if one understands that.

HHDL is fully supported in his view by the monastic community. If some one sees a conflict he has to get the full perspective. The monasteries have the right to set up rules against a practice which is seen by them as harmful. There is nothing wrong with this. Moreover the decision is made by the majority, there is no dictator here. In monasteries with about 5000 monks harmony is most important, how they solve disputes & quarrels this is their business and they should do it according to the Vinaya. How can NKT judge this as they don't know the Vinaya, monastic life, how the Tibetans & monasteries are functioning?

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Title: Ordination according to the Vinaya

Author: Adam

Date Posted: 22 Jul 2008 05:09 PM (GMT)

Tenzin:

I have read most of your web-site and I am aware that you regard NKT ordination as invalid because it doesn't accord with the rules of the Vinaya. I am not interested in discussing whether this is or isn't true as I regard it as a matter of secondary importance, but I would be grateful to you if you could let me know where I could learn a bit more about ordination according to the Vinaya, especially in the Tibetan tradition, as I am curious about this.

I do admire your commitment to the Tibetan tradition even if I regard your faith in DL as misplaced.

Adam

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Title: Ordination & Sources

Author: Tenzin Peljor (<http://info-buddhism.com/>)

Date Posted: 22 Jul 2008 06:23 PM (GMT)

Thank you Adam.

I have never said nor did the ASA say that the NKT-ordination is invalid. Instead I defend NKT ordination as being valid in the sense that a 'Rabjung ordination' is something existing in India and Tibet and that the NKT-ordination is either a type of lay follower ordination (the sixth type of a lay follower ordination includes celibacy) or it could be considered of being the 'intermediate [Rabjung] ordination'. The latter is difficult to claim, because a correct 'Rabjung ordination' includes the wish to become eventually a Getsul, and GKG discourages his followers of wishing this.

This is the one side of just what the NKT ordination is. The other side is that I emphasized such an 'intermediate [Rabjung] ordination' doesn't qualify the person to be a real Buddhist monk or nun of the Buddhist order. This statement is based on the Vinaya and Pratimoksha and for those who are fully ordained and received teachings on the Vinaya and know the Vinaya, this is plain obvious.

The interpretation of NKT-ordination by Geshe Kelsang does not accord with the Vinaya and Pratimoskha. His interpretation is not correct. You'll find a short portray about the [status of NKT-ordination at my WSS-unlock page](#). If you prefer a Buddhist scholarly paper you can order and read: Geshe Jampa Thekchok, "Monastic Rites", Wisdom Publication, 1995. At Wikipedia you'll find something in the [Pratimoskha article](#) and also Je Tsonkhapa's [Essence of the Vinaya](#). Usually

the Vinaya is not discussed in public. How important it is one can get an idea based on these quotes:

"As long as the complete Vinaya, the supreme treasure, abides, The Lamp of Dharma shall abide." Vinayastutra

If you are an ordained person and you are interested to understand the monk's rules I can send you a qualified commentary by a Lhramapa Geshe on the monks' vows. I am happy to support your spiritual wishes in any possible way.

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Title: Thanks

Author: Adam

Date Posted: 22 Jul 2008 07:15 PM (GMT)

Thanks Tenzin,

I'm not ordained and can't see myself becoming ordained. It appeals to me in a sense, but I'm aware that I would be in no way capable of the level of moral discipline required, including strict celibacy. I sometimes do the Precepts practice which I get a lot out of.

I would like to read this commentary but if it is not appropriate to make it public, or send it to a lay person, then perhaps it's better if you don't.

Have you read The Sutra of the Wise and the Foolish translated by Stanley Frye? I find this book beautiful and inspirational and would recommend it if you haven't already read it.

Adam

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Title: Dharma - the nectar

Author: Tenzin Peljor

Date Posted: 22 Jul 2008 08:51 PM (GMT)

Thanks Adam.

Sorry, then I can not pass it to you. In Tibetan Buddhism the Vinaya is not for the public but in Theravada everyone can study it and can have access. The Vinaya of both traditions is not very different, so you can study the Vinaya of Theravada school, especially the explanations [by Thanissaro Bhikkhu](#).

I have that Sutra in German and I like it and the Jataka tales very much.

They are deeply inspiring. There are also some ancient Buddhist texts translated & published by [Dharma publishing](#), like the J takam I by rya• ra.

Thank you for your recommendation!

Best wishes, t

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Title: Thanks

Author: Adam

Date Posted: 22 Jul 2008 10:45 PM (GMT)

Tenzin:

thank you for the link to the McCune thesis which I have saved a copy of. Thanks also for the link to the explanation of the Vinaya according to the Theravada school which I will take a look at at some point.

The Bernis research and commentary is excellent and if it is not used in academic work then this is a great shame - it deserves to be. I would suggest that you read it as it gives a very precise and factual account of events, and a real feeling for conditions within the exile community. You can down-load it via the Shugden Society web-site.

Adam

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Title: Vinaya

Author: Chris Ward [SITE ADMIN](#) (<http://triplegem.terapad.com/>)

Date Posted: 23 Jul 2008 10:26 AM (GMT)

Hi Adam,

I have been away on retreat and other things and so have not been able to contribute recently. The Vinaya is a very interesting body of material which lies at the heart of Buddhism. As Tenzin says, the 'Theravada' vinaya is virtually identical with the Mahayana (including Tibetan) Vinaya. In fact to talk of different Vinaya versions is a bit like talking about different versions of the Bible.

However, Mahayana monastic rules usually add the Bodhisattva vow to the 227 (or so) basic vinaya rules.

Quiting from an academic source on the purpose of the Vinaya:

Its [the Vinaya] code of rules drastically limits the indulgence of desires, and promotes a very self-controlled, calm way of life, of benefit to the monks and nuns themselves and an example which 'inspires confidence' among the laity. Overall, the rules are said to have been established for:

- protecting and ensuring the comfort of the *Sa-ṅgha*;
- warding off ill-meaning people who might wish to join it,
- helping well-behaved monks and nuns;
- destroying present defilements and preventing future ones;
- benefiting non-Buddhists and increasing the number of Buddhists;
- and establishing discipline by observing the rules of restraint (Vin.III.21).

Access to insight at <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/thanissaro/bmc1/bmc1.intro.html>

gives some useful material. Keown - The nature of Buddhist ethics - is a good academic work.

From the perspective of our debate the 'inspiring confidence in the laity' aspect of the Vinaya is important. The public behaviour of monks and nuns is intended to inspire both Buddhist and non-Buddhist lay people. So the behaviour of robed protesters against HHDL is seen as harming the reputation of Buddhist monastics in general by contradicting the spirit and letter of the Vinaya. This is one reason why the Australian Sangha Association have condemned the protests.

Interestingly I understand that Tsongkhapa - a major influence on traditional Kadampa - emphasised the Vinaya and the study of the early tipitaka texts.

best wishes

Chris

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Title: Hi

Author: Adam

Date Posted: 23 Jul 2008 03:59 PM (GMT)

Thanks Chris,

I hope you had a good retreat. Which tradition do you follow?

I appreciate the beauty and benefits of the Vinaya, and will follow these links some time to learn more about it. Geshe Kelsang's reasons for not making this a

requirement of NKT ordainees is that he thinks it impractical for modern life outside of a monastery or nunnery. For example, there may be times when a monk or nun needs to travel in a car with a member of the opposite sex with no one else present. I think the Vinaya would forbid this.

Of course I can understand the opinion of the Australian Sangha Association. My answer to this, as you know, is that the protests need to be judged in the same way as one might judge the actions of Martin Luther King or any other civil rights campaign on behalf of an oppressed group. Note: many people criticised Martin Luther King during his life-time, and it was only subsequently that he came to be regarded with pride by Americans generally. People got hurt and killed as a direct result of his protests. Does that make them wrong?

I think that this is an interested moral question that defies a simple answer. I would say the same about the WSS protests - I'll not say that it should be obvious that they are justified and right, but I'll consider it within my rights to ask that people should try to understand a complex situation before they pass judgement.

Whether or not they're interested in doing so is another matter.

If you take a look at the Western Shugden Society web-site and the blog you will see that the sparks really flew in New York with Tibetan women getting extremely upset and throwing coins at the WSS protestors. Some of them had to be restrained by the police. The younger Tibetans took photos of the 100 WSS Tibetans protesting in order to try to intimidate them.

On a lighter note many of the Tibetan women shook their dresses at the protestors - a traditional Tibetan insult the meaning of which was obviously completely lost on the 300 WSS Western protestors, who looked on in bemused confusion!

Adam

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Title: Polarisation

Author: Chris Ward SITE ADMIN (<http://triplegem.terapad.com/>)

Date Posted: 24 Jul 2008 12:28 PM (GMT)

I attended an excellent retreat at Amaravati Buddhist Monastery and follow the Forest Sangha Tradition.

The vinaya does include some rules which restrict activity, but this is what renunciation involves. There are also rules which look outdated and others which are hard to understand. But overall the Vinaya must enshrine some deep and wise principles given it has enabled the monastic Sangha to survive for 2500 years.

As to our debate, it does seem as though the NKT/WSS are unable to engage

with critical comment. Any criticism is simply brushed off as indicating that the originator is on the HHDL's 'side' and 'hostile' and hence their concerns can be ignored. I agree that many start from a basic position of sympathy and respect for HHDL, but this does not mean that they are incapable of sifting the evidence and judging the actions of all those involved in this dispute in a fair way. And there is such a thing as constructive criticism.

I do not find your comparison with the activity of Martin Luther King at all convincing. Perhaps budding historians can come up with a better parallel, but it strikes me as having more than a passing resemblance to the current disputes in the CofE with conservatives and liberals and individual Bishops differing over doctrinal issues and feeling aggrieved (and ostracised) by policies and statements issued by the leadership and each other.

Anyway, as i have said before, this conflict is unlikely to be resolved by the constant re-presentation of the same evidence and the same arguments.

Chris

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Title: Ursula Bernis

Author: Adam

Date Posted: 24 Jul 2008 03:19 PM (GMT)

Chris:

with all due respect you seem to have shown no evidence of wanting to gain a deeper understanding of this issue. Your starting point was to publish an article that described our protector deity as a "spirit" and criticised both the NKT and the WSS, and all you have done subsequently is to reiterate your position that you regard our demonstrations as demonstrating "wrong speech."

If you would like to learn more about this issue you should read the research of Ursula Bernis, down-loadable from the Indian-based Shugden Society web-site. This is an excellent document.

I have visited Chithurst which is beautiful.

Adam

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Title: Ursula Bernis

Author: Chris Ward SITE ADMIN (<http://triplegem.terapad.com/>)

Date Posted: 24 Jul 2008 05:12 PM (GMT)

Adam

My last post did come across as a little terse. If you think it unhelpful I can delete it.

I have been doing some background reading around this issue, but have had a build up of work due to my retreat and having to cope with the death of a close family member a few weeks back. Consequently I may have lost the thread of this debate somewhat and cannot say that I have checked every source that has been mentioned. However, what I have read shows that this is a complicated issue with a lot of history.

A quick scan of the Bernis work shows it to be a lengthy and detailed work which I will have difficulty doing justice to in the next few weeks. But I will try to read it in due course.

Glad you liked Chithurst. I spent a pleasant couple of days at the Tara Centre in Derby as the guest of Khyenrab a year or so ago. I enjoyed my discussion with him and found him a pleasant and helpful character.

Chris

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Title: a break

Author: Adam

Date Posted: 24 Jul 2008 06:33 PM (GMT)

Chris:

There's no need to delete your last post. I responded to it in a forthright manner, so we can call it quits!

I'm glad you liked it at Tara Centre, and enjoyed meeting Khenrab. You'll probably be aware that he is now the Deputy Spiritual Director of the Tradition.

I'm very glad that you have expressed an interest in having a look at the work of Ursula Bernis. It is an excellent document. I suggest that we take a break until we have all had a chance to read it.

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Title: Have a good break

Author: Chris Ward [SITE ADMIN](#) (<http://triplegem.terapad.com/>)

Date Posted: 24 Jul 2008 12:29 PM (GMT)

Hi Adam,

Have a good break!

C.

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Title: NKT Ordination

Author: Adam

Date Posted: 23 Jul 2008 05:24 PM (GMT)

Chris and Tenzin:

See the Wisdom Buddha Dorje Shugden Blog for an official response to the ASA accusation that NKT ordination isn't valid.

I think it has to be recognised as an unfriendly gesture towards the NKT. This is just being realistic.

Discussion of the Vinaya in its own right is a different matter, and quite interesting.

Adam

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Title: Vinaya/Pratimoksha

Author: Tenzin Peljor

Date Posted: 23 Jul 2008 06:15 PM (GMT)

Thank you Adam. NKT responded, as far as I can see by accusing the ASA of a "mixture of religion and politics". It would be nice if NKT tries to understand and to learn from the experiences Ordained Sangha, and can see the statement as an invitation to

think about their role as a part of the Monastic Sangha. In general monks and nuns should take the hints or criticism of elders seriously, this is one of the monk's rules.

I published the NKT point of view, ASA's pov, my pov and a list of qualified sources in [the comment section of my blog](#).

I hope this doesn't lead to a new battlefield but to a constructive dialogue. NKT can contact ASA and both can think about how to support the NKT nuns and monks to live according to the Vinaya. TP

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Title: The problem

Author: Adam

Date Posted: 23 Jul 2008 10:53 PM (GMT)

Tenzin:

the ASA is clearly hostile towards both the NKT and the WSS. Also, we have clear reasons why we do not agree with this point of view.

I'm very sorry that things are as they are, and sadly, this is all due to the actions of the Dalai Lama. The truth of dependent relationship doesn't contradict this assertion, but merely means that we can't blame him (or anyone else), in a completely judgemental manner.

I hope you will take up my suggestion and study the research by Bernis. I'm about two thirds through it right now. If you do then perhaps we can discuss specific points related to this. Aside from this I think we will be just going around in circles.

I will be off-line for the next two weeks from Friday as I am going on holiday - to the Summer Festival infact.

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Title: I am sorry for NKT

Author: Tenzin Peljor

Date Posted: 24 Jul 2008 03:39 AM (GMT)

What to say, Adam. Always the same patterns and tactics. HHDL is hostile, the person who are critical with NKT are hostile, (even my [Amazon reviews](#) are hostile), the Tibetans in New York are hostile, now even the mindful and well-thoughted ASA statement and ASA is hostile; even academics are "heavily biased" and "disgruntled ex-members" (Besides Barnis and all NKT/WSS websites, everybody saying something not in accordance with NKT views is

hostile?)

My suggestion to NKT is, they should try to search dialogue and listen to other Buddhists, and to think about the [Statement of the Australian Sangha Association](#). As you came here also with the intention to show you are willing to present another face of NKT, I think, you undermine now your own intentions by falling back into the old-fashioned NKT pattern.

I wish you anice holiday & festival.

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Title: Sadly they are!

Author: Adam

Date Posted: 24 Jul 2008 09:46 AM (GMT)

Tenzin:

sadly they are! Most commentators are hostile towards the NKT due to their preconception that the Dalai Lama is always right and/or protests on the part of Buddhists against his policies are always wrong.

There are some independent voices out there such as those of some FWBO members who have a genuine unbiased concern about the issue.

I'm keen to find some common ground wherever it exists, however, in general I think that we will probably win the support of the ordinary decent people with an interest in world affairs before we win the support of Buddhists with a sense of loyalty to the Dalai Lama, and perhaps this is not surprising.

I'm sorry you're not interesting in reading Bernis, as I think you could learn a lot from her work.

Adam

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Title: Western Shugden Society - Review and Present Situation

Author: Tenzin Peljor (<http://westernshugdensociety.wordpress.com/>)

Date Posted: 25 Jul 2008 02:46 AM (GMT)

I have tried to sum the different povs and developments of the last three months of WSS/NKT protests of both sides and the press.

Although a finally satisfying neutral summery is challenging, I hope it offers some new povs, and it at least fair.

I included for the first time quotes from other ordained persons, who sent answers to me after I requested them about their knowledge of the events in India.

see: [Western Shugden Society - Review and Present Situation](#)

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Title: Dechen, Kundeling, and DL

Author: Adam

Date Posted: 18 Aug 2008 05:17 PM (GMT)

Hi Tenzin,

I posted a comment on your blog. However, if you wish to respond perhaps you should do so through this site as otherwise I will have no way of knowing.

Were you at Nantes? People said they saw you there. I also think I recognised you, but am not sure.

Adam

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Title: Dechen, Kundeling, and DL

Author: TP

Date Posted: 30 Aug 2008 11:31 AM (GMT)

Hi Adam, I answered it. Yes I was in Nantes (to listen to the teachings) and had the good luck to meet a good old NKT friend from Germany. I felt very happy to meet him and very happy to listen to the teachings. Best Wishes. TP

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Title: difference and perspective

Author: Adam

Date Posted: 30 Aug 2008 03:22 PM (GMT)

Hi Tenzin,

I'm glad you had a good time in Nantes and enjoyed meeting your NKT friend from Germany.

I think I'm starting to lose some of my enthusiasm for endlessly debating the issue with people. I'm not sure where it leads. "A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still" and however clever my point by point arguments may be (or seem to me) they're unlikely to convince anyone with faith in DL.

One point that I would like to comment on however is the point that you made about points of view being more differentiated than the WSS suggests. This is certainly true, however, I think that the WSS has to keep things relatively simple in order to make its point.

Ursula Bernis makes this point in her research. I think many Tibetans are only offering DL tacit support because they feel they have to, even though they have massive reservations about his words and actions, knowing that they wouldn't accept such advice from anyone else, and that they are only accepting his demands due to the pressure of conformity. Others maybe accept the authority of the Dalai Lama but lament the discrimination. Of course there will be many different points of view. In Anna Karenin Leo Tolstoy said:

"Just as there are as many minds as there are heads, so there are as many types of love as there are hearts."

I liked those words as they provide as vivid sense of the inevitability of the differences between us all - it can't be any other way.

I am reading a good book at the moment called The Nature of Prejudice written in 1954 by American psychologist Gordon Allport. It is very analytical and makes many important differentiations. Although it is basically about prejudice in 1950's America most of the points are of more general relevance. Of course it is important to recognise differences as well as similarities, and while the persecution of Dorje Shugden worshippers resembles the Jim Crow laws in American, people can choose to renounce their faith in Dorje Shugden any time they like, in a way that they cannot choose to renounce their race.

In this way the persecution is also dissimilar to the Nazi persecution of the Jews prior to the outbreak of war, as the Nazis defined "Jew" as someone with two or more Jewish grandparents and didn't take any account of whether people had any belief in the Jewish faith. So there are significant differences as well as significant similarities between these different types of persecution.

It seem to me that the Dalai Lama wants to make the Tibetan exile community into a Private Members Club for people who are willing to accept his spiritual and political authority. Frankly, if he has the power to do this I'm not sure what we can do about it. All the same I think that we are right to protest as this serves many functions other than the arguably somewhat naive one of persuading the Dalai Lama to completely retract all of his previous statements and end the discrimination altogether.

Even if it proves to be necessary for Dorje Shugden practitioners in India to separate from Tibetan society, we still need to dispute the lie that this is because of their evil and disruptive nature; and make it clear that it is, rather, due to the Dalai Lama's pride, vanity, and insecurity that cause him to feel threatened by innocent spiritual practitioners who happen to hold different views to his own - this is my interpretation of his behaviour anyway.

Anyway.... is any of this of any value? Kundeling is a character isn't he? He makes no bones of his support for Chinese control of Tibet, but isn't he entitled to this point of view? In an open society people can hold whatever view they like. Frankly I think ALL Tibetans in India would be better off applying for Indian citizenship so that they can have freedom of thought and religious belief and not have to conform to the latest views of DL and the Tibetan Government in Exile. However, they then lose the significant entitlements they get as Tibetan citizens.

Frankly, I really don't know how things are going to pan out. I will be starting a Social Work degree course in October and am looking forward to having something to distract me from my perhaps somewhat obsessive preoccupation with this issue. There's a limit to what I can do anyway, that will be of constructive usefulness, and it may be as well for me to recognise this.

I'm glad that we can remain relatively civil anyway.

Best Wishes,

Adam

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Title: my last post here

Author: TP (<http://westernshugdensociety.wordpress.com/>)

Date Posted: 30 Aug 2008 08:37 PM (GMT)

Hi Adam, yeah to lay down this case may be good. I don't believe it is "faith in the Dalai Lama" which makes your & NKT/WSS's efforts ineffective in convincing others to believe the NKT/WSS claims. People have common sense to add 1+1=2. Common sense and to check the things thoroughly is what HHDL always stresses.

Also in my own case, after leaving those Shugden lamas, I checked out thoroughly this issue. In the beginning of my encounter of TibBudd I had much faith in HHDL. NKT destroyed it and manipulated me that I finally felt aversion & hate & that the

“world is fooled by the Dalai Lama”; later – after I had freedom from the negative influence of Shugden lamas and their views - due to my new freedom to investigate now freely, I laid down my own bias which was strongly encouraged in NKT. I got a better understanding of Budd. etc. my aversion/hate/sectarianism/pride I learned in NKT ceased & my mind developed faith in the genuine, respected masters of Buddhism. Faith based on reasons.

The way NKT/WSS addresses their pov does not convince those following Buddhist principles as it is clear from this site and the ASA statement. I think, it is again an oversimplification to point out as the cause of lacking support to WSS's ideas “faith in the Dalai Lama”.

I think, oversimplification and the use of emotional abusive language is not convincing for those Buddhists who are open minded and like to question & investigate things, and who have at least some understanding about the Four Noble Truths & Buddhist history. It is clear that no reputable Western Buddhist academic, like Hopkins, Thurman, Klein etc. support Shugden pov. Shugdenpas are quite alone, in India and in the West but very noisy and sometimes very militant.

Your claim of “pressure of conformity” is non-sense. I guess you have almost no contacts to Tibetans or no insights into the Tibetan community otherwise you wouldn't claim such things. Your view is in line with what Brown portrayed in The Independent: “The view from inside the Shugden Supporters Community was almost a photographic negative of everything the outside world believes about Tibet and the Dalai Lama.” he addressed also the problem of NKT's “elastic ways with truth”. As you follow still their concepts of “persecution” & spread ideas about HHDL which I and other Buddhists & the majority of the world do not share, because they do not accord with reality - not due to “blind faith” or his “tremendous reputation” as WSS claims - I leave it here as it is.

I feel it as very distorting & disrespectful to read your claims about “the Dalai Lama's pride, vanity, and insecurity...”. For me it looks like you live in another world. May you and all beings be happy. I wish you all the best, Tenzin.

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Title: truth and fairness

Author: Adam

Date Posted: 30 Aug 2008 10:03 PM (GMT)

Tenzin:

most people I have spoken to have no difficulty accepting the Dalai Lama's behaviour as wrong. It is quite unfair and unjust to accuse an innocent section of the Tibetan populace of being Chinese agents out to destroy the harmony of Tibetan society.

I also feel sorry for people attending the Dalai Lama's teaching who encounter our

demonstrations and the literature we try to distribute. What are they to make of it? They only wanted the experience of hearing a few words of wisdom from a highly revered world leader who also happens to be the world's most famous Buddhist. They don't listen to what we have to say, for the most part, simply because it isn't really on their agenda.

According to my understanding we have a duty to bear witness to the persecution that is taking place in India regardless of whether people are capable of understanding our message, which in any case is something over which we have no control.

For those who wish to investigate the issue further I recommend the research work of Ursula Bernis which is a gold-mine of insights. I must credit you for inadvertently giving me the encouragement to study this.

As regards understanding DL I take as my own starting point the, for me, plainly evident truth that DL is doing something profoundly wrong. How to explain this? Is he mad? Plain evil? Neither seems convincing to me. We can use these words to make clear our rejection of the idea that he is inspired by compassion or virtue, but they don't take us far in terms of insight and certainly do not explain his undeniable success as a Buddhist teacher and writer.

In his book on Nazi Doctors Robert Jay Lifton said that he made clear his rejection of the doctrine of "pure evil" in place of a careful examination of circumstances and motive. This is based upon his background in psychoanalysis and the Freudian idea of psychic determinism. For Freud also the concept of evil was a bit redundant as mental events were to be viewed as natural occurrences in a similar way to the way in which we view physical events, from a scientific standpoint. This has a parallel with the Buddhist teachings on dependent-relationship as Geshe-la explains in the section on The Patience of Definitely Thinking about Dharma in How to Solve our Human Problem. You yourself have made a similar point.

The most specific account we have of such an analysis of circumstance and motive is the account of Ursula Bernis. Kundeling's writings are also very interesting and insightful and entertaining.

I can have compassion for DL. I see his persecution of Dorje Shugden worshippers as a desperate attempt to maintain his sense of indispensibility for Tibetans in the face of the dawning realization within his own mind that he has achieved none of his main goals - independence or autonomy for Tibet. He needs to go easy on himself and others. These goals were not attainable. Instead he chooses to spearhead an insane campaign against those who worship the "evil spirit of red China" Dorje Shugden, and to try to achieve some sort of symbolic victory. Here he really can achieve some real results, but to what purpose????!!

I guess that all of us DL, TGIE, GKG, WSS, yourself, myself, and everyone else, will all just keep following their own trajectory according to the dependent-related conditions that make each of us act and think as we do, a bit like one of those massive domino chains, with one domino knocking over the next, and the next, and the next....

It may be that none of us have much control over any of this!

Let's just hope that that things start to pan our eventually and that people can lead their lives in peace and harmony one more.

Best Wishes,

Adam

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Title: an article by Prof. Williams is available

Author: TP (http://info-buddhism.com/dorje_shugden_note_paul_williams.html)

Date Posted: 02 Dec 2008 03:29 PM (GMT)

Hi Chris and Adam, I hope both of you are fine and well.

We have discussed in the past already the quote by Bristol-based Buddhist specialist Paul Williams who was quoted also in The Guardian Article, and some academic papers I stumbled upon.

He replied very kindly to my emails and allowed me to offer an early article from 1996 which has been published quite similar later in "The Middle Way" by The Buddhist Society.

If you are interested here is the link:

- [[url=http://info-buddhism.com/dorje_shugden_note_Paul_Williams.html](http://info-buddhism.com/dorje_shugden_note_Paul_Williams.html)]A quick note on Dorje Shugden (rDo rje shugs ldan)[/url]

(I hope my codes for the link are proper, for the case it was not I put the link also in the "Your Homepage" line.)

I find this article as being very helpful for a better backgrund understanding.

Best Wishes. TP

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Title: Witch Hunt

Author: Tenzin

Date Posted: 10 Dec 2008 03:34 AM (GMT)

That Williams article just looks like more of the same to me 😊

An interesting and also original series of articles you may want to check out can be found here:

The Buddhist Witch Part Three

<http://wisdomjunkie.wordpress.com/2008/11/21/the-buddhist-witch-part-three/>

Actually, it has five parts already and the arguments and reasoning are very well explained and backed up by research on this phenomenon of witch hunting.

Hope you enjoy these articles. They are at the very least thought-provoking.

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Title: Witch Hunt vs Siege Mentality

Author: Tenzin Peljor (<http://westernshugdensociety.wordpress.com/>)

Date Posted: 11 Dec 2008 06:42 PM (GMT)

Dear Tenzin,

in the context of such reflections like [witchhunting](#) or the claims and the writings on the [NKT 'truth' site](#), put into cotext of the report of a former body guard of Geshe Kelsang (["Is it all in my head or not?"](#)), it could be helpful to read what Siege mentality is:

"One of the interesting social-political-psychological phenomenon which can be observed in different societies pertains to the experience of being under siege, i.e., feeling as if the rest of the world has highly negative intentions towards one's own society or that one's own society is surrounded by a hostile world. The focus is on "negative intentions" and "the rest of the world". "Negative intentions" refer to the desire and motivation of the world to inflict harm or to hurt the society, so that they imply a threat to the society's well being."

for more see: [Siege Mentality](#) by [Daniel Bar-Tal](#)



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Title: Witch Hunt versus Siege Mentality

Author: Tenzin

Date Posted: 11 Dec 2008 08:58 PM (GMT)

Dear Tenzin,

You seem to be suggesting that I and other Shugden practitioners feel that we are surrounded by a hostile world. However, I don't feel that way at all. I feel deeply connected to other living beings, and a great deal of love and compassion for them. This is not due to any good qualities I possess but entirely due to my practice of training the mind (Lojong), teachings which I received from my kind and beloved teachers and lineage Gurus. I am not alone in this. All the Shugden practitioners I know are Lojong practitioners, and the vast majority of them are loving and kind people connected to their communities, who would not recognize your description of a siege mentality.

I certainly do not believe that the world is out to get us! Actually, I think it is the opposite. Generally, in the NKT at least, our Centers are doing very well and are well received and supported by the communities we are in. The only people who are "out to get us" are the Dalai Lama and those who are implementing and supporting his ban on our religious practice of Dorje Shugden -- and they make no secret of being out to get us!! That is why the witch hunt articles are so close to the truth.

Love, Tenzin

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Title: Witch Hunt versus Siege Mentality

Author: Tenzin Peljor (<http://westernshugdensociety.wordpress.com/>)

Date Posted: 12 Dec 2008 11:34 AM (GMT)

Yes, this is what I suggest. This what my impression is from being withing the organisation, from what was reported to me by former members or from what I am faced with by actual members, besides some rare exceptions prviously.

I do not wish to get you or NKT or Shugden followers. I oppose the misinformation they present.

"To get us - the 'witch hunt'" is excalty what I see as fitting in the Siege Mentality. The websites which were set up indicates this attitude as well.

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Title: Witch Hunt

Author: Tenzin (<http://www.wisdombuddhadorjeshugden.org>)

Date Posted: 13 Dec 2008 01:04 AM (GMT)

All I can say is that it is a little arrogant to tell me and other Shugden practitioners what we feel and think 😞 Perhaps you should listen to us for a change.

The websites are also simply doing what you think you've been doing for years, correcting misinformation and spin. They are the exercise of free speech, something Tibetans in India have not had for a long time, and they are helping finally to clear up a lot of confusion.

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Title: own confusion

Author: Tenzin Peljor (<http://westernshugdensociety.wordpress.com/>)

Date Posted: 13 Dec 2008 10:18 AM (GMT)

Dear Tenzin,

I listened for more than 6 years to Shugden followers, I engaged for them, I supported them, I believed them, I spread their propaganda. I tried to convince others how wrong the Dalai Lama is, I accused wrongly HH the Dalai Lama, I was hostile and arrogant towards HHDL and to all who respect him – yet we were claiming we would “love” them. All our bad actions we claimed would be based on “pure love”. Like a person who abuses children calls the abuse “love”, we claimed likewise - wrapped in complete self-deception - all these wrong actions are “actions of love”. But we deceived ourselves so much: all these were actions based on ignorance, pride, confusion and much hostility based on the heavy misguidance of unwholesome spiritual friends.

I believed all the spins and misinformation offered by NKT/SCC and Shugden Followers and especially Geshe Kelsang Gyatso for whom I really feel now very very sorry, and whose not-good example is a great teaching for me, never to become like this.

I do not wish to lend my ears and time to more spins, untruths, and exaggerations. I know the spinning machine of NKT or SSC first hand, I was a part of it. I know Kundeling, Gangchen Lama, Dagom Rinpoche. I am just not interested.

As a result of the misguidance I received one of my favourite prayers is that the spiritual seekers may be separated from unwholesome spiritual friends and may be able to follow genuine spiritual teachers. Besides this and some engagement and the purification of the own ignorance by recognizing it, an ordinary being like me can not do more.

With respect to NKT members and WSS followers I strongly suggest to stop to listen to the own self-referential propaganda system of NKT – a system in structure and output similar to the communist dictatorship of PRC - set up by an expelled monk, who separates his followers from the Sangha to make them completely dependent on himself.

I think it would be wise to listen to the experienced elder Sangha, instead to spread the own confusion.

Best wishes.

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Author: Tenzin (<http://www.wisdombuddhadorjeshugden.org>)

Date Posted: 13 Dec 2008 06:29 PM (GMT)

Dear Tenzin Peljor,

You call this post "own confusion" and I believe that is an apt description of your own state of mind. You have some very wrong views and disrespect for some great Lamas. You disrespect tens of thousands of NKT practitioners who are practicing Dharma very purely and sincerely. You disrespect and don't care for thousands of Tibetan Shugden practitioners who are just trying to have their voices heard. You arrogantly take on the position of defending the Dalai Lama and the TGIE and their actions, but that is so easy -- it is defending the underdog that is brave. I do not believe that you are heroic, as you seem to think you are.

Your own personal actions while in the NKT may well have been "based on ignorance, pride, confusion and much hostility based on the heavy misguidance of unwholesome spiritual friends". (Maybe not much has changed for you, I don't know!) However, this description is not apt for the thousands of NKT practitioners I know, who would never recognize the NKT you seemed to inhabit due to your own projections, and who are humble, kind, loving and wise. I believe you must have had some warped relationships with Carola or Dechen, and you have projected onto the NKT her faults and your own faults in being the main person caught up in the cult

of her personality -- when most other people in the NKT were smart enough to see right through her. You are blind to the part your own history and personality plays in the drama you are creating, but I state it here anyway.

You are also entirely wrapped up in the propaganda of those who oppose the Shugden practice -- so it is disingenuous to blame others for using self-referential sources.

I am sure Venerable Geshe Kelsang Gyatso appreciates your sympathy. However, I very much doubt he needs it.

Anyway, there is just no discussing with you. You have gone too far down the road of intolerance and bitterness.

I too will pray for you.

Love, Tenzin

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Title: Tibetan Youth Congress Enforces Dalai Lama's Ban on Dorje Shugden

Author: Tenzin (<http://www.wisdombuddhadorjeshugden.org>)

Date Posted: 11 Dec 2008 10:01 PM (GMT)

Check out this link for an example of what I just said: "they make no secret of being out to get us!" This of course refers particularly to our fellow Shugden practitioners in the Tibetan exile community in India.

[Tibetan Youth Congress Enforces Dalai Lama's Ban on Dorje Shugden](#)

"The Monasteries Have Been Cleaned!"

Report from an Eyewitness

Date: Early September 2008

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Title: Tibetan Youth Congres & HHDL

Author: Tenzin Peljor (<http://westernshugdensociety.wordpress.com/>)

Date Posted: 12 Dec 2008 11:50 AM (GMT)

I do not know what this is for a new 'information' and what truth or untruths are in it.

The TYC took a rather critical attitude to both sides which can be read in [the introduction of their translation](#) of a part from the sectarian Yellow Book.

It is also known that they are rather critical with some of HHDL's approaches (as young people tend to be), however as all Tibetans (besides some very rare exceptions) they respect and revere him.

It is just unlikely and also inappropriate that the TYC, a lay organisation, enforces the Dalai Lama and the monastics to ban the practice from the monasteries.

You'll find in every society beings who are able to exaggerate events and to spin it to a point where they appear as the poor victims of others while they have of course not done every thing wrong. It appears to me this attitude of NKT's leadership meets here with that of some from the Tibetan Society. But such a congruence does not validate the exaggerations and spins.



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Author: Tenzin (<http://www.wisdombuddhadorjeshugden.org>)

Date Posted: 13 Dec 2008 01:00 AM (GMT)

Hello again,

I think this witness has no reason to lie, and there are plenty of instances where the TYC have taken it upon themselves to enact the Dalai Lama's wishes forcefully in the Tibetan population. And of course it is 'inappropriate', though not 'unlikely' -- young people in every population can become fanatical, even (and some would say especially) followers of a revered leader like the Dalai Lama.

Tenzin, might I ask you, have you ever had someone ban your spiritual practice? and call you a demon worshipper? And so on? You often display a lack of empathy for those who are actually experiencing the effects of the Dalai Lama's pronouncements, who have become pariahs in their own society. There is no reason for all the Tibetan witnesses and players in this to be lying. You always think they are spinning things, but they are just reporting what is happening to them.

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Title: Spirit Worship is not Buddhist

Author: Tenzin Peljor (<http://westernshugdensociety.wordpress.com/>)

Date Posted: 13 Dec 2008 11:03 AM (GMT)

Dear Tenzin,

I don't use the term demon worshippers. But it is clear and was stated by many masters of all the four schools of Tibetan Buddhism, inclusive their heads, the Ganden Tripa, HH Sakya Trizin, HH Mindolling Rinpoche, and many others that Shugden is either a spirit or functions as a demon to ordinary beings - hear and see their statements in the documentary film [Dorjee Shugden, The Spirit and the Controversy](#).

About how a monk from Sera sees the NKT/WSS website read [Scandalous feeding on rumors and gossips by pro-Shugden](#).

He wrote to me:

Thanks Tenzin la,

I would appreciate if it is possible for you and others to counter the pro-Shugden accusations specifically on the "visit" of HH the Dalai Lama to Sera in Feb 09. You might have seen that they also tried to show that Trijang Rinpoche's thrones have been removed from Ganden at the orders of HH. But this is absolutely incorrect and the thrones are still there. I happened to be there recently. It is the pro-Shugden Dokhang House, now break-away from Shartse, that have taken away all the religious artefacts that late Trijang Rinpoche had donated to shartse monastery, all at their will. Hope you also know of this...

Just for your information..

Tashi Delek!!

Tsering

I answered him:

[..]

*So now I am a bit tired and I have to continue my studies and I am not willing to work alone anymore, rather I decided to leave it as it is, being happy that I have done my duties. So I can not do more, **but** I am happy and strongly encourage you, to give the proper information, to write an article or post, which I will publish. I strongly encourage you to ask the abbot or the person in charge of Sera to issue an official press release on this. The best is it is signed by all the monks. This is very powerful and a clear statement. I would do what ever I can to make this known to people.*

Best Wishes.

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Author: Tenzin (<http://www.wisdombuddhadorjeshugden.org>)

Date Posted: 13 Dec 2008 06:46 PM (GMT)

Hi Tenzin Peljor,

How considerate and noble of you not to use the term "demon worshippers"! Yet in the same sentence, you go on to say that that is exactly what we are, just ordinary people who worship a demon. That includes Trijang Dorjechang and other great Gelug Lamas, of course. The other masters you mention are copying the Dalai Lama, just following his wishes without questioning. Just repeating the same old propaganda does not make Dorje Shugden any less of a Buddha. And the fact is, it all depends on how you look at him. For me and many others, he is a Wisdom Buddha who functions to increase our good Dharma qualities. That is our good karma with the practice.

Whatever you or others think of my Dharma Protector, it is immoral and intolerant to support the ban of our spiritual practice. Much has been said about this nowadays, and there is a growing number of non-Shugden practitioners who agree that the Dalai Lama has made a big mistake. Check out, just for example,

<http://mountainphoenixovertibet.blogspot.com/2008/10/evil-spirit-puts-tibetan-democracy-to.html>

or

<http://canterburyatheists.blogspot.com/2008/12/dalai-lama-hail-neo-medieval-tibetan.html>

and of course any amount of news coverage on the subject, including documentaries by Al Jazeera, France 24 and France 2.

I am glad the thrones are back, if indeed they are. There is no doubt that they were in the process of being removed when the report was made. There is also still no doubt that the Dalai Lama disrespects his Guru Trijang Rinpoche, describing him as a spirit worshipper and "wrong, all wrong".

A press release signed by all the monks would mean nothing, as it has been clearly shown that it is possible to coerce monks into signing anything, including signing away their spiritual practice in a forced signature and oath campaign.

Thanks,
Tenzin

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Author: CompassionForce

Date Posted: 13 Dec 2008 06:12 PM (GMT)

Dear Tenzin P,

This might be some kind of game to you, but to the Shugden monks at the Gelug monasteries in Southern India, a visit from the Dalai Lama means trouble.

As you might recall, the present escalation of the Shugden issue that resulted in the formation of the Western Shugden Society and the demonstrations against a Dalai Lama who refused to at least discuss his ban of this Deity started in January 2008 with the visit of the Dalai Lama to the monasteries. Then there was the fake 'referendum' with the pre-determined outcome and the splitting of the monasteries. We were horrified that the Dalai Lama was prepared to callously split the Sangha for no real reason! What reason is there is assume that the DL's visit in February 2009 isn't going to result in more trouble for the besieged Shugden monks?

It's like the person who has no power to oppose a powerful force, they take their frustration out on the weaker and more vulnerable. The Dalai Lama has no power to control Western advocates of Dorje Shugden, so he'll take his frustration at the worldwide protests against his sectarian actions out on the monks who cannot fight back.

You simply follow the Dalai Lama and support his illegal ban regardless of the suffering it's causing. I agree with Tenzin - you have little empathy.

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Title: confusion & truths

Author: Tenzin Peljor (<http://westernshugdensociety.wordpress.com/>)

Date Posted: 13 Dec 2008 11:35 PM (GMT)

Dear Tenzin and CompassionateForce,

for me its amazing to see in what kind of distortion of reality NKT seem to lead their - or at least some of their - followers. I like the title of the website "[NKTworld](#)" it is a different world, its the NKT world.

What Andy Brown wrote twelve years ago in the Independent

"The view from inside the Shugden Supporters Community was almost a photographic negative of everything the outside world believes about Tibet and the Dalai Lama." ([Battle of the Buddhists](#))

is still very true, I think.

I think some NKT members are just the blinded food soldiers of Geshe Kelsang Gyatso's politics.

As [Depaak Thapa stated](#) has already stated 12 years ago:

"Perhaps what the Shugden supporters in the SSC or the NKT refuse to realise is that they have become very handy pawns in the Gelugpa conflict."

You may call this uncompassionate or what ever, I think it is not me who lost touch with reality. I think it will upset some of what I say who firmly believe they would be the bearer of the truth. Those people from NKT running a vast amount of websites with distorted claims and calling the own confusion "the truth", with truth-websites, truth-blogs, truth-pseudonyms - I guess in the future there will be also a truth-shop or truth-Hotel? - while calling those who oppose the own views "liars". For me this speaks for itself.

I do not simply follow the Dalai Lama. I use my common sense, investigation and analyse, and my experience within NKT + my experience from living outside of the NKT world, to judge things. I know both worlds, the NKT world, and the outer NKT world. For me the difference is that of a well compared with the ocean.

Since I was equal about 6 years with Shugden followers (4 years with NKT) and about 5 years without them, additional based on the background of the experience of a communist dictatorship I lived in, I think I can put things into perspective.

A former member of NKT said recently to me, it were surprisingly those people from the former communist east countries (who know dictatorships first hand) who left NKT when NKT started their second media campaign against the Dalai Lama. They said: "we know this already and do not wish for more" and turned their back to NKT.

Many Westerners unexperienced with dictatorships may just lack that experience. There is no dictator outside of NKT.

This is my last point here. You said your points, I said mine. That's it.

I wish you both all the best, and a relaxed Christmas and Happy New Year.

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Author: Tenzin (<http://www.wisdombuddhadorjeshugden.org>)

Date Posted: 14 Dec 2008 12:15 AM (GMT)

Hi Tenzin Peljor,

As with many of your comments on the Internet, your comments in this last posting say more about you than about your subject matter.

For one thing, all your sources are over a decade old. You have no clue what is going on in the NKT these days, nor what is really happening to Shugden practitioners in

India, and you have no wish to find out, preferring to keep to your own fixed idea of what is right and what is wrong.

Those people you mention who came from communist regimes were, basically, you. I have felt in the past, seeing you fawn over Carola at Festivals, that your upbringing in East Germany was what got you so eagerly and blindly into the safe cult of personality that was Carola/Dechen (whose right-hand man you were). Luckily, Geshe Kelsang put a stop to that strangely communist cult of personality very quickly, when he dismissed Carola. Those years you spent at Carola's side gave you a warped view of the NKT, but the NKT you inhabited was nothing like the NKT everyone else inhabited at the time; and it is especially nothing like the NKT of today.

I too wish you a good holiday season. Luckily for us, we live in a democratic society where we are able to enjoy some freedom and relaxation. It is not so easy for the Shugden monks in India, who live in isolation, estranged from their former Sangha friends this holiday season.

Best,
Tenzin

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Title: ID card claim and the credibility of Western Shugden Society

Author: Tenzin Peljor (<http://westernshugdensociety.wordpress.com/>)

Date Posted: 14 Dec 2008 11:55 PM (GMT)

With respect to the Time Magazine Article [The Dalai Lama's Buddhist Foes](#) the Tibet scholar Robert Barnett of Columbia University had clearly written to the weekly magazine's correspondent David van Biema, *"ID cards are not given out by the exile administration, but by the Indian authorities"*.

He wrote also to the correspondent:

"I also made it clear that the Western Shugden group's allegations are problematic: they are akin to attacking the Pope because some lay Catholics somewhere abuse non-believers or heretics. The Western Shugden Group is severely lacking in credibility, since its form of spirit-worship is heterodox, provocative and highly sectarian in Buddhist terms and so more than likely to be banned from mainstream monasteries – while its claimed concerns about cases of discrimination in India should be addressed by working within the Tibetan community instead of opportunistically attacking the Dalai Lama in order to provoke misinformed publicity for their sect."

(see TibetanReview.net)

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