



PRINCIPAL POINTS OF THE KASHAG'S STATEMENT CONCERNING DOLGYAL

(English Translation, commented by the Tibetan Studies Press Office)

After nearly forty years in exile under the leadership of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the chances of achieving our goal of freedom for Tibet continues to improve. Tibetans stand out among all the refugees in the world for their unique achievements. This is no doubt the result of the Tibetan people's courage and perseverance in attempting to restore the freedom of their Country, which they enjoyed for more than two thousand years of its recorded history. However, we are yet to achieve the ultimate triumph. Obstructive factors of various kinds, emanating from beings of the both the form and formless realms, continue to hinder our efforts.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has investigated these obstructions and their causes for many years. One of the findings of his investigations is that depending on the spirit, Dolgyal, otherwise known as Dorje Shugden or Gyalchen Shugden, conflicts with Tibet's two protector-deities (Nechung and Palden Lhamo) as well as the protector-deity of the Gelugpa tradition, Pledge-holding Dharmaraja (Damchen Choegyal). The inclination of this spirit is to harm, rather than benefit, the cause of Tibet.

Understanding this, His Holiness the Dalai Lama himself made a complete break with the Dolgyal in 1976. Since then, His Holiness has regularly explained to the Tibetan people why depending on the Dolgyal was inappropriate. Many lamas, abbots, geshe, as well as the general Tibetan public, both lay and ordained, heeded his advice and stopped propitiating Dolgyal. As a result, the Tibetan situation has taken a turn for the better. [*how as Tibet is still not free?*]

However, some people have continued to propitiate Dolgyal, either because they failed to appreciate the threat it poses to the Tibetan cause or because they have decided to disregard it. There are yet others who not only propitiate Dolgyal themselves, but also actively encouraged others to follow suit. This has impaired the sacred relationship between the people of Tibet and their protector-deities. Today, this is one of the greatest dangers to the cause of Tibet and the life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

During the spring teaching this year, His Holiness the Dalai Lama said that it was very important at this point in our struggle that the people and protector-deities of Tibet maintain a harmonious relationship based on their mutual commitments to each other. He repeated what he had declared on many previous occasions that just as a person's breach of honour can create difficulties, so can a breach of commitments among protector-deities. He reiterated that what he has previously announced remains unchanged. He conceded that restrictions on Dolgyal would not apply to any monastery, lama's household or





private individual who have no concern for the general interest of Tibet. His Holiness made this absolutely clear.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama clearly explained the point again on 21 March, 1996 during the preparatory ritual for the Very Secret Hayagriva (Tamdin Yang-sang) Empowerment. He said.: *"Recently I have conducted a number of prayers for the well being of our nation and religion. It has become fairly clear that Dolgyal is a spirit of the dark forces. Therefore, during the Hayagriva invocation last year, I specifically mentioned Dolgyal by name and an incantation was made to ward him off."* His Holiness continued: *"I wonder if any among you here today continue to propitiate Dolgyal and still feel comfortable receiving this Hayagriva Empowerment. This is the reason why I suggested yesterday that it would not be appropriate for those who propitiate Dolgyal to attend this empowerment. When the protector concerned is disloyal to its commitments, the person concerned becomes disloyal in turn. As I said yesterday, this gives rise to a breach of commitments which carries with it a definite threat to the life of the lama."* [but think – if we truly believe His Holiness is a bodhisattva, then nothing we do or say can harm him or shorten his life]

"If any among you here are determined to continue propitiating Dolgyal, it would be better for you to stay away from this empowerment, get up and leave this place. It is improper for you to continue to sit here. It will not benefit you. On the contrary it will have the effect of reducing the life span of Gyalwa Rinpoche (The Dalai Lama), which is not good. However, if there are any among you who hope that Gyalwa Rinpoche will soon die, then you can stay." Therefore, rejecting Dolgyal has become a matter of the highest importance to the cause of Tibet, which is dependent on the personal security of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama also remarked: *"The biography of His Holiness the Great Fifth Dalai Lama contains a reference to discord between him and Tulku Dragpa Gyaltsen (whose spirit is alleged to have become Dolgyal). The matter is made very clear in the Great Fifth's Extensive Collection of Secrets (Sangwa Gyachen). On the basis of this evidence, the 13th Dalai Lama imposed restrictions on Dolgyal."*

>This statement is historically incorrect. The 13th Dalai Lama banned the manifold village oracles of Tibet, but never Dorje Shugden or other well-known deities.<

"I am a successor to the Great Fifth Dalai Lama and, likewise, have a unique karmic relationship with the previous Dalai Lama. I have therefore a duty to carry out the legacy of the Great Fifth and the 13th Dalai Lama. This is not a matter of what is in the Dalai Lama's interest, but what is in the interest of the Tibetan nation and religion."

When it comes to the interests of the Tibetan nation, I will carry through to completion the work I have begun. I will not back off because of a few disgruntled individuals. I am determined to implement the conclusions of my careful research and will not let it be. In the great monastic





universities-Drepung, Sera and Gaden, the majority are faultless. However, it is clear that a tiny number among them are stubborn."

>Note the emphasis on the 'tiny' number of concerned individuals. Here the figures: Dorje Shugden is revered in the Gelug and Sakya tradition. The Gelug tradition is the most widespread tradition of Tibet. In the whole of Mongolia and far into Siberia the Gelug tradition is the only one practiced. To all of these people Dorje Shugden was known as one of the most important protectors and many masters, monks, monasteries and families follow daily prayers and meditations with Dorje Shugden. In the Tibetan provinces Chaatring, Gyalthang and Lithang (east Tibet), Phari and Tromo (central Tibet) and Nyanang (west Tibet) Dorje Shugden was commonly revered as the region's patron. In the Indian Himalayas, in Ladakh, Lahul, Spiti, Darjeeling and Kalimpong the practice of Dorje Shugden is also widespread, likewise among the Chinese Buddhists in Taiwan. On the base of these considerations it is estimated that the number of people affected is in the range of four millions. Even today, after rather successful efforts of the exile government to declare practitioners of Dorje Shugden as traitors, large groups of individuals remain steadfast. Out of the 2500 monks of Sera monastery, 700 still openly stand to their faith, and in Ganden monastery it is 500 out of 2000 monks.<

"Even private individuals may later have cause for regret if you take this lightly now in the hope that perhaps things will turn out all right after all ... Some of you feel that your business and ability to earn a living do better if you propitiate Dolgyal. This is ill-omened talk. It is an example as the notable lama and writer Gung- thang Tshang remarked, of how we human beings end up embracing evil friends.

[True! But in some monasteries, monks have no time to meditate because they have to do Tara pujas all the time for businessmen. Plus, according Lama Yeshe, it is said that DS is so compassionate to even give people material gain, so they will increase their faith and later turn to higher practice]

Propitiating spirits is a practice originating in pre-Buddhist Tibet. However, when Guru Padmasambhava was helping to establish Buddhism in Tibet in the 8th century, He recruited some spirits such as Nechung, the State Oracle, to protect the Buddhist doctrine. Due to his high spiritual attainments, he was bale to subdue such spirits and bind them by oath. Propitiating of spirits, therefore, it not a Buddhist practice itself, but a means to help sustain spiritual practice. Over the centuries the practice of propitiating spirits has instead become widespread as a means to achieve fame, fortune and the general well-being for this life, concerns that run counter to general Buddhist outlook."





His Holiness the Dalai Lama has commented on this to: *"Those who can afford us protection and bounty in this life alone - be they humans, deities and nags, mountain- dwelling protectors, and so forth - are all objects for whom we might feel compassion. There is no reason for holding them in awe. Seeking refuge in them is a disgrace to the Gelug tradition. It is disgraceful to seek refuge in such beings while failing to seek benefit in the Six-armed Mahakala (Gonpo Chagdrug) and Pledge-bound Dharmaraja (Damchen Choegyal), the worthy appointed guardians of the immensely valuable teachings of Je Tsongkhapa."*

[Protectors have a time or lifespan where they were important – after that, they pass into the formless (read the book Oracles and Demons of Tibet for more information)]

Allaying any fears Tibetans may have about ceasing to propitiate Dolgyal, His Holiness said: *"Lamas, Geshe, religious students, and laity need not fear that they will be harmed if they stop propitiating Dolgyal. Nothing will happen. I will face the challenge. As Gelugpas, recite the Migtsa-Ma prayer, it will be enough if you also recite the Condensed Extensive Praise to Dharmaraja (Choegyal Gyi Toepa Kyangkumma). No harm will befall you."*

It is the duty of the Tibetan Government in Exile to encourage compliance with any advice given out of concern for the cause of Tibet, the security of its head of state and the honour of all Tibetan Buddhist traditions, including the Gelug tradition. Consequently, it has initiated a programme to prevail upon those still following Dolgyal to make a break with it. We are doing so out of concern for the greater welfare of Tibet so that the Gelugpa teachings of Je Tsongkhapa remain pure. Representatives visited Tibetan religious seats in South India to read out His Holiness the Dalai Lama's statements. Most people with connections to Dolgyal have come to understand that propitiating him undermines the cause of Tibet, compromises the personal security of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and brings harm to the individual propitiator himself or herself. Many of them stood up amidst the assembly of Lamas, Geshe, and the general body of monks to state that they were giving it up. Likewise, many letters undertaking to cease propitiating Dolgyal have arrived from monasteries, public and private organisations and the general public. We consider this an acceptance of responsibility for the greater good of Tibet.

>Here the practice of Dorje Shugden is declared as an obstacle to the cause of Tibet. Most Tibetans will see an 'Independent Tibet' as the only meaning of the 'cause of Tibet'. The exile government is therefore using the hopes of its countrymen for an independent Tibet to motivate them to destroy Dorje Shugden. At the same time the present Dalai Lama and his exile government are officially abandoning the claim for a free Tibet, which no Tibetan government has ever done in the past.<

However, a few Lamas, Geshe, lay people and organisations have adopted an extremist posture and continue to follow Dolgyal thinking that what they are doing accords with Gelugpa practice. Besides these, a handful of people are seeking to exploit the issue to





create discord within the Tibetan community. They are spreading baseless rumours and accusations in the international community, thereby playing into the enemy's hands [*Buddhists have no enemies*]. We, therefore, request them to stop.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has raised concern about the question of propitiating Dolgyal only because it has a great bearing on the cause of Tibet. It is precisely because of this that he has conducted extensive research and investigation on the matter for more than two decades. He explained his findings to his tutor, Kyabje Yongzin Trijang Rinpoche. The tutor graciously acceded to it, acknowledging that the findings were entirely faultless. This should be firmly borne in mind by all concerned.

>This is the most difficult point for the Dalai Lama: Trijang Rinpoche is one of the foremost masters of the Gelug tradition and was the personal tutor of the Dalai Lama. Trijang Rinpoche greatly revered Dorje Shugden himself and has composed many texts on extraordinary practices for an effective development of compassion and wisdom in connection with Dorje Shugden. With his ban against Dorje Shugden, the Dalai Lama directly opposes his own master, which cannot be justified in Buddhism in any way. The Dalai Lama therefore needs to find some kind of justification in connection with Trijang Rinpoche. Here the Dalai Lama refers to an encounter with his master Trijang Rinpoche in the mid seventies.

First, the Dalai Lama had requested the life empowerment of Dorje Shugden from Trijang Rinpoche. Then the state oracle began to slander Dorje Shugden, fearing for his position and influence. Under the impression of these attacks against Dorje Shugden by the state oracle the Dalai Lama withdrew from him request for the initiation. Trijang Rinpoche accepted the Dalai Lama's withdrawal, and it is this acceptance that he refers to with the words 'the tutor graciously acceded to it'.

The above statement though implies, that the Dalai Lama's present ban and 'results of investigation' were acceded to by Trijang Rinpoche, which is not the case at all. The reality is, that the Dalai Lama would have never even dared to mention his present attitude towards Dorje Shugden while Trijang Rinpoche was still alive. The actual contents of the mentioned encounter between the Dalai Lama and Trijang Rinpoche can still be verified today on the bases of letters by Trijang Rinpoche to his closest disciples on this account. In this context the timing of the ban against Dorje Shugden is also worth noting: After Trijang Rinpoche passed away in 1981 there lived many great masters who knew Trijang Rinpoche's actual words and attitudes very well. If the Dalai Lama had issued a similar ban at that time, the word of these widely respected masters would have turned such a ban ineffective immediately. The last eye witness who would have been able to counteract such a ban by the Dalai Lama was Trijang





Rinpoche's caretaker, Kungo Palden. Kungo Palden died in the autumn of 1995, the Dalai Lama presented the above statements to the public in spring 1996.<

In one of his recent statements His Holiness the Dalai Lama said: *"You should not think that dangers to my life come only from someone armed with a knife, a gun, or a bomb. Such an event is extremely unlikely. But dangers to my life may arise if my advice is constantly spurned, causing me to feel discouraged and to see no further purpose in living."* [True! But what is the most important advice of His Holiness that is constantly spurned? Good heart, kindness, compassion!] In subsequent statement, His Holiness said: *"I am now a man in his sixties. Owing to some merit accumulated in many past lives, I do not see any substantial danger to my life ... In the light of the Tibetan people's plight and the tragic situation in Tibet, I will try to live long so that I can share in their sufferings and console them as well as I can. Apart from that, I have no personal interests whatsoever."*

All Tibetans should think hard about this both as individuals and communities. It is pointless to pay lip-service to religious freedom and democracy if a lack of trust amongst ourselves undermines our cause and the personal security of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. There is no question of His Holiness the Dalai Lama ever trampling upon or neglecting any aspect of religious freedom. In fact, no one has ever attempted to prevent any Tibetan from embracing Buddhism or non-Buddhist religions, or any school of Tibetan Buddhism. This is why Christians, Muslims, followers of the four great traditions of Tibetan Buddhism and Bön enjoy complete religious liberty in the Tibetan community. What needs to be stressed here is that there never has been, nor could there be, any attempt to impose Buddhists, Christians and Muslims. Similarly, religious freedom has never been used as a pretext to impose Kagyu, Sakya or Gelug doctrines and practices on Nyingma monasteries. On the contrary, there is a law which lays down that Christians and Muslims should follow their own respective religious doctrines and practices and that the doctrines of other religions, and practices inconsistent with their own character should not be imposed on these religious centres. This is a spiritual tradition that accords with the principles of democracy and freedom.

According to Tibetan religious tradition, it is the responsibility of the founding lama or leader of the monastery of any sect to give spiritual guidance as to what guardian protector, practices and doctrines the monastery should follow. But monks of the monastery do not question that guidance in the name of religious freedom. His Holiness the Dalai Lama is the supreme religious and temporal head of Tibet. It is his responsibility, in his capacity as the spiritual leader, to give spiritual guidance for the benefit of the Tibetan people. As the temporal head of Tibet, it is his responsibility to give political direction to the Tibetan people and to seek to restrain activities that would bring harm to the cause of Tibet. Fulfilling his responsibility in this way cannot amount to a violation of religious and democratic freedoms.





The essence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's advice is this: *"Propitiating Dolgyal does great harm to the cause of Tibet. It also imperils the life of the Dalai Lama. Therefore, it is totally inappropriate for the great monasteries of the Gelug tradition, the Upper and Lower Tantric Monasteries and all other affiliated monasteries which are national institutions ever to propitiate Dolgyal. The public should be thoroughly informed so that they can gain a clear appreciation of the situation themselves. However, everyone is completely free to say: "If the cause of Tibet and the Dalai Lama's life are undermined so be it. We have religious freedom. We are a democracy. We are free to do as we please. We will not change our tradition of propitiating Dolgyal:"*

The overwhelming majority of the Tibetan people will remain steadfast, keeping in mind the greater good of the Tibetan cause, and contribute as best as they can to fulfil His Holiness the Dalai Lama's wishes. Nevertheless, it is quite clear that far from restricting religious freedom, the choice is left open to the individual concerned.

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