

CHRONOLOGICAL EVENTS 1950 – 2008

This chronology was compiled by Kundeling Rinpoche and can be found on Sumati Arya's website under the heading 'Kundeling Rinpoche'. We do not necessarily share the opinions expressed here, nor do we wish to advocate the disdainful tone of the text to others; however the information here contained is valuable to get a clearer picture of Tibetan spiritual/political history as it has unfolded in the last half century.

1950 : **December 19th** : China announces that its annexing of Tibet is a reclamation of Chinese territory. The case for Tibet as an independent nation goes unheeded by the U.N.O., Great Britain's Ambassador stating that Tibet's legal status is unclear and the Indian delegate advising dialogue within the parameters of the Chinese Constitution, as a solution. All options for the Dalai Lama seem exhausted, his National Assembly requesting him to flee Lhasa. Thus, at 2 a.m. at night, the teenaged incumbent Dalai Lama, Tenzing Gyatso, sets out for Chumbi Valley, in the company of 40 nobles and 200 bodyguards armed with machine guns and howitzers. The destination is Dungkar Tashi Lhundup Monastery (also known as the Tomo Dungkar Gonpa. The young God-King settles here for 8 months, returning to Lhasa in August 1951 (*'In Exile from the Land of the Snows', John Avedon, London 1984*). This period could well be considered a momentous one in the Dalai Lama's life, as vital decisions on the destiny of his kingdom, and spiritual guide-lines, are to be decided. His Government itself, with the 'inner circle' of his Senior Chamberlain Donyer Phala and the two Venerable Tutors, camps on the Monastery's premises. The precious relics of Buddha Shakyamuni and his apostle Shariputra, arrive in the Monastery for the first time from India, under the auspices of the Maha Bodhi Society in April 1951. The young ruler has his first opportunity to witness the actual bone relics of the founder of the Buddhist Teachings himself. All preparations, ceremonies and public audiences are managed jointly by the officials and staff of this famed Monastery, 'bastion of Shugden adherents'!

1951 : **January – August** : The tense political climate, the unpredictable future, the indecisive faction-ridden Government, the looming dangers and sorry complacent state of Tibetan affairs, the parasitical aristocracy in Lhasa –all this makes for a convenient excuse to place

important political and religious decisions in the lap of the Oracular Institutions. These have, merely a year previously, made an ‘amateur’ teenaged Dalai Lama the ‘Commander in Chief, declaring him Ruler of all Tibet on November 17th 1950 (*‘The Last Dalai Lama – a biography’ M.H. Goodman*). Despite all this, the young God-King, in his own words, is amidst a newly discovered freedom in the Domo (Chumbi) Valley. Besides hosting the Relics of the Buddha, he gives his first ever public discourses in the month of March.

Already at the helm of affairs, in the month of April he consults the famed Oracle of Dungkar Monastery, that of the Deity Dorje Shugden. Thereafter, in consultation with the highest Authorities and eminent spiritual Heads, his Cabinet and Secretariat, deliberations are held at Ripung Gang (a location below the Monastery) to anoint Dorje Shugden as a Tibetan State Oracle. On an auspicious day a solemn ceremony is held in the august presence of the foremost political and religious figures in the land and the Authorities of Dungkar Monastery themselves. Within the Shrine Hall, Dorje Shugden, the Deity, takes possession of his medium and pronounces his good wishes and obeisance to the young ruler. The Dalai Lama, sitting on a throne facing the Deity, reciprocates, highlighting the greatness of Dorje Shugden. Afterwards, his Chamberlain Donyer Phala, on his behalf reads out the Government citation proclaiming the Deity as one of the State Oracles. The rank of Government Official is bestowed upon the medium and other honours bestowed on Domo Dungkar Tashi Lhundup Monastery. The God-King goes on to compose a new Invocation of the Deity Dorje Shugden that has, since then, been a part of the liturgical practices of this Monastery (*from an eye-witness account provided by the ex-monk Mr. Jamyang, currently residing in Gangtok, Sikkim, India*).

1985 - 2005 : THE GYELTHANG SUMTSEN LING MONASTERY AFFAIR

Prelude :The Gyelthang Sumtsen Ling Monastery (originally called Song Tsen Ling) is the largest Gelugpa Monastery in the township of Dechen in the Tibetan Autonomous Region, coming within Yunan Province of China. Surrounded on the East, West and South by the Dichu River it is governed by the Authorities of the District known as Gyelthang. With a monk population of around 700, there are seven Houses, all but two, practitioners of Dorje Shugden. Since the Chinese ‘open policy’ the monks had re-established themselves and proliferated,

and the monastery prospered and regained its original splendour. Jangmar Rinpoche - nicknamed Aku (Uncle) Choepel – originally a member of the Dokhar House of this Monastery and subsequently settled in exile in India, is one of the surviving incarnate members of this Monastery who had escaped in the early Sixties. Having settled in Dharamsala, he went on to join a small community of hermits above McCleod Ganj. From 1975 on, when the Dalai Lama had begun to broach the subject of the propitiation of Shugden and the ensuing dilemma, the Lama is known to have taken up the cudgels on behalf of the Dalai Lama. Amongst a small group of Western students following Lam Rim instructions from him and visiting Tibetans bringing supplies to the hermits, he is known to have dissuaded many from the practice of relying on Worldly Protectors (*Laukika Dharmapala*, skrt.) such as Dorje Shugden .Whether he received an invitation from the Dokhar House of Gyelthang Sumtsen Ling Monastery or whether the Dalai Lama felt he had found a suitable knight to dispatch on a mission, in any case, in 1985 the Lama goes forth on his first ever visit to the Monastery, since coming into exile.

At his home-coming, in the relaxed climate of the ‘open policy’, the Lama successfully disseminates political and religious booklets and documents to the population. He himself describes in his writings, how conscientiously he warns people of the harm that could come about from the practice of Dorje Shugden and that it is the intention of the Dalai Lama for Tibetans to cease this practice. Due to the aura surrounding Jangmar Rinpoche’s association with – and messages from - the Dalai Lama, the relaxed mood of the Authorities, and the complicity of some ethnic Tibetans in high positions, the Lama cultivates with ease new candidates to his cause in the Dokhar House of the Monastery. He prudently takes the ex-Umze Yarphel and the monk Yonten from the Dokhar House, into his confidence, with the objective of indoctrinating as many monks and lay people as possible, to support the political ideology of the Dalai Lama and the religious shunning of the propitiation of Shugden. Carrying on this dissemination amongst monks and lay people of the Lithang area, he creates a harbinger of conflict that eventually flares up between the monks and laity.

During a second visit to the Monastery in 1995, the Lama bestows monastic ordinations on aspiring candidates. According to him, although many monks vouchsafe for his enlightened directives, there are never the less a handful of the older monks who spread baseless

allegations against him. In his words ‘they were the anathema of the Buddhist Teachings and progress’. Elements (according to him) ganged up against him, reporting him to the local Authorities and Judiciary, as a result of which he ‘underwent various tribulations and could barely escape, through the grace of His Holiness the Dalai Lama’. *(Reports taken from a small booklet by Jangmar Rinpoche himself, entitled ‘The Clouds of Offerings delighting those of Pure Commitments in Reliance upon Deities and Protectors’, written in 2002 In the booklet, the Lama tries to establish that the Gyelthang Sumtsen Ling Monastery’s association with Dorje Shugden is a ‘recent phenomenon’, besides portraying the followers of the Deity within the Monastery as primitive and promiscuous. Never the less, the booklet reveals the Lama’s bellicose ravings and serves as clear evidence of his unholy mission on the Dalai Lama’s behalf. In 1998, while attending a mass ritual performed on behalf of the Dalai Lama, he got into a brawl with the female Oracle Tsering Che nga - some say, while others say it was Yudoma – in full public view. Prohibited from entry into Chinese Territory, he has been serving as a ‘middle man’ between pro-Dalai Lama monks coming and going between Gyelthang Sumtsen Lingand India).*

November 2000 : the monk Shakya from the Rongpa House of Gyelthang Sumtsen Ling Monastery, travels to Dharamsala in India. With the assistance of Jangmar Rinpoche, he is able to obtain an audience with the Dalai Lama and swears to help instil the ban on Dorje Shugden within the Gyelthang District. He is one of many to keep a hot line between the Dalai Lama and some pro-Dalai Lama Officials within Gyelthang itself. Shakya, during a visit to the Phokhang House of Depung’s Loseling Faculty in Mundgod, Karnataka, informs the monks there about these developments, obviously to impress them that he carries an important task bequeathed to him by His Holiness!

February 2002 : Due to the hostility of the faction of anti-Shugden monks, it becomes necessary to protect an important *thangka* displayed according to age-old tradition in the main Assembly Hall (*Tshog Chen*, tib.) of Gyelthang Sumtsen Ling Monastery on the occasion of the Great Prayer Festival (*Mon.lam Chen.mo*, tib.), depicting Dorje Shugden in the entourage of Tsong Khapa. Never the less, the priceless depiction is ripped apart during the night, the Authorities not having foreseen any such assault at that time.

October 2003 : Sixteen monks of the Dokhar House of Gyelthang Sumsen Ling Monastery enter the private quarters of their Abbot in order to vituperate against and threaten him. Foreseeing trouble, he appeals for help to the Authorities, who respond by sending some army and local Police from the Amosho Regiment of the Dechen District. When they arrive at Bungraga, in the vicinity of the Monastery, they are met by Cheda-Lha (an Official holding the rank of ‘*Tutam*’ and favouring the anti-Shugden faction of monks) who, claiming that there is no need for security within the Monastery, orders them to return. As a result, the Shugden antagonists use the opportunity to physically belabour their Abbot and the resident ‘*Tsong Ja*’ Tashi Tsering (the Vice Head of the Local Branch of the United Front) in the late afternoon, tearing apart a *thangka* depicting Dorje Shugden. The security reinforcement does eventually arrive, but only in the late evening. Aggrieved by this assault, 300 monk and lay Shugden adherents repeatedly plead with the District Authority in Charge, while peacefully protesting outside the Headquarters for Justice. They further plead their case with junior Officials of the District who give them empty assurances that the matter will be looked into, but to no avail. Seven months later, a high-ranking Official arrives at the Monastery. The Central Government in Beijing had received a photocopy of the original letter sent by the Private Office of the Dalai Lama to the Monastery. Apparently, a copy of this letter had been dropped by the assailants at the doorstep of the Abbot, clearly indicating the support of the Dalai Lama for the actions of the anti-Shugden monks, showing that their antics had gone amiss! But the aforementioned Cheda-Lha takes measures in anticipation and it is said that he bribes monks and merchants in the locality, promising positions, if they reveal nothing regarding the existence of the letter. Jamkhar Rinpoche, a Drikung Kagyu Lama and Shugden adversary, is claimed to be an accomplice of Cheda-Lha in these intrigues, having visited Dharamsala in 2002 and, it is said, having received money from the Dalai Lama.

December 31st 2004: having fomented discord within the Gyelthang Sumsen Ling Monastery, the Dalai Lama’s Secretariat feigns distress in a letter addressed to its Abbot, Administrators and monastic community. Fully aware that the violent events that had ensued within the District and the Monastery, were the consequence of its own hate campaign, it never the less carries on with ravings on ‘evil Shugden’. As if addressing a feudal gathering, it refers to the claim that the 5th Dalai Lama began the battle on Shugden, (invoking this historical precedence since the 5th Dalai Lama founded this Monastery) it continues by instilling fear and superstition into the minds of the

monks by insisting that everything going wrong and volatile amongst themselves until yesterday was necessarily because of the persistence of their members in propitiating Shugden. 'Even amongst civilians and individual persons, it is visibly clear that obstacles have happened and continue. Therefore, it is vital to be clear on what should be rejected and what should be practiced, without having to regret, as the freedom to do so lies in one's own hands'. The letter declares that 'no harm (*such as wrath*) can issue as a result of abandoning Shugden' and that the Dalai Lama will take responsibility for that. 'If you take the instructions of His Holiness to heart, in the same manner as the general masses of Tibetans do, and if you can, follow them all in time, there will be merit ensuing'. This wresting of his own authority over all Tibetans, shows absolute disregard for the Chinese Authority – the contemporary reality – under which the Monastery exists.

2005 (month?) : With the help of the Private Office of the Dalai Lama, Tsondu, a monk from Phokhang House, is given preferential treatment and is allowed to take his Geshe Degree. After barely a year in the Higher Tantric College of Gyuto in Bomdila, Arunachal Pradesh, North India, he is sent to the Gyelthang Sumtsen Ling Monastery in China's Yunan Province. He had previously worked for four years as a member of the Gelugpa Cultural Society, Bylakuppe. Ngodup Tsering, the Minister of the Department of Security of the Tibetan Exile Government, and the Geshe formed a team to collaborate with the monks of Gyelthang.

September: Ex-Umze Yarphel, Yonten and Ku Ku, three monk members of Dokhar House of Gyelthang Sumtsen Ling Monastery, pay a visit to Dharamsala, India. As usual, with the assistance of Jangmar Rinpoche they have access to the Dalai Lama, in whose presence they claim to have worked in supporting the ban on Shugden and in proclaiming Tibet's Independence from China. They speak of an accomplice, Cheda-lha, an Official of the local branch of the United Front, as one who has faith in the Dalai Lama. He had been helpful in discreet ways in supporting the ban. The Dalai Lama hands over a Rolex watch and a letter for the Official as a personal gift. Jangmar Rinpoche reports these developments to the Phokhang House monks in Depung Loseling College in Mundgod.

December : The people of Phongteng Village in Gyelthang Province, Yunan decide to build a *stupa* to honour the memory of two of its famous Geshes. It had been decided in 2004 itself, that this *stupa* would also serve as a shrine for the Deity Dorje Shugden. They had been granted permission to go ahead with the project, by the Authorities concerned. Never the less, on the completion of the first story, some miscreants surreptitiously place four explosives around the structure at around midnight and the explosion destroys everything. It is later learnt that the Drikung Kagyu Lama Jamkhar and some Nyingmapa Lamas, emboldened by the Dalai Lama's tirades, had carried out these acts with impunity.

1997 : December 21st : In a rare disclosure of the duplicities engaged in by the Tibetan Exiled Administration headed by the Dalai Lama, 'The Indian Express' reports the concern of the Indian Police Force about cases of Tibetan perjury. It states that there is a glaring increase in recent years of un-registered refugees coming into Dharamsala from Tibet and that the Tibetan Government is concealing the past records of these people, even when they have been engaged in criminal activities! A case cited occurred on November 28th of this year when a 28 year old monk named Kunga was shot at point blank range by a fellow Tibetan in the Mcleodganj refugees' Reception Centre. According to reports, the victim 'had escaped Tibet after committing a murder'. 'It was only after the incident the local police could find out his background, that too with almost negligible help from the Tibetan Government. The accused managed to run away and the police is not able to carry out in-depth investigations into the case because of language problems', reports the daily.

With regards to the triple murder of the Principal Ven. Lobsang Gyatso and his two monk assistants on February 7th of this year, very little cooperation has been extended by the Tibetan Department of Security to police enquiries. The excuse being given by Thupten Samphel (the additional Secretary to the Tibetan Dept. of Information) is that the job of checking the credentials of Tibetan refugees lies with the Indian Police! The report continues : 'On the

other hand, sources allege that the Tibetan Government had often been manipulating the facts about Tibetan refugees in stray criminal activities in and around the town, to present an innocent face.....The Tibetan officials are found to be personally pursuing registrations for these fresh Chinese-trained spies also, who were caught near the Dalai Lama's palace two years ago' (*The Indian Express*, Chandigarh, Dec.21st 1997, entitled 'Unregistered Tibetans a cause of Worry to Police').

It must be remembered that in the years following the triple murders, the Tibetan Leadership continues to insinuate that Dorje Shugden followers and particularly the Shugden Society in Delhi, are criminally involved in the murders, circulating documents of so-called 'evidence' on their website. It even trumps up the local Superintendent of Police in Kangra, who, confidently facing a T.V. channel report, declares that the results of his investigations do show the hands of Shugdents!

May : The Tibetan Exile Government, on its web-site, continues to repeat a six months-old report of the identification of four of the supposed six suspects in the murder of Ven. Lobsang Gyatso and assistants. Claiming the accused to be 'reportedly in Tibet', the Himachal Pradesh State Police have approached Interpol asking for their extradition. In the words of I.D. Bhandari, D.I.G. (North), requesting the arrest warrants, 'the six murderers reached Lhasa after committing the crime and were safely escorted to their villages'. The two accused now identified are Thupten Choden and Lobsang Phuntsok and the two previously identified are Tenzing Chozin and Lobsang Chodak. 'The Kangra Police had earlier arrested five Shugden supporters from Majnu-Ka-Tilla in Delhi for interrogation', claims the report (without mentioning that they were thrown into jail and then subsequently cleared of all charges!).('Two More Shugden Activists Identified as Murderers', from the web-site of the Office of Tibet, H.H. the Dalai Lama).

1999 : November 10th : Dharamsala's Dept. of Information and International Relations (*Chi.til Le.khung*, tib.) reports on a demonstration in Karze, duly picked up by the World Tibet Network News. It says that some 3000 Tibetans demonstrated to call for the release of the Spiritual Teacher Geshe Sonam Phuntsok and two others, arrested on October 24th for 'Independence poster campaigns and bombings that had rocked the Karze area in recent months. However, sources believe that the arrest was sparked off by Karze Monastery's refusal to back

supporters of the spirit known as Dorje Shugden, whose worship is discouraged by His Holiness the Dalai Lama'. The Monastery is reported as 'snubbing' an invitation and gifts offered to them by Thupten, a monk from Rabten Choeling Dharma Centre in Switzerland, 'as an expression of displeasure with Rapten Choeling's refusal to follow His Holiness the Dalai Lama's advice against worship of the Dorje Shugden spirit'.

Pamela Logan, a scientist currently dedicating her time and resources to a project in the Karze Region known as 'Kham Aid Supporters', places a complaint with the Tibet Link web-site about the inaccuracy of the report and the blatant attempt to discredit Shugden followers. Although, in her own words, 'barely conversant with the Shugden issue', she is familiar with the location and the recent developments. In the ensuing debate, (in which several Tibetans contribute only abusive comments but Helmut Glassner, Austrian monk and previous translator of the Dalai Lama sends details of 'Thupten's visit') some clarifications emerge : The number of demonstrators turned out to be 300. The town's population is about 10,000, one-third being Chinese. If, as was reported by W.T.N. 20,000 Chinese Security Forces were employed, that would mean 2 for each inhabitant! ; The arrested had been accused of bombing a tiny medical Centre set up by a doctor who is a Shugden supporter; Thupten had not even visited Karze Monastery, let alone made offerings or give invitations; Police and security personnel in the district are ethnic Tibetans and all top posts in the local Government, including the Communist Party Secretary, are held by Tibetans. In an impartial appeal, Pam Logan concludes 'I believe that conflict resolution – whether we're talking about China/Tibet or Shugden/Dalai Lama – necessarily requires that two sides first acknowledge that a middle ground exists between them, and then try to move into it. Perhaps there is a way that people can worship Shugden without causing harm. Perhaps there is even a way for Tibet to survive and flourish under some form of Chinese rule.'

(Debate.....

2000 : January : Dharamsala's monthly edition of its news journal 'Sheja' ('*Knowledge*') reports the Gyuto Tantric Monastery and its 'sincere final investigation into Dholgyal'. It states that 'during the year 1996, the community as a whole had placed their signatures towards rejecting the propitiation of Dholgyal and had announced this to our Government and related Departments'. On October 1997, prior to the arrival of His Holiness, a mass meeting was held by the monastic Institute to investigate into possible remaining adherents. Later, His

Holiness, in response to doubts expressed about the cause of ailments of the ex-Abbots, clearly indicated that ‘it is good to clear away the grass and objects from Phagri’ (meaning to come out clean with Dholgyal practice). And during a sermon on ‘The Lamp to the Five Stages’ (*Rim.nga Sel.don*, tib.) on the Guhayasamaja Deity’s practice at the Gyurme Tantric Monastery on October 2nd 1999, referring to the indisposition of the ex-Abbots of Gyuto, he stated that ‘this could be due to the lack of pure commitments with regards to Dholgyal’ (meaning the persistence of the practice). The report continues that the community of Gyuto had declared that ‘all grass and objects related to Phagri have not only been removed, but indications that arrived from the Religious and Cultural Affairs Departments of our Government regarding the requirements for a Lama Umze (*an ecclesiastical appointment achieved by seniority after serving as Disciplinarian – a practice found only in Gyuto and Gyume Tantric Colleges*) have been put into practice. According to a resolution taken during the meeting, we have ordained that not only the candidates for the Lama Umze but also Geshes and incarnate Lamas seeking admission (*traditionally referred to as ‘placing one’s monastic mat’*) will be handed a questionnaire enquiring of the following : a) whether the aspirant will conform in subservience to our Government, under the Leadership of His Holiness the Great Protector, or not? and b) if the aspirant is one who strictly adheres to abandoning the propitiation of Dholgyal?’

September 10th : The first General Meeting of the Dorje Shugden Society is held in the newly built Prayer Hall of Dokhang House in Ganden Shartse Monastic College. Eighty delegates from all over India and Nepal attend and there are just two points on the agenda : 1. To reach a general consensus amongst Shugden adhering Tibetans as to whether they wish to continue under the Leadership of the Dalai Lama or not, and 2. To endorse and proceed with the construction of a new shrine to the Deity Dorje Shugden. At around 9a.m. just when the meeting is to commence, a motley crowd of about three thousand pro-Dalai Lama Tibetans, arrives at the gates of Dokhang House. Although claiming to form a peaceful demonstration, the crowd is fully armed, with 4 vehicles within easy reach, two supposedly filled with bricks, stones and chains, and two to serve as ‘ambulances’! The militant mob - a mix of womenfolk and men, with a predominance of monks and a handful of nuns – is led by the Dalai Lama’s Representative Ngodup Dorje. Thirty Shugden monks stand guard at the gates and the local Police Inspector and ten of his men in uniform are present. The crowd begins to shout anti-Shugden slogans and abusive swearing and then suddenly starts to hurl stones in the direction of the Prayer Hall. The monks on guard, seeing their Temple and monastic quarters attacked, have no choice but to retaliate, with

equal vengeance, at which a melee breaks out that continues for three hours. Almost all the local newspapers, particularly those in the local Kannada dialect, report 'the attack on Dorje Shugden adherents by pro-Dalai Lama Tibetans'. Officials of the Dalai Lama's Government in Exile deny any manipulation, claiming the outburst in Mundgod to be 'the spontaneous reaction of anger amongst Tibetans against Shugden followers, who they felt opposed to the Dalai Lama' (*The Times of India*, New Delhi, Sept.20th).

September 12th: The convention of Dorje Shugden Society, having concluded its resolutions in Mundgod, proceeds to the Bylakuppe Settlement to bring the convocation to a conclusion. The local Police from Periyapatna and Kushalnagar have already been alerted following the violent disturbances in Mundgod and are already present in large numbers in the courtyard of Pomra House, Sera Mey Monastic College. The delegates are urged to conclude proceedings during the daytime. In fact, a mob of about 1000 Tibetans has already gathered at one of the approach roads to Camp 1 Settlement, armed with stones, sticks and even sickles. The meeting is kept to a minimum and at the conclusion of declarations and prayers, the delegates depart for Mysore in a convoy of vehicles, taking the Camp 3 route to avoid a confrontation. Sixteen Pomra House monks who had accompanied the delegates to the exit route, unfortunately decide to return by the Camp 1 route and are met by the angry mob who pounce on them hurling stones. Although outnumbered, the monks retaliate with the very same stones that had been hurled at them, but the Police in the proximity, take the monks into custody to pacify the crowd.

It is subsequently learnt that the Liaison Officers for the Dalai Lama in both the Mundgod and Bylakuppe Settlements, had ordered at least one member from each and every family to demonstrate against the Shugden adherents, failing which they would be fined. In the violent clashes in Mundgod, many of the nuns present had been forced to be present, on pain of expulsion and were seen to be upset and aghast at the attack on monks within Ganden Monastic - that too in the month of the Rainy Season Retreat (*Varshavasa*, skrt. *Yar.ney*, tib.) a holy period when monks do not travel beyond their monastery's precincts. During this period, it is a tradition since the time of the Buddha, for lay people to provide necessities for the monastic communities. In this case, however, all those injured amongst Shugden antagonists, are given free medical care, while those hurt amongst Shugden followers are ignored. The Liaison Officer Ngodup Dorje is later promoted to Head of all Tibetan Settlements in India, with Office in Bangalore.

2001-2007 : THE DROMO GESHE RINPOCHE AFFAIR :

Dromo Geshe Rinpoche, Ngawang Gyaltzen Jigme Choekyi Wangchuk, (Sikkim, 23.01.1937- New York, 10.09.2001), following his release from prison in Lhasa (1961) because of his being Indian rather than Tibetan (Hindustan Standard, Aug.10th 1960), served as the Director of Tibet House in New Delhi. A close disciple of Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche (1900-1980, the younger Tutor of the Dalai Lama), he was thus a devotee of Dorje Shugden, as was his Great Predecessor.

August 25th 1999 : In a ‘most peaceful and cordial manner’, at a meeting of the Ghum Dun Gon Samten Choaling Association in Darjeeling (an Association gathering together Domo Geshe Rinpoche’s Monasteries in Kurseong, Kalimpong, Pedong and Sikkim), ‘It was unanimously decided that the members of our Association will continue to worship the Deity of Dorje Shugden’ even if they have to face any eventuality.

September 10th, 2001 Domo Geshe Rinpoche passes away in New York, U.S.A.

October 4th 2001 : Though he had not received any Teachings from the Dalai Lama in his life, out of complete faith his monasteries in Kalimpong and Darjeeling areas approach the Private Office of the Dalai Lama requesting that His Holiness may kindly compose a prayer for the swift return of Domo Geshe Rinpoche’s reincarnation. Claiming that the late Master had ignored his injunctions concerning Shugden worship, the Dalai Lama declined this request. As a result of this refusal on the part of the Dalai Lama, on **June 23rd 2002** a Public Notice is published in Bengal and Sikkim ‘The Statesman’, stating

that ‘there being no other option.....a Search Committee (for his Reincarnation) consisting of representatives from all His Monasteries, His Labrang, His Ancestral Home, His Relations and His Devotees and Benefactors from Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Bhutan and Sikkim is constituted.....The Committee also has the tacit support of His Devotees and establishment in the United States of America and other countries.’

November 9th 2002 : After consulting H.H. Trijang Rinpoche, the Ghum Dun Gon Samten Choeling Association presents the reply before the members (together with delegates from Domo Geshe Rinpoche’s Centre in U.S.A.), in which he informs them that the reincarnation of Domo Geshe Rinpoche has already taken place to the North West of Samten Choling Monastery, but that this should be kept secret and that there should be no hurry in searching for him. They should do prayers and await further instructions. The members unanimously agree.

March 2005 : Tharpa Choeling Monastery forms the ‘Ganden House and Tharpa Choeling Monastery Management Trust’ to take care of the interests and assets of Domo Geshe Rinpoche until they are handed over to the reincarnate Domo Geshe Rinpoche.

July 2005 : Sera Je Drati Khangtsen, in the person of Geshe Lobsang Sherab, takes it upon themselves to search for the new incarnation and (despite his previous refusal to compose a Prayer for his swift return) requests the Dalai Lama to select the Domo Geshe Rinpoche’s incarnation. (It must be remembered here that Sera Je Monastic College has unanimously thrown its weight in behind the Dalai Lama and his ban on the worship of Dorje Shugden). The Dalai Lama assures Geshe Lobsang Sherab that it is his own responsibility and that he will decide who will be the reincarnation! In view of the unprecedented step of Drati Khangtsen, on August 26th 2005, Ghum Dun Gon Samten Choaling Association once again urgently appeals to Trijang Rinpoche to consult the Oracle for the search of their beloved Guru Domo Geshe Rinpoche. On October 28th 2005 the Dalai Lama selects a boy from Camp 4 Tibetan Refugee Colony in Bylakuppe, as the reincarnation. Samten Choeling urgently requests from them on November 20th further information about ‘under whose authority’ Sera Je Drati Khangtsen has acted, to take all the initiatives in the

search for the incarnation. The reply from Sera Je Drati Khangtsen on November 26th is insufficiently brief, stating that ‘the previous Rinpoche is a Lama of the Drati Khangtsen. Hence Drati Khangtsen took up the responsibility’. The recognition seal on the incarnation of his choice is given by the Dalai Lama on December 10th 2005. Four days later, Sera Je Drati Khangtsen tries to justify its untoward actions, informing Samten Choeling that ‘Domo Geshe Rinpoche happens to be one of the registered incarnate members of the College and in the case of him admitting himself into the Great Seats, except for the affiliation to this College, there are no other Colleges that he belongs to. Therefore, there should be no misunderstanding as to where his affiliation may lie in the future’. Samten Choeling refuses this justification on December 14th, stating that, quite simply, Domo Geshe Rinpoche was known as ‘Domo Rinpoche’ and not ‘Drati Rinpoche’ and repeating once more that the Dalai Lama had refused to write a Swift Return Prayer and therefore it was logical to refer to H.H. Trijang Rinpoche, rather than him. On December 18th, Samten Choeling appeals to the Member of Parliament for Darjeeling and Kalimpong, Shri Dawa Narbula (who forwards it to the National Government Home Minister), and to the Police Inspector in Charge, to bring the facts to the notice of all authorities concerned, since they foresee ‘untoward incidence, confusion and clash amongst the monks’.

December 27th 2005 : The Oracle of Dorje Shugden declares Domo Geshe Rinpoche to be reborn in Sikkim. He advises that this information should be kept quiet for now. There will be obstacles at the beginning, but ‘Do not lose heart!’

June 2006 : The Dorje Shugden Devotees Charitable and Religious Society of Delhi, protests the case of the Controversy over Domo Geshe Rinpoche’s incarnation, to the Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh. Meanwhile, on June 14th, in a letter to Trijang Rinpoche, the members of Tharpa Choling Monastery, led by the ‘Omze’ Lama Lawang, explain their change of position and their subsequent alignment with the Dalai Lama, stating that the Dalai Lama has already given his Seal to his choice and ‘since the case has now definitely been ascertained’, if it were to be rejected, then eventually ‘all the related Monasteries coming under the affiliation of Domo Dungkar will have to be segregated from the Dalai Lama. Hence, we desire the chosen reincarnation.....’. Members of the Dungkar Gonpa Society in New York, disciples of Domo Geshe Rinpoche in U.S.A., are, however, active and adamant in their position. On June 13th they write to the Samten Choling Monastery, Tharpa Choling Monastery, Tashi Choling Monastery, Gaden Choling Gonpa, Gaden House and Enchey House, stating that their ‘highest

responsibility as disciples of Kyabje Domo Geshe Rinpoche is to remain faithful to the Kadampa tradition and to the lineage of our Guru.....It is our belief that the only way to do this is to follow the leadership of Kyabje Trijang Choktrul Rinpoche'. They conclude with the wish to 'remain united in following the course that we began together four years ago'. An even stronger appeal goes from them to the Samten Choling Association, requesting that it be read aloud at the meeting on June 22nd. Without mincing words, they write: 'Please keep in mind that the Monasteries of the Samten Choling Association belong to Kyabje Domo Geshe Rinpoche. In the Gelug tradition our Rinpoche, as well as his predecessor Ngawang Kelsang, were identified with the King Protector Dorje Shugden. For a long time the Protector practice has been upheld in Rinpoche's Monasteries. In today's circumstances we firmly believe that although as individuals you have freedom of choice, as monasteries belonging to Domo Geshe Rinpoche you do not have the authority to change the practices He established. Therefore, we strongly request you to examine carefully the consequences of accepting an incarnation who would be separated from this tradition. We also ask ourselves why, after so many years of facing difficulties and pressures, you would change now when an incarnation has been recognized by the King Protector'. At the same time, they write directly to the Dalai Lama 'to clarify any possible misunderstanding', explaining the unanimous decision to request Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche to coordinate the search, after the refusal by the Dalai Lama to write the Swift Return prayer, and the unexpected and unwarranted 'personal initiative' of Sera Je's Geshe Lobsang Sherab, 'without properly consulting.....Domo Geshe Rinpoche's Monasteries'. 'Neither his actions nor his conduct represented the wishes or intentions of Kyabje Domo Geshe Rinpoche's disciples'. On July 8th, Trijang Rinpoche confirms to the functionaries of Tharchoe Monastery and the Choeze of Domo Labrang, his original choice of the child indicated in 2002 as 'the unmistakable mind emanation'. Although tactfully stating that 'it is also plausible that there may be other emanations of the Master's body, speech, mind, attainment and enlightened activities', he recommends that 'you should decide after holding consultations with the monastic community of Samten Choeling and the reincarnation committee'. The matter becomes ever more heated and since 'Lama Lawang and other monks are planning to take possession of the entire landed properties by illegal means and by enthroning their alleged boy (fake Rinpoche) from the Sera Monastery', Ghoom Dun Samten Choling Association on August 10th writes requests again to the Member of Parliament Shri Dawa Narbula and to the Superintendent of Police, to 'do the needful for the protection of the property'. On September 3rd, Delhi's Dorje Shugden Society appeals directly to Tharpa Choeling Monastery, reminding them of the past unity under the great Lineage Masters and of the

commitments they had pledged themselves to, before ‘going ahead and accepting the choice of a very strange incarnation’. ‘The whole process of this so-called recognition has been dubious’, they say, and ‘there is nobody superior in recognising an unmistakable reincarnation other than the Kind Refuge, the Vajradhara Trijang Rinpoche, the Master to the great Predecessor himself’.

Ghoom Samten Choling Monastery petitions the LD Executive Magistrate in Kalimpong to pass an order restraining the ‘opposing parties’ from installing their chosen reincarnation in Tharpa Choling Monastery.

December 28th: A sacred image of Dorje Shugden, commissioned by the famed Domo Geshe Rinpoche Ngawang Kelsang, made and consecrated getting on for a century ago by the Holy Lama, suddenly disappears from the hallowed shrine of the Tharpa Choeling Monastery, Kalimpong. This monastery itself was established by the Master. The sacred Implements of the Deity, that had been embedded in the wall above the entrance to the Monastery, are also found to be missing. The Choir Master of the Monastery, Umze Lhawang, and Thubten Rabyang (also nicknamed ‘Chonze-la’ on the staff of the Labrang in Kalimpong) who, according to eye witnesses had received occasional visits from the Heads of the Tibetan Youth and Women’s Organisations and other Tibetan fraternities, are immediately identified as the culprits behind the desecration and theft. It is learnt later that the two were coaxed with promises of the blessings of the Dalai Lama and other bounties, should they succeed in eradicating the practice of Shugden and in bringing all the other Monasteries and disciples of the late Master under subservience to the Dalai Lama’s spiritual guidelines.

2003 :

April 5th: The Nyenam Phelgyeling Monastery originates from the Nyenam Village close to the Nepalese border in Southern Tibet. It is one of the Institutions that had been forcibly converted to the Gelugpa by the Fifth Dalai Lama. Amongst the many priceless relics, this Monastery boasts a hallowed image of the Dharmapala Dorje Shugden, believed to have been crafted as a gesture of atonement, by

the hands of the Fifth himself. Placed on the lap of the Himalayas and sandwiched between the Tsang and To Ngari Districts, it was strategically poised not only as a stronghold of Shugden Gelugpa followers but also amongst the holy sites related to the 12th century poet/saint Milarepa. The towns of Phari and Domo, too, bastions of Shugden practising Gelugpas, were in the vicinity. Phelgyeling, by virtue of its strength, was a rallying point for local Kagyupas, Nyingmapas and even the non-Buddhist Bonpos, for whom Shugden was considered the local Deity Landowner (*Kshetrapala, Sthanadeva*,skrt.). All considered it their own gathering place. There were no inklings about the Deity's 'sectarian flaws' or the possible harmful effects of the practice. The Nyenam Phelgyeling was testimony to harmonious co-existence in the Region.

Reconstituted at the foot of the sacred Swayambunath Stupa Hill in Kathmandu after 1959, Phelgyeling Monastery once more became a focus for Tibetans of all denominations who would assemble here for major religious and political occasions. The celebrations for the birthday of the Dalai Lama, announcements from the Government in Exile, Tibetan Youth Congress and Tibetan Women's Organisation gatherings, appeals and fundraising for Tibetan Freedom movements and all matters related to the 'Tibetan Cause', were championed by the members of this monastery. For the people of Nyenam, this was their 'base' for renewing their fellowship and to reminisce on bygone days. The greatest of Gelugpa stalwarts visited and stayed in this monastery, giving religious discourses and moral support. There was nothing in this monastery's history or present that remotely indicated that the presence of the hallowed image of Dorje Shugden or his practice, harmed the cause of Tibet or the well-being of the Dalai Lama.

Then suddenly, one fine morning after the ban on Dorje Shugden, Nyenam Phelgyeling Monastery apparently becomes transformed into a den of 'Devil worshippers'! After 1996, various Tibetan associations, including the society of Nyenampas, begin to make a 'bee-line' for this monastery to persuade its members to renounce the practice of Dorje Shugden, citing the reasons given by the Dalai Lama as valid proof. The monks, however, stand their ground, giving reasons that proved the contrary. There are efforts by the Nyenam Association to rid the monastery of its hallowed image of Dorje Shugden. The image remains until today within the monastery's Protector sanctuary, testimony of the Fifth Dalai Lama's change of heart.

The observation of the *Mon.lam Chen.mo* Great Prayer Festival, resurrected by the Gelugpa *savant* Dagom Rinpoche (1953-2007) in 1992 in Kathmandu, witnesses all the Gelugpas living in Nepal united as never before! Gelugpa monasteries in Bodhnath and Swayambunath take turns to host the event with pride. But the 1996 ban dents this harmony – Dagom Rinpoche becomes a *persona non grata* overnight and suddenly all Shugden followers are seen as enemies of the Tibetan Cause. Under these circumstances of widespread ‘apartheid’ against Shugden followers, Nyenam Phelgyeling Monastery and determined followers of the Lama and the Deity, take it upon themselves to observe the celebrations at all costs. Whereupon, Lama Zopa Rinpoche, devoted Nepalese follower of the Dalai Lama, institutes a separate Prayer Festival in his own Kopan Monastery with staunch Dalai Lama supporters. This produces an unprecedented affair of two Great Prayer Festivals in the same city and country, unmistakably highlighting a schism amongst Gelugpas. When the 13th century Master Tsong Khapa instituted the festival, even the Sakyapas, Nyingmapas and Kagyupas joined in. But to the Dalai Lama and Zopa Rinpoche, the heinous crime of destroying the existing harmony amongst Gelugpas, is lost on them.

2003 : There is alarm amongst the community of Nyenam Phelgyeling Monastery – their bank savings have evaporated and two priceless traditional tapestries that hung on roof columns, have vanished. About fifteen monks, led by Gen Thardo (the acting Abbot) and Yeshe Namdag, have sworn to relinquish their practice of Dorje Shugden, in the presence of the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala. Back in the monastery in Kathmandu, they attempt to dissuade the other monks from holding the Great Prayer Festival. Delhi’s Shugden Society, too, has its own share of problems : a wedge seems to have been driven between its Board Members, with disagreement on policy and future *modus operandi*. For the last few years, wild rumours have circulated about the embezzlement of funds. The Society is ‘in the eye of the storm’. Dharamsala, despite suspected bribes to the Kangra and South Delhi Police, have not succeeded in putting members behind bars. There are also factions within Pomra Khangtzen (Sera Mey Monastic Seat) who have distanced themselves from the majority, while amongst Ganden’s Shugden followers in Mundgod Settlement, an atmosphere of distrust towards Delhi’s Society seems to prevail. All this could be explained as part of Tibetan *penchant* for bickering, but it is not as simple as that. As Shugden followers begin to investigate the source of their troubles, indications seem to point strangely to one

individual. Everywhere, woes have originated since the acquaintance with a monk named Tshigta!

This Machiavellian monk arrived from Mole Shang Nesar village, Sichuan Province in China's Western Tibetan ethnographic Region. He first joined the Sakya Institute in Rajpur, North India in 1993, claiming to be an Incarnate. The fraud was discovered, he was expelled and later joined Sera Mey College in Bylakuppe, South India. Here, rather than follow the study programme, he opted to work in the kitchen and there earned himself the nickname of 'Tshigta' for burning the bread on more than one occasion. He took up residence in the Labrang of Gosok Rinpoche, ex-Abbot of Sera Mey. Although mediocre in performance, within a few months he had somehow attracted the attention of the Dalai Lama, who in 1996 recognised him as the incarnation of a Sakya Lama named Mingyur Rinpoche. His image bolstered by this, he immediately got busy to secure the confidence of the *Chushi Gangtuk* (Four Rivers Six Ranges) Association, the old Guerilla confederation of Khampas. During the Dalai Lama's brief visit to Bylakuppe, despite many engagements, he found time to give private audiences with Tshigta.

With his new identity and the trust of the Chushi Gangtuk, in 1997 he convinced members of the Pomra House to elect him President of the local Dorje Shugden Society. Delhi's Dorje Shugden Society was 'taken for a ride' by a series of telephone calls – reputedly by the same Tshigta concealing his voice – praising his capacities and his connections. In the early Spring of '98, he left for Tibet, supposedly on a mission for the Dalai Lama. He boasted to pro-Dalai Lama monks in Pomra that he was entrusted with an assignment to deliver stipends and incentives to agents of the Dalai Lama spread around in six different places in the T.A.R., whereas to the pro-Shugden monks he claimed to be on important missions on behalf of Beijing. One was to intercept agents of the Dalai Lama's Department of Security, and the second was to identify Lamas recognised by the Tibetan Leader.

When the Dalai Lama visited Hunsur Settlement for 13 days from September 25th 1999, he led a delegation of monk students from Gosok Labrang to offer a Long Life petition (*Ten.shug,tib.*) and a solemn oath that they had all relinquished their Dorje Shugden practice. All were thanked profusely by the Private Office of the Dalai Lama.

Around this period, Tshigta was asked by the Dalai Lama's Department of Security to depute a trusted 'lieutenant' into the T.A.R. to gather sensitive information for the Indian Intelligence in Delhi. Thupten Pasang (nicknamed 'Nagpo Chenpo') was sent. In the same year Tshigta visited the Chinese Overseas Friendship Association in Beijing, narrating to its members the tragic predicament of Dorje Shugden devotees in India. He is believed to have presented himself as the sole representative of Shugden followers, claiming that the Society in Delhi was defunct because of the useless and corrupt ways of the members. In a second visit he is said to have won the sympathy of the Beijing Association. In 2000 he secured permits and access to various regions in Tibet, for the young incarnation of the Great Phabongkha, whose name he used for his own profit!

Probably sensing something foul, in 2001 the Indian Intelligence tried to intercept him but he left for Nepal. Here too he continued in his usual ways and found himself a place in the Nyenam Phelgyeling Monastery, near Swayambhunath. Within weeks he had convinced the monks to take up new initiatives for the welfare of their community. He alleged that he had received permission from the Chinese Authorities, to rebuild new monastic premises in the hometown in the T.A.R. Besides, the monastery could open various franchising ventures in major Chinese cities and he inferred that the Chinese Authorities would be willing to offer 7.5 crores of Nepalese rupees towards these projects. In the same year, he urged the monks to transfer their precious treasures and antique *thangkas*, to the supposed new monastery in Tibet. In what seems to be their only clever response, the monks refused, saying that it would be better to wait until he new premises actually materialised. Nothing materialised! So in February 2002 he suggested another plan – to send a party of monks on a fund-raising tour in China and from there to Western countries. This plan also flopped and left the monks stranded in China!

The 'maverick' monk again came up with another novelty – from within the Monastery premises, he began to issue false passports. Some new arrivals from Tibet were given these false documents so that they could re-enter the T.A.R. on a mission assigned by him. These Tibetans were soon apprehended on the border by Tibetan Police who found political material from Dharamasala and photographs of the Dalai Lama in their bags. During the

interrogation, the name of ‘Mr. Tshering Tamang’ (pseudonym of Tshigta) emerged. On the basis of information from the Tibetan counterparts, the Nepalese Police arrested Tshigta in full view of everyone at Phelgyeling. Tshigta tearfully implored the members to bail him out and within 26 hours, they, trusting and hopeful as ever, did so, paying 30 lakh Nepalese rupees.

As a last ditch, Tshigta called upon the community to seek the help of the Dalai Lama. This, he said, would help them out of their debts and their isolation from the rest of the Tibetan community. The monks Gen Thardo and Yeshe Namdag, having already become accomplices to Tshigta’s antics, agree and the rest of the community, exhausted by Tshigta’s fruitless initiatives, remains perplexed.

Eventually, in 2004, during the God-King’s visit to Sarnath in January, Tshigta leads a faction of his supporters into the Dalai Lama’s presence. They try to explain their predicament of having a historical connection to Shugden, and promise to practice in secret. But the Dalai Lama is not amused and insists that they give their oaths and signatures to entirely relinquish the practice, whereupon he would announce their declarations to the public at the upcoming Kalachakra celebration in 2005. Twenty or more Phelgyeling monks under Gen Thardo and Yeshe Namdag, do travel to Dharamsala in the Spring of 2005 and offer their oaths and pledges in the presence of the Dalai Lama.

The Shugden loyalists remaining in the Nyenem Phelgyeling Monastery, are non-plussed on hearing these developments. Throughout the period of Tshigta’s misdeeds, the gullibility and trusting nature of the monks has made them easy prey to his antics. Never the less, light begins to creep into the overcast darkness of ignorance. Shugden followers are now being forewarned by others who have been duped by Tshigta. It dawns upon many that the monk masquerading as a Lama is a ‘double agent’, albeit an unsophisticated and mischievous one. Unlike a capable spy, who works under camouflage, not leaving any signs as to his identity, Tshigta was flamboyant and boastful of his activities. He was not a die-hard spy for the Chinese, the Dalai Lama or Shugden followers, although he seemingly worked for them all and took all of them for a ride. Shugden followers in Nepal and India were to suffer most from his

activities. He achieved some objectives for the Dalai Lama, but he created a brief rift in the tranquillity and fellowship within the Shugden Society and brought Phelgyeling's Holy Community to the verge of bankruptcy. It was only when he corrupted important members of the Monastery, bringing them to the brink of a confrontation over the deity Dorje Shugden, that the monks finally began to see through the conspiracy.

The division between those upholding the ancient traditions of the Monastery (the Shugden 'Loyalists') and those who, through the mounting debts incurred by following Tshigta's schemes, had turned to the Dalai Lama, reached its zenith. Those monks who follow Shugden outnumber the pro-Dalai Lama faction, not because of their political acumen or support from high places, but rather for their determination never to deter – at whatever cost and in the face of adversity – from the avowed spiritual practices that had been handed down to them by their Holy Gurus. The rebel pro-Dalai Lama monks receive support and finances particularly from one Nyenam Tshering Tashi, a patron and Nyingmapa who had been arrested by the Police in Lhasa in March 1999 for smuggling antiques from Tibetan Monasteries.

Eventually, under increasing pressure from Shugden loyalists anxious to retrieve their antiques and money from Tshigta, Gen Thardo and Yeshe Namdag and their entourage, abandon their monastic quarters. But with the support of Tshering Tashi's money, the two somehow begin to disrupt the Monlam Prayer Festival, bribing Officers and Municipal Officials in Kathmandu. On the basis of false accusations, the Kathmandu Municipality orders Phelgyeling Monastery not to hold the Prayer Festival because of the danger of disrupting Law and Order. By running 'from pillar to post' and through the intensive lobbying of Nepal's Dorje Shugden Society and other Shugden followers, the Monastery succeeds in observing the Great Prayer Festival in 2004, 2005 and 2006, despite the efforts to stop it. Tshigta abandons the monastery in 2004 and after a brief period of affluence in Kathmandu, he gradually falls from the grace of all those he had duped and disappears from the scene – some say to the U.S.A., some say back to his hometown in Lithang.

Gen Thardo, left to himself with an ailing Nyenam Tshering Tashi and a timid Yeshe Namdag, attempts to resurface and make his presence felt, by hiring a handful of Nepalese rowdies who threaten to disrupt the Monlam Festival once again in 2007. Regardless of this ‘show of strength’, the Festival carries on as before, through the help and combined efforts of Shugden followers.

When unfurling the different schemes undertaken by Tshigta, and his intentions, one objective becomes obvious – his over-riding self-interest. As for the manners he employed, he was a master of deception and with this he got the upper hand of the dubious and opportunistic amongst the Shugden followers and amongst his own countrymen from Pomra Khangtsen, in order to approach both the Dalai Lama and the Chinese Embassy in Nepal. The same operation was applied to the gullible factions within the Nyenam Phelgyeling, already faced with mounting debts. In this way, Dharamsala’s rumour-mongers had a field day, proclaiming to all that Shugden followers were now getting financial support from the Chinese.

2004 :

December 16th-23rd : In speeches given at Gyume Tantric College's courtyard at Rabgyeling Tibetan Settlement Gurupura (Hunsur) in South India, the Dalai Lama states that people coming over from Tibet show reverence towards his person but by-pass the significance of his Government in Exile and question its purpose. This is a 'dull-witted attitude'. 'There has to be an overall organisation, an Institution (*Chi.way Dig.zug*, tib.), for objectives to be achieved'. Obviously aware of the diminishing popularity of his Government in Exile, he reiterates that he and his Government are one and the same thing, deftly implying that it is as infallible as himself! The God-King continues, saying that in the Settlement there is 'an association of Chatringpas' that continue with the Dholgyal practice (actually there is only one frail old man!). 'Although it would be incorrect of me to say so, I would like to call them all idiots!', he says. 'Dull-witted but filled with arrogance.....members of your families must be careful when associating with them as there is every possibility of being deceived by them'. He points out the venue, the new Congregation Hall of the Gyume Tantric College, gleefully recounting 'that in connection to the book 'The Father's Bequeathed Oral Tradition', wasn't it this spot or the location of the older Hall, that I actually drove Zimay Rimpoche out of the Congregation? Perhaps the Protector of this Institute, Kalarupa, asked me to do it on his behalf (*giggling*). So it wasn't me, but Kalarupa' (*Laughter*). Although some people within Tibet (a 'handful, with parochial orientations and lacking in intelligence', according to him!) were sceptical about the implementation of the ban, complaining of schism in their Monastery, there were others that reported great benefit! He goes on : 'These people – quite a number of them – who are gifted with intelligence and sharp discrimination, have reported that since the implementation of this ban, the harmony and purity of practice amongst the Sakyapas, Kagyupas, Nyingmapas and Gelugpas within Tibet has been further enhanced', therefore those from Tibet 'have told me to enforce the ban with more vigour. Prior to my restricting the practice, it is a matter of fact, as a personal revelation on my part, that in my acquaintances with Dholgyal-practicing Geshes and Lamas, even though I had personal proximity with them , the relationship never went beyond bringing contempt – this was very obviously clear! Besides, within Tibetan Society it is only Dholgyal followers who are opposed to me. This is probably a repetition of the 360 years old historical conflict (*referring to the times of the 5th Dalai Lama*). And if I were to speak from a negative context, people associated with the Government of India confide to me that there is no perceived threat to my life within India, other than from the Shugden Society. So things have come to this!' (*Translation from live recordings*)

2005 :

September 7th : In a *tete-a-tete* with a local Tibetan reporter, the elder brother of the Dalai Lama, 77 years old Gyalo Thondup, reveals some facets of his early dealings with the C.I.A., carving a niche for himself as the Tibetan James Bond! His conversation, however, emphasises his disillusionment with the American Administration. 'Whatever they did in the past is very important (*referring to the C.I.A.'s clandestine support*) because they are a very powerful country. But the Americans are very vague. For instance, they are saying that they encourage the Chinese to talk with the Dalai Lama or his representatives....This is a very vague way of American approach. They should take a positive line in order to resolve this problem if they are really interested', says Gyalo, adding in reminiscence 'In the 1950s and 60s, America had promised us that they would support us for many things, including Independence if we fought with China. But eventually America betrayed us'. Gyalo concludes : 'We should try to deal directly with the Chinese because China is the more important...' (*report from Dharamsala, India, September 7th 2005*). Elsewhere, in response to a Tibetan News Agency, he had suggested that the Dalai Lama himself should meet face to face with the Chinese for talks.

December 21st : India T.V., a Hindi news reporting Channel based in New Delhi, broadcasts a report on the upcoming 'Maha Kalachakra' engagement of the Dalai Lama in Amravati, in the southern Indian State of Andra Pradesh. It reports having received information about 'serious assassination threats' to the Tibetan Leader during the mammoth event, from six 'terrorists of the Shugden group who have recently crossed over from the Tibetan border into India. The Dalai Lama will be present at the venue from January 5th-16th and it is alleged that more than 100,000 followers of the Buddhist religion will participate. India T.V. has in its possession six pictures of such terrorists (*the photographs are transmitted*) who the Andra Pradesh State Government, considering the perception of a threat, has instructed the police to post these pictures in and around the Kalachakra venue. All of them are supposed to be associated with a Tibetan Society named Dorje Shugden. This Society believes that the Dalai Lama is not a God and, hence, that Buddhists should not worship him. The Dalai Lama's Home Minister in Exile Samdhong Rinpoche, has informed India T.V. that all the afore-mentioned terrorists are followers of the banned Guru Shugden and have the moral support of the Chinese Government. Besides, these elements occasionally attack the policies of the Dalai Lama and have their bases within China's Tibetan Autonomous Region'. (*India T.V. news, December 21st, 'Vijay Times', December 22nd*).

Geshe Thupten Samphel, scholar and Teacher to many monks within the Sera Mey Pomra Khangtsen and one of those falsely accused as ‘terrorists’ by the Tibetan Administration, takes up the matter with Kundeling Rimpoche. He is concerned about the adverse effect upon his countrymen from Lithang, already gathered in Amravati for the Kalachakra engagement, if they are given to understand that Shugden followers are sworn to harm the Dalai Lama. Amongst the naïve and blindly trusting, such a rumour could trigger violence against Shugden adherents. On behalf of these innocent scholars, on December 29th Rimpoche writes to the Prime Minister of India, the Foreign and Home Secretaries and the Ministry of Defence. The posters of the accused, that were pasted up at the venue and elsewhere, are later removed. It was also alleged that a search warrant had been released by the over-enthusiastic S.P. of Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, for the arrest of the Pomra Geshe! The bogus ‘threat’ to the Dalai Lama and the manipulation of this false information, become obvious. Pomra Khangtsen is one of the strongholds of Shugden practitioners and the Venerable Geshe is a steadfast practitioner and a rallying figure amongst its inmates.

2006 :

March 27th – During the annual Spring Discourse, given to a large contingent of pilgrims (devotees) recently arrived from the Tibet Autonomous Region, within the ‘Tsug Lag Khang’ (central cathedral) temple premises in Dharamsala, the Dalai Lama thanks all individuals and institutions within Tibet that have, on his behalf, engaged in aggressive purging and discriminatory policies targeting the Shugden deity and his followers. In a tone suggesting a ‘battle to the finish’, the Leader exhorted a relentless pursuit of the operation to exterminate the practice of Shugden. Referring to the Chinese trend of initiating a project with excessive zeal but ending it with little substance and sobering effects, the Tibetan Leader maintained that the pressure in the campaign against Shugden should not come to an end like that. In an address unmistakably phrased to arouse passions that would motivate a confrontation with Shugden adherents, the Dalai Lama, alluding to the unabated practice and growing numbers of Shugden followers in the Kham Province, pinpoints the townships of Chamdo, Dragyab, Markham and Dema as the main culprits. Citing the disregard for his admonishments by the lay people and monastics of these townships, the Leader dubs the inhabitants as ‘ungrateful and recklessly dull-witted towards the political Cause of Tibet and the great contributions of the Fifth and Thirteenth Dalai Lamas’.(Reported in ‘Bod Gyalo’ recorded Tibetan newscast, Vol.34, Nov.’06)

June 16th : In response to the revised code of conduct, entitled as the principal constitution for all Gelugpa Institutions, the Dorje Shugden Society explicates its concerns in its correspondence with the Abbots and Administrative Heads. In this letter (as in those sent to the Tibetan Government in Exile), the Society reiterates its condemnation of the interference of non-monastic political elements that are attempting to manipulate and dictate the terms of what is good and what is not good for the Gelugpas in their practice. The Society particularly questions Article 12 (Chapter 4) of the new regulations, that states that ‘Those wishing to join the Gelugpa Monasteries should be candidates who have completely relinquished the propitiation of Dholgyal, besides having no connection whatsoever with its practice’. The letter further brings to their attention, the genuine age-old tradition of the Gelugpas in putting their trust in the Vinaya Pitaka (the Canon on Discipline as taught by the Buddha) for guidelines in the matter of conduct, and the Sutra (the instructive Teachings) and the Four Classes of Tantra for their practice. It further solicits the Authorities not to consider short term benefits, during their tenure, and to be less sycophantic in their relationship with the Dharamsala Establishment.

December 20/21 : The Fifth International Dorje Shugden Summit and Tenth Anniversary of the Founding of the Dorje Shugden Society, are observed in Delhi, with 320 participants and delegates from 14 countries. Main points for discussion are three : a) developments during the decade-long ban on Dorje Shugden, b) the ensuing restrictions and discriminatory policies, and c) the conditions and possibilities provided within the Indian Constitution. Consensus is reached on six resolutions that are passed : 1. To provide moral support and protection to Gelugpas living under persecution, regardless of whether they are Shugden followers or not, and to reply to the baseless allegations and assaults on Gelugpas at large; 2. To pursue legal means through judiciary bodies, to bring about a solution to the on-going conundrum; 3. To highlight the injustice and hardships being undergone by Shugden followers, by raising public awareness and launching websites; 4. To fight by peaceful and legal means, always in accordance with the laws of the respective countries in which Shugden adherents abide; 5. To found a United Gelugpa Organisation wherever in the world followers of this tradition abide; and 6. To protect and support the Monasteries of the Ven. Domo Geshe Rinpoche, currently suffering under a politically motivated interference from Dharamsala.

**2007 : THE AFFAIR OF THE 16 (19?) TIBETAN YOUTHS WITHOUT
AUTHORISATION FOR GELUGPA MONASTERIES**

February : Lobsang Sherab and eight other Tibetans escape from Tibet into Kathmandu in order to seek admission to study in Tibetan Monasteries in South India. Presenting themselves at the Tibetan Reception Centre run by the Administration in Exile, and declaring themselves from the Chatring and Gyalthang Region of the Yunnan and Sichuan Provinces of the Tibetan Autonomous Region (an area that disagrees with the Tibetan Government policy of banning the worship of Dorje Shugden), they are asked by the representative Kelsang Chungda to sign a form declaring that they abide by the policy. When they refuse, they are denied the authentication slip that shows they are genuine escapees from Tibet. On **February 17th**, the Cabinet Secretariat (Kashag) of the Tibetan Government in Exile, issues a circular in which it states that ‘those who with arrogance and stubbornness continue to follow relying on the practice of Dholgyal, such individuals cannot be sent to the Three Great Seats or any other Gelugpa Institution’. Nepal’s National Dorje Shugden Society protests to the U.N. Refugee Organisation in June. Shortly after, a letter from the Reception Centre declares that, following the wishes expressed to them by the U.N.O. for Refugees, ALL authorisation to Tibetan escapee Refugees desiring to go to the Monasteries is suspended. Pressure like this from the U.N.O. is unprecedented.

May 3rd : Pomra Khangtsen Cultural Institute Association, of Sera Mey monastic Seat in South India, appeals to the Minister of Culture and Religious Affairs of the Tibetan Government in Exile (Kashag) about the refusal of required documents necessary for the admittance of monks to their Khangtsen, explaining that if this policy is to continue, not only will there be the impossibility of recruiting for their Khangtsen, but the very axis of the hallowed tradition of Master/Disciple relationships and the continuation of the Teachings, will come under serious threat. For this reason, they are ‘taking recourse to judicial means’. On **May 29th**, the Kashag replies briefly that ‘in the case of a new arrival who had not stopped the practice of

worshipping Dholgyal, it is not possible for the Department of Religion and Culture of the Tibetan Government to order clearance that the person be admitted into a monastic Seat'. It must be explained that Pomra Khangtsen has a particularly strong relationship with the areas of Chatring and Gyalthang, from where, for reasons of inviolable Master/Disciple relationships, almost all of their recruit monks come.

June 1st : The National Dorje Sugden Society in Delhi, requests a Commission of Enquiry, sending letters to the Indian Home Minister, the Karnataka State Home Minister, the UNHCR Chief of Mission and the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State. June 20th : The Dorje Shugden Devotees Charitable and Religious Society, Sera Monastery, Bylakuppe Branch, sends letters requesting an intervention into the injustices being caused by the Dorje Shugden ban, to the Mysore District Deputy Commissioner, the Karnataka State Governor and the Deputy Commissioner Mysore District, and to the National and State Home Ministers, requesting an enquiry and intervention. There is no official reply.

July 15th : A total of 16 Tibetan kids, aged between 13 and 18 years, all Dorje Shugden followers from Yunnan and Sichuan Provinces of the T.A.R. proceed to the Tibetan Refugees Reception Centre in Dharamsala, requesting permission to study in Tibetan Buddhist Monasteries in South India. They are refused the requisite authorisation but remain in the area to plead their case. September 14th : Following a complaint about the Tibetan Refugees Reception Centre in Dharamsala, sent to them by Jampel Yeshe the President of Delhi's Dorje Shugden Society, the National Human Rights Commission (Law Division) issues an order to the Reception Centre giving them notice to supply a report and the requisite information within 4 weeks. However, on September 27th the Superintendent of Police and Foreign Registration Officer at District Kangra of Dharamsala, Gyaneshwar Singh, issues notices to the children to quit the area within one week, for 'indulging in activities at Upper Dharamsala which are precarious to the public safety and which may culminate into endangering public tranquillity and peace'

2007 : **February 2nd** : The Shugden antagonist and crusader for the Dalai Lama's cause in the ban on worship of Shugden, the Abbot of Jangtse Monastic College, Ven. Lobsang Choepel, who was set to depart for Taiwan, suddenly stirs up a hornets' nest during an early morning Tea Congregation in the Faculty's Hall. He declares himself a victim of harassment being continuously engineered by Dholgyal Society and followers. He never the less reiterates his commitment to fight to the finish for the Dalai Lama, swearing to purge the Jangtse Faculty completely of any 'underground' Shugden practitioners. Furiously pointing out the shrewdness of eight monk members of the Serkong Division in the Faculty, he serves them an ultimatum that they will not be let off the hook and that actions will be taken against them (*meaning expulsion*). An important provision, the Identity Card possessed by various monks in Gelugpa Seats and that serves as a guarantee for obtaining the right to basic necessities, had earlier been denied to these eight, by deception. Like other destitute refugee monks, with no means for survival, their very existence rests on obtaining this I.D. Card. Cornered and with no other choice, the eight are forced to place their signatures, disavowing themselves from Shugden practice. Delhi's Dorje Shugden Society writes an appeal on their behalf, to the Indian Prime Minister ManMohan Singh

March 5th : A scuffle between local Indians and some Tibetans in Dharamsala results in serious injury to some of those involved. According to reports, one Tibetan succumbed to wounds sustained. The situation escalates and Samdong Rinpoche, Chairman of the Kashag, to defuse the situation, declares that this incident is 'planned and fomented by the Dorje Shugden Society upon payroll from China'.

April 26th : The Indian Home Minister, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, writes to the Chief Minister of Karnataka State, Mr. H.D. Kumaraswamy, requesting him to 'look into the matter' of the expulsion of monks from Ganden Jangtse College who took part in a Peace March of protest to the ban on Dorje Shugden. (This refers to events that took place in 1997!). Although coming such a long time after the event, the importance of this development should not be overlooked.

May 10th - : The Belgian Government is believed to have asked the Dalai Lama to reconsider his plans to visit Brussels for the 5th International Conference of Tibet Support Groups, scheduled for 11th-14th May 2007. The move is linked to the coming visit to China of a Belgian Trade Delegation in June, to be led by the Crown Prince. The Tibetan Leader's visit was also supposed to coincide with the eve of the European Union's 'China Human Rights Dialogue', to take place in Berlin on 15th/16th May. 'The Tibetan Leader finds it more difficult this time than it was in 2005 when the Belgian Government had for the first time asked him to postpone his visit to the Country' (*Press statement by Kalon Tempa Tshering, May 9th 2007*). The first conference of Tibet Support Groups was held in Dharamsala, north-west India, in 1990, the second in Bonn in 1996, the third in Berlin in 2000 and the fourth in Prague in 2003. The impressive international gathering is the result of years of campaigning for Tibet by the Tibetan Leadership, extolling the high moral ground of the Tibetan victims and condemning the Chinese.

May 12th - : Trijang Chogtul Rinpoche seeks an audience with the Dalai Lama when the Tibetan Leader is on a visit to the U.S.A. The Dalai Lama seems detached and gloomily asks the young incarnate the reason for his visit. Rinpoche replies that he has called to pay obeisance and offer the traditional request for the Dalai Lama to 'Live Long', since this year is the last in the 12 year cycle since his birth and, according to Tibetan Astrology, considered critical. The Leader relaxes and begins a conversation, during which he is believed to have said that he 'could not come to a conclusion as to whether Dorje Shugden was a Demon, a Buddha or a Protector' but that never the less he could state with conviction that 'the practice is bad'! 'Dagom Rinpoche too, like all the other Lamas involved in its practice, has died young', stated the Lama. According to him, the current Zong Rinpoche is praiseworthy as he had used his wisdom to relinquish the practice. Then, addressing Trijang Rinpoche, he adds 'You are old enough to make your own decisions'.

May 24th - 26th - : An unprecedented event takes place in Ganden during the holy month of Saga Dawa. Three lay people from each of the nine Tibetan Settlement Camps are called upon by the Camp Leaders to participate in a three-day-long recitation of the Mani Mantra, inside the Ganden Tsog-Chen (Great Congregation Hall). Although it is customary for lay people to assemble in a Mani Lhakang (a shrine hall adjacent to private monasteries), the Assembly

Halls of the Great Seats had been created for the preservation of the sanctity of the monastic life. Monastics could cherish their lives as 'renounced ones' (*Pravajikas*, skrt.), away from the mundane affairs of householders. The novelty, ensuing from the 'progressive' mind of the Dalai Lama, does not end here! Nyingmapa monks are made to preside over the event, with the actual members (monks of Jangtse and Shartse Colleges of Ganden) made to participate as mere on-lookers. On 26th (10th day of the Tibetan month) a grand ceremonial '*Guru Bumtshog*' (100, 000 *Ghanachakra* Offering to Guru Padmasambhava) is held in the same precincts. It is considered rather *chic* for the most hallowed Seat of the Gelugpa Founder Tsong Khapa, to be used to commemorate Padma Sambhava, the Founder of the Nyingmapas!

Some have compared these unintelligible inventions, to asking women to share their toilets or private rooms with men, for fear that they may be considered 'exclusivist'. Or Protestants being asked to make their Churches available for Catholics to celebrate the Saints and the Virgin Mary. Or a Shaivite Temple being told to make space for devotions to Krishna! All this, because the liberty to maintain and advocate the purity of one's own chosen lineage or path, for the Dalai Lama is considered 'intolerance, fundamentalism and sectarianism'!

September 4th : '*The Times of India*' reports that China will ban the reincarnation of 'Living Buddhas' without State permission and outside China. In a new Law that came into force on Sept.1st, China 'grades' the degree of influence of the Lamas concerned and the relative type of authorisation required.

October 17th : In a move that is perceived by many as an effort to resurrect his moral stature and at the same time deliver a strong message to China, the U.S. President George Bush receives the Dalai Lama. Besides personally handing over the highest civilian honour, the Congressional Gold Medal, to the Tibetan Leader, he meets with him the previous day at the White House. Tibetan followers are elated, the impression being that maybe America will finally pressurise China on the Tibet question. Tibetans in India and Nepal jubilantly proclaim that 'the prestigious award....surpassed even the aspired achievement of a Free Tibet'. The U.S. State Department's Deputy Spokesperson, Tom Casey, makes light of China's anger. He reiterates that the issue

of honouring the Dalai Lama had been raised many times in the past. Despite there being no change in the U.S. view on the status of Tibet, the Administration never the less considers the Dalai Lama 'a very important and significant spiritual Leader' (*The Times of India*'...?... 2007). There are others, however, who question the moral propriety of receiving the award from the hands of a war-mongering President whose hands have been soiled with the blood of Iraqis and Afghans.

November 1st : The Tibetan broadcast division of 'Radio Free Asia', transmits a report on the Dalai Lama's visit to the city of Toronto, Canada, and on an address given by him to a congregation of Tibetan settlers on October 31st. The journalist Tseten Namgyal announces that 'finally, the Dalai Lama has stated that people engaged in Dorje Shugden practice are currently not only with evil designs but are in league with the Chinese Government and are busy spreading propaganda and discord' (*Da,tug Phu.tug*, tib.). Besides, the Chinese (too!) have recently criticised the Dalai Lama on his ban on Shugden. In substance, the Dalai Lama states that the practice of propitiating Deities and Spirits is not the substance of Buddhist Teachings, besides being in conflict with the commitments of the Refuge Precepts. He says (*quote*) : 'There is a clear indication of the strengthening of bonds between the Chinese Government and the Shugden Society. One of the points of criticism raised by the Chinese team with my representatives (*spokespersons for the negotiating team during a recent dialogue*). is my ban on Dholgyal. Hence, this is now a political affair! Moreover, from the information I have received from Tibetans coming across from the T.A.R., I am informed that a Dholgyal Society has recently been founded in Beijing and the objective of this organisation will be to condemn Gyalwa Rinpoche (*himself*) in the presence of an international gathering during the Olympics (*in 2008*). They say that the person heading the group will be 'Nga Rinpoche' (*referring to 'Nga Lama', ie. Kundeling Rinpoche. The slight deviation from the derogatory name, with the suffix 'Rinpoche', is probably diplomatic!*). There are probably only two persons known by the appellation 'Nga Rinpoche'. One of these is believed to be the one living in India going by the name of Kundeling and the other is supposedly residing in Singapore, known as Serkong Tritul, the one who had briefly studied in Ganden Jangtse's Monastic Faculty. The person feeding me with this information is not one given to frivolity but one who has suddenly come over from Tibet, a serving member of the Communist Party. While we were conversing on unrelated matters, this man casually mentioned the matter to me. "Gyalwa Rinpoche should be aware of this", he said to me. Whatever it is, the matter has now turned into a political affair. Whether it be in Nepal or in India, the Chinese Communists are now courting Shugden protagonists. This is something you all need to know – the elderly are

well aware of this but the young also will never the less need to keep the matter in their minds'. This speech was widely circulated in Tibetan Exile newspapers such as '*Lho.chog Pho.nya*' (under the Headline '*The Dalai Lama Needs to be Aware of This*', December 1st 2007)

20th November : Tokyo, Japan. (*AFP reports*): 'Tibet's spiritual leader the Dalai Lama said he is open to naming his successor before he dies, going against centuries of tradition but ensuring that China does not interfere. "If the Tibetan people want to keep the Dalai Lama system, one of the possibilities I have been considering with my aides is to select the next Dalai Lama while I'm alive".....The options would include electing the successor 'democratically' from among high-ranking Tibetan Buddhist monks or naming the successor himself, the Dalai Lama said. "If China selected my successor after my death, the people of Tibet would not support him as there would be no Tibetan heart in him" he said'. On November 23rd, '*The Voice of Tibet*', broadcasting from Norway some excerpts from Dalai Lama's speeches, refers to the Chinese announcement of the new regulations on the choice and approval of reincarnated Lamas (dubbed as 'Living Buddhas') of September 2007. The Dalai Lama implies that the historical intervention of the Chinese Emperors in the matter of choice, was merely in a mediatory role. Being devout practitioners of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, they made their presence known , simply to cool the tempers of the contestants presenting respective candidates. He adds that the choice of authentic candidates requires the authorisation of practising Buddhists and ridicules the role of the Chinese since their Communist Party official disassociation with religion cannot make them the rightful authority. 'The underlying intention of the Party could only be to monopolise the hold over the *Tulkus*, having understood the influence they had over the Tibetan masses'. There are three possibilities for designating the next (15th) Dalai Lama : an election similar to the Papal succession; locating an already living candidate even while the predecessor lives (*Maday Tulku*); the recognition of a candidate born at the death of its predecessor. It would have to be someone who would carry on the work of the predecessor ; if not, he would be revealed as a pseudo incarnation!

The furious reaction of China is swift to come. As 'The Independent' (British based) newspaper (and many others worldwide) reported on November 23rd, 'China has accused Tibet's spiritual leader, the Dalai

Lama, of violating the religious rituals and historical conventions of Tibetan Buddhism by suggesting he might appoint a successor before his death instead of relying on reincarnation. Beijing's latest broadside against the Dalai Lama is a sign of heightening tensions between the central government and the man Tibetans see as a god-king. While reincarnation sounds like an esoteric concept to those of other belief systems, it is a deeply political issue in the isolated Himalayan enclave'.

At the same time, Chinese disapproval of too much Western friendliness towards the Dalai Lama is shown on other fronts. They openly criticise the presentation by President Bush of the Congressional Gold Medal to the Dalai Lama last month, the first public appearance by a sitting U.S. President with the 14th Dalai Lama. (A refusal to allow a U.S. aircraft carrier and two U.S. minesweepers to dock in Hong Kong is said to be a response). In Germany, after the Chancellor Angela Merkel met publicly with the Dalai Lama on September 23rd, Siemens loses a 20 billion euros contract for the Peking-Shanghai high speed railway line. In Turin, Italy, the city of cars, questions are being asked about the possible effect of the Dalai Lama's being made an honorary citizen of the city on December 19th, as a high powered Chinese business delegation is in the city for talks with Italian Government Ministers and important financial and industrial leaders (*'La Stampa', Italy, November 7th*).

THE AFFAIR OF THE WINTER DEBATE SESSION* – Nov.-Dec. 2007

**(Winter Session Debate – a month-long annual affair culminating in the fashion of a 'tournament', an age-old tradition. It was famed for the assembly of erudite scholars and for the rigours undertaken by the participants in their zeal to perfect their dialectic skills. Acclaimed as*

‘Jang Guncho’ (that can be translated from the original Tibetan as ‘The Winter Debate Session of Jang’) the engagement as such goes back probably three centuries or more, when it began to be held in the courtyard of the Jangphu Monastery where a famous image of the deity Manjushree is the central focus of devotion and attraction. Situated to the south-west of Lhasa, the location of the monastery is far from being ideal and romantic. Rugged and barren, the environment became even more extreme during the Winter. The standards of today are, however, a far cry from the glorious annals of the past.

After the rehabilitation of the three major Gelugpa Seats some years after the Tibetan exodus in 1959, the Jang Guncho sessions were revived in 1990 on the advice of the current Dalai Lama. Since then, even the followers of Tibet’s indigenous Bon tradition, as well as the Nyingmapas, Kagyupas and Sakyapas, have been encouraged to participate in the month-long affair. In this show-case of the Tibetan Leader’s magnanimous eclectic stand towards even non-Buddhists, the display of camaraderie has - as can be seen in the following factual report of this year’s events – never the less become unavailable to Dorje Shugden followers!).

November 18th : Prompted by their Disciplinarian and other Shugden antagonists within Sera Monastic Seat’s Je College, nineteen monks submit a jointly signed circular, in turn sent to various Authorities of the Mey College. The gist of the paper maintains that the signatories do not want to engage in the ‘Winter Session Debate’* with their counterparts within Mey, their sister College. Announcing their unanimous resolve to disown any monks placing their faith in Dorje Shugden, in a pious vein they claim honourable intentions that, they state, are not meant as an assault to the Holy Community of Mey College but rather for the harmony of their respective Institutes, as is to be expected of any Buddhist monastic institution. The group of monks further reveals that their intention arises from their determination to follow the Dalai Lama’s advice on Shugden to the letter! Unlike in other cases, when the authors to such petitions had often been fictitious, this one is signed by *bona fide* monk members of Sera Je College.

Later, ‘Voice of Tibet’ Radio from Norway on November 23rd reports a Press Conference on November 22nd in South India, in which the

Disciplinarian of Sera Je, Geshe Lobsang Choedhar, announces that a signature campaign has been launched following the above petition and that three thousand monks from Sera Je have consented. Referring to the decision taken at the Abbots convention in 1998, to 'relinquish relationship with those who don't give up the worship of Dholgyal', he cites the Tibetan sayings of 'separation of water and separation of Province' and 'differentiating between mouth and its beard' both meaning segregation and discrimination. This decision is nothing new but simply a consequence of the Abbots' decision in 1998. Gegu Lobsang Choedhar outlines their so-called 'guidelines' for the temporal and spiritual well-being of Tibetans, (*reported in the newspaper 'Southern Envoy' on November 22nd*) as ordained by the Dalai Lama, as follows : 1). Following the Resolution taken in 1998 in Sera Monastic Seat under the leadership of the Ganden Tripa, and the decision taken in 2000 in Delhi during the first International Gelugpa Convocation, we have to take up definite responsibility in implementing these with integrity, and not leave it to mere lip-service; 2). We are all aware of the clarity in the factual historical evidence gathered by His Holiness as a result of unbiased investigation and guidelines with relation to Dholgyal. He has time and again said that those who persist in placing faith in Dholgyal while posing as his followers, are purely commitment breakers and perverts. It is decidedly obvious to all, without further clarification, that between the two (*Dalai Lama and Shugden followers*) there is a breach of commitment. The abiding of two such opposed under one roof, within the Small and Larger Vehicle Teachings and the Tantras, has been likened to the mixing of 'milk and blood'. There is no reason for the two to be together, from the point of view of the religious beliefs, ideology and tenets; 3). We are the (*true*) revivalists and preservers of the freedom of the culture (*and heritage*) of the Tibetan people. The worshippers of Dholgyal, on the other hand, have become an organisation that serves as a tool in the hands of the Red Chinese Government and exterminators of the culture of the Tibetans. Therefore, politically there is no scope for us to live together ; 4). It is but correct to act as per the wishes of Dholgyal followers who have earlier said that decisions regarding the course of future actions or implementations, should be decided by the majority of Gelugpas themselves. Therefore, to collect signatures from all those so wishing, such as the staff of the Gelugpa Cultural Society (Bylakuppe), the Three Great Seats and those in authority, is compatible with the correct etiquette of democratic freedom.

November 29th : (*Form distributed by Thubten Choepel of Tsangpa Khangtsen to gather signatures – signatures collected November 29th '07*)
:)

In accordance with the document issued on January 1st 1998, in the Sera Lachi Hall, under the auspices of the Ganden Throne Holder, for the fulfilment of the righteous Cause of Tibet and the pure commitments in spiritual and temporal matters, the following has been clarified : that henceforth there should be segregation - like that between the face and the moustache - from people who do not cease with the propitiation of Dholgyal. Although such intentions as stated have not been put into practice up until today, from now on, never the less, those empowered with responsibility for the sake of temporal and spiritual matters, both in words and in actions, according to their own wish, should place their signatures to put into practice the aforementioned resolution, that they will not attend 1) the Gelugpa Examination, 2) The Manjushree Winter Debate Session (*Jamyang Guncho*) and 3) The Great Prayer Festival (*Monlam Chenmo*) and never associate with those who do not stop the worship of Dholgyal. We need to put this into practice from the year 2007. *This is followed by the following handwritten addition:*

Respected Abbot, Choir Master (*Umze*), Office Bearers of the Shartse College and all those involved in shouldering the responsibility for temporal and spiritual matters. I, a student of the Sera Je Monastic Faculty, called Thubten Choepel, having cited four reasons (*mentioned in detail in above mentioned 'Southern Envoy' report*) from the past and having expressed these to the Sangha Community within my Faculty, have, through that consensus, received and collected an estimated 3200 signatures as a sign of their support. As we know, the temporal and spiritual matters of Tibet and its inhabitants are currently faced with the danger of extinction. Myself, being conscious of this predicament and unable to bear the situation, have engaged in this project. Besides this, His Holiness has time and again expressed exasperation in the shouldering of his responsibilities – them being unbearable, as we all know. Therefore, as in the saying 'If there is discord within, nothing can be achieved outside', if people are without pure commitments within, then one can learn from the advice (*as given by His Holiness*) on how harm or benefit comes about as a result. The essence of my appeal is this : I request the right, in a democratic spirit, to be able to collect such signatures, on the basis of free will, of all the monks gathered, and to distribute materials related to this, and I hope your respected selves will consider the immediate and long-term benefit of the matter and will not hamper this opportunity for all of us to be united like the pearls on a necklace and a white conch-shell. I appeal to you to consider this.

Written on November 19th 2007 with the hope that the Assembly of monks will quickly be advised of these matters. (Copies to : Gelugpa Cultural Society, The Religious and Cultural Affairs Office of the Tibetan Government in Exile, The

Cabinet Secretariat of the Tibetan Government in Exile, and The Private Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama).

December 2nd: The walls in the precinct of Drepung are crowded with posters hung during the night by Shugden antagonists. The substance calls for the segregation and ex-communication of the ‘Dholgyal’ adherents from amongst the majority of conscientious monks following the advice of the Dalai Lama. ‘They stand for the truth of Tibet’s spiritual and political causes, in tune with the Dalai Lama’s standards, whereas the Dholgyal followers do not’. The monks of Sera Je, scheduled to debate with the Sera Mey candidates, are believed to have contacted telephonically the Abbot of Sera Mey, Lobsang Rapga, asking that the incumbent candidates be substituted with others not adhering to Dholgyal. This is of course inconceivable. On the evening of December 2nd, when a thousand monks of the different faculties assemble, the Sera Je monks stay away. (*Report by a local Tibetan weekly, ‘Umay Lam’ – the Middle Path – in its Dec.2nd edition*).

December 3rd: Complaints had been filed and appeals made earlier by Delhi’s Dorje Shugden Society, regarding the possibility of discriminatory acts being engaged in against Shugden followers. On the first day of the Debate Session itself, the Superintendent of Police, Karwar District, Shiva Prasad and Police Inspector of Mundgod K. Taiggi, visit the Camp No. 3 Office of the Dalai Lama’s Representative. The Liaison Officer is obliged to summon the respective Administrators of the four Faculties of Drepung and Ganden Seats along with the Training Tutors involved in the Winter Debate. The S.P. issues a notification stating that no untoward violence or tussles should be engaged in by any party and that Law and Order should prevail. He asks the candidate and training tutor of Sera Mey, Tshering Dondup, to report to them in the case of any harassment or intimidation. Those gathered are warned of their responsibility in informing their respective members to keep the peace during the religious event.

December 4th-10th : **Posters exhibited in Drepung Monastic Seat of the Mundgod Tibetan Settlement, Karnataka, on the occasion of the Winter Debate Session (Jamyang Guncho) –**

(POSTER 1).

**FOR THE ATTENTION OF ALL THOSE ATTENDING THE
MANJUSHREE WINTER DEBATE SESSION** (December 4th '07)

The candidate for today's examination is not only a Shugden follower but also a zealot, giving his all for this Spirit – a well known fact. Therefore, we from our side need a movement that is not only firm but also possessed of clarity in its objectives. In the words of His Holiness 'Even though the Temple is on fire, one keeps on smiling! And even if the dog carries away the torma (*in his mouth*), one keeps on smiling!' As if not hearing and not having heard, this apathy towards the advice of His Holiness is an expression of ingratitude to the great kindness shown by him. So, for this reason, we are requesting all to stay away from the venue of the examination. If you do attend, we shall consider you a commitment breaker, shameless, and one aligned with the Dholgyal followers.

(POSTER 2).

AN APPEAL (December 10th '07)

As you all know, the Dholgyal Society is willingly engaged in disregarding and destroying the pure intentions and instructions of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the very legacy of temporal and spiritual affairs of the Tibetan people. Never the less, in his loving affection and great compassion, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has even up to today carried out fulfilling the purposes and intentions of the Three Great Seats with a composed manner. However, right from now on, we should not permit those evil elements to cause harm and for the sake of the temporal and spiritual affairs of Tibet, we who abide by the advice of His Holiness should unite, and it is now time for us to pay them back in their own kind in clear terms. Hence, during this Jamyang Guncho, when Dholgyal adherents sit down for the examinations, no monk from any of the Faculties should debate with them. If any individual monk knowingly persists in debating with them, and thereafter there are rumours and problems arising from this, then the debater himself will have to take the consequences. This appeal is made but once to all the like-minded brethren who are keeping in mind the unity and the possible disintegration of the (*Tibetan*) people.

(POSTER 3).

AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT TO DHARMA BRETHREN

(Dec.10th)

THOSE WHO KEEP IN MIND THE ROOT CAUSE OF THE TIBETAN PEOPLE AND RESPECT THE VISIONS AND ADVICE OF HIS HOLINESS, SHOULD NEVER BY ANY MEANS EVER ENGAGE IN FRATERNITY OF WHATSOEVER MANNER WITH OUR ENEMIES. SUCH PEOPLE (*who respect the Dalai Lama*) SHOULD NOT EVEN IN THEIR WILDEST DREAMS CONSIDER MAKING DIPLOMATIC OVERTURES (*towards Dholgyal followers*) IN ORDER TO IMPRESS OTHERS.

During the revision of the Gelugpa Regulations, with the Ganden Tri Rinpoche at the head of the convocation and the Abbots and Ex-Abbots gathered together, it was already decided in that resolution (by conscientious Geluggas) that we should have nothing to do with those worshipping Dholgyal, like in the manner of ‘separating the face from the moustache’ or ‘the Province from the Water’. And even recently, His Holiness had expressed himself in an exasperated manner, that ‘those who do not listen to my instructions and always turn their backs on them, then for me, my mind has become exhausted and I feel there is no purpose for me to stay any longer. And if you dishearten me there is no reason that it should not harm my body and health. I am a man now come into my seventies.’ This, and ‘I have nothing to gain personally from taking this harsh step’. This advice, having been given to the Gelugpa Seats for each and every individual to comply to, should be kept at heart. And therefore, not only should we cease activities of religious dialogues (debates) with Dholgyal followers but even when faced with a Dholgyal candidate sitting for examination, not only should we reject debating with him, it is even vital not to set foot in the examination venue. If there is somebody who, regardless, debates with a Dholgyal follower, such an individual or persons will be considered to be aligned with Dholgyal followers and will also be recognised as somebody who completely disregards the wishes of His Holiness. There is no other way than this!

December 5th : In contrast to the stone-walled silence observed in previous years when anonymous campaigns to outcast Shugden followers were rampant, the Authorities of the Sera Mey and Sera Je Monastic Faculties address the programme Teachers (*Cho.thog Ge.gen*, tib.) and monk students for the Winter Debate Session, showing a clear indication of their disapproval of attempts at segregation or eventual excommunication. The correspondence from

Mey's Faculty merely hints at the necessity for the monks to adhere to the prescribed conventions of the famed Debate, further suggesting that its monks should not create any undesirable trouble. The letter ends with a directive to consult the authorities in the event of any unwanted occurrences and that the Abbots of the six Faculties (in the three Seats of Ganden, Sera and Drepung) would be meeting to discuss matters. Je Faculty's address is more forceful (*The Anti-Shugden campaign is spear-headed from the Sera Je College*). It expresses regret at its monks' abstention from their obligation to debate with the scholars of Mey Faculty in Drepung Seat (on the night of December 2nd). In no uncertain terms it states that 'There is but one common charter for the Three Great Seats and it is inadvisable to follow hearsay and baseless maligning instead of emphasising the Unity (*of the Three Seats*) – like in the Tale of the Rabbit (*referring to a story from the Panchtantra*)'. The letter continues : 'As you know, much harm and damage is already being done to this Unity if you persist with your actions. We hence appeal to your common sense'. There are letters also from the Authorities of Gomang, Loseling, Shartse Faculties within the Drepung and Ganden Seats, in almost the same vein.

December 11th : The Gegu (Disciplinarian) from Jangtse Faculty of Ganden, Geshe Dawa Sangpo, summons the programme Teachers, Chonze Wangchug Chopel and Zapa Lobsang Yeshe. Having sensed possibilities of discord, the Gegu warns the Teachers to take the responsibility to consult the monk students about to take part in the coming debate with the sister college Shartse. Although unwilling, the two hold a meeting with the students and while a number of the students vehemently oppose the suggestion to debate with the Shartse candidates, there are also those who caution prudence. The Gegu and the moderate elements have the upper hand and on the evening of 11th the Shartse monks sit for examination while the Jangtse monks in attendance stand up to debate in the preordained convention. Geshe Dawa Sangpo is known to have warned : 'The Shartse and Jangtse Monastic Faculties have for centuries intermingled, like water and milk, and need to coexist in this way. Anybody attempting to do otherwise and abstaining from the Winter Debate, will not be spared! Gegu Geshe Tenpa Sonam, of Gomang, makes a moving speech to the gathering about the harmony and pure moral discipline that are the legacy to be preserved by all. Never the less, as soon as the debates have concluded peacefully, some miscreants hiding in the dark corners of the debate ground throw eggs which land on the Jangtse debaters Dora, Tshering and Phara, Sonam Nyima.

Hence, the signs of a definite schism to come, are reflected in this year's Jang Guncho Winter Debate Session. While the ecclesiastical Authorities play down the antagonism of the opponents to Shugden, the latter too hold their ground, with Shugden adherents remaining mute spectators to the unfolding drama.

December 15th: During the turbulent course of these events, it becomes clear that the Authorities of all six Faculties are all opposed to the over-enthusiastic projects of the Shugden antagonists. Thupten Choepel, the ring-leader, has reportedly made a round of all the Abbots and Disciplinarians, pressing for massive support for his four-point agenda. The response was that the Colleges had already been 'purged' of Shugden adherents, by public and individual oath-taking. Surprisingly, even the Jangtse Abbot of Ganden Seat, a passionate supporter of the Dalai Lama, and the 'maverick' Lobsang Tshephel, toe the same line. However, the emboldened monks from Gomang, despite the plea for unity from their Disciplinarian Geshe Tenpa Sonam, defy orders to participate in the final debate related to the Second Volume of Namdel (*Pramanavartikka*,skrt.). The Winter Debate Session is declared concluded on the 22nd of the month. There are some who say that the Authorities also need time to prepare for the coming visit of the Dalai Lama that begins on January 2nd.

December 13th: Although successive Popes in the Vatican have welcomed the Dalai Lama, the current Pope Benedict XVI cancels his meeting with him at the last minute. According to Italian Media reports, 'the decision had facilitated the ordination on Tuesday of a new Bishop in Guangdong, Southern China, with the Vatican's approval. Although no members of the Italian Government were scheduled to meet with the Tibetan Leader, the political high point of his stay was said to be a likely meeting with Italian MPs in Rome' (*Agence France Presse*). Earlier, on November 25th in Japan, the Leader

had 'cut little ice' when the Government and Prime Minister, Yasuo Fukuda, 'cold-shouldered' him by not even providing security. 'Fukuda realises that Japan needs better relations with China not only for its own sake but also for U.S.-Japan ties', says Robert Dujarric (*Director of Contemporary Japanese Studies at Temple University, Tokyo*). 'Bad relations with China make some Americans think that Tokyo is responsible for tensions in the region. Japanese Officials worry the U.S. is making China an important partner/stakeholder in Asia. For Japan to play a role in the region it now needs better ties with China as well as good relations with the U.S.', Dujarric said (*reported by Catherine Makino for 'Asia Times On line', Nov.28th 2007*).

Considering the relentless campaign against the Deity Dorje Shugden and his followers, both throughout History and intensely in recent times, Shugden adherents are classified now as the epitome of all evil. However, the facts within the exile Tibetan communities reveal otherwise. Insidious as Tibetans at large – and monastic communities in particular – can be, there is a steady flow of news about Tibetan perfidies. Information previously suppressed has come to light concerning outrageous 'goings-on' within the bastions of Tibetan culture and heritage, the Monasteries in the Tibetan Settlements. Dharamsala, seat of the Dalai Lama himself, is known to abound with licentious monks and nuns. Girls in the various Tibetan Settlements rate monks as the 'best dates' (because they are generous and make good lovers!) (*'Chi.Tshog Me.Long', Society's Mirror, Sept.2006*). Tibetans themselves 'write off' Officials of the Government in Exile as impotent in policy making, using favouritism and especially nepotism. (). Embezzlement of funds just seems to be an on-going story (). Paedophilia and other sexual assaults are not new extra-curricular activities in the big Monastic Seats. The Sera Je College, praised lavishly by the Dalai Lama in recent years, actually tops the list of promiscuous monks. News has eked out in a widely circulated report, about a young Tibetan monk named Tenpa Thinlay, aged twenty, who was whisked away forcibly by six masked monks, threatening him with dire consequences should he set off an alarm. All six molest him (*'Bod.kyi Bang.chen', August 3rd 2004*). Another report tells of two monks breaking into the apartment of a young monk and assaulting him. They are recognised and, for the first time, the Sera Je Authorities take action against them (*'Bod.kyi Bang.chen' , November 3rd 2004*). There have been successive reports of murders taking place within the hallowed precincts of the Monasteries - but after 1996 suppressed – the bodies of the victims incinerated to destroy all evidence, and the monks warned to keep a tight lip if questioned by outsiders.

This degeneration of moral principles in Monastics and in Tibetans at large, has been decried by concerned and thinking Tibetans. In an article penned by one Kelsang Gyatso, a monk from Depung Gomang, he decries the current monastic obsessions of ‘baroque’ structures and opulent domains, summing up the state of affairs eloquently as follows : ‘It will be difficult for anyone, such as an outsider, to digest the stated claim that “all Tibetans in Exile live under the benevolent and non discriminatory policies of the Exiled Government, sharing in equal measures its joys and sorrows”’. Instead of instilling the virtues of generosity and contentment, the monasteries are engaged in a race to build magnificent structures, while out rightly ignoring the poor lay people in their vicinity. Tibetans claim high moral grounds, in uniting temporal and spiritual matters. But in practice, spirituality is being polluted by politics and religious authority is used to implement a political agenda. Tibetans are often carried away by deception and competition in their dealings with others, and can be dominated by anger and bias. Today, because of the repulsive behaviour of some monks and so-called Lamas, lay people are gradually losing faith in the Monastic Communities (*‘Bod.kyi Du.bab’*, *Times of Tibet*, June 30th 2006). So, despite claims that there is ‘only a handful’ of Shugden adherents ‘stubbornly’ continuing their practice, according to these objective reports, Tibetan society does not appear to have resolved its crisis of moral values or political correctness – quite the contrary!

2007 : December 20th : The Venerable Kyabje Denma Locho Rinpoche is a highly acclaimed Gelugpa Lama, spiritual Master to countless Gelugpa disciples. As early as 1962, he had been diligently serving the cause of the preservation of Tibet’s heritage and the dissemination of the Gelugpa tradition in particular. A Lineage Holder of many rare practices and transmissions, he had been working according to the express wishes of the 14th Dalai Lama. A humble practitioner, always opting to live in solitude, his unblemished character and apolitical orientation are well-known to all. Since the times of prelude to the ban on Shugden, the sagely Lama – as always in the past – observed a passive neutrality, having never been associated himself with Dorje Shugden or his practice. Rejecting the abusive ravings of many well-

known Gelugpas, he distanced himself from the widespread ‘Shugden bashing’ and subservience to the Dalai Lama.

Notwithstanding this, for his visits to his hometown Denma in Tibet, he was said to have been given the assignment by the Dalai Lama, to speak about the ills of Shugden practice. It is unclear whether the Lama was browbeaten into accepting the mission or whether he wished to carry out faithfully the task that had been given to him. What is clear, is that even after repeated visits to his hometown and to other areas in the T.A.R., he was not successful in his mission. Rather, he met with highly respected Gelugpa figures and, some say, Denma Gonsar Choje Rinpoche (*d.2005*) himself. What is obvious is that he graciously demonstrated respect for the practice of Dorje Shugden – as he would do also towards the Dalai Lama.

As a true Lama would not discriminate but will offer spiritual instruction ‘even to a dog’ (as the great 12th century Tibetan translator, Marpa, would say) he finally began to accept invitations from Shugden followers, to teach in their Centres. He visited the Dharma Centres of Serkong Tritul Rinpoche and granted many transmissions there. While paying a visit to Kopan Monastery in Nepal, to offer discourses, he is believed to have sent his attendant to Dagom Rinpoche, offering a petition to him to ‘Live Long’.

All these deeds of the Lama - profoundly in tune with a spiritual conduct which contributes to harmony, acknowledges the established practices of the Great Lineage Masters and the spiritual contributions of others – seem to have earned him the wrath of the Dalai Lama. A vicious open-letter campaign has been launched against him in Depung, accusing him of being a traitor, a person with double standards and lacking conscience, for having ‘sold his soul to the Devil’!

The posters proclaim :‘Having chalked out various plans with Serkong Tritul of Taiwan, without thinking of the immediate or future consequences of resultant happiness or sorrow (*i.e. the fruits of virtuous or negative deeds*) he (*Denma Locho Rinpoche*) has connived a scheme wherein he would, within ten years, derive a sum of 20 million

dollars (*from Tritul Rinpoche*).....He has given 1 crore in Indian currency to his residence (*Lobsang Chokyi Gatshal, tib.*), the Denma Khangtsen in Depung and for the preservation of Dholgyal practices of Denma Gonsar (*Rinpoche*) in Tibet. To Namkha Rinpoche and the Bumchen Monastery he has offered 300,000 yuan Chinese currency. The Religious and Cultural Affairs Office and the Department of Security (*for the Dalai Lama*) should rigorously investigate these matters, for the happiness of Tibetan subjects and the well-being of His Holiness’!

The posters continue their tirade with ‘...in case you are not endowed with indestructible faith in His Holiness, then you should know that it is now almost a year that Denma Locho Rinpoche has been deprived of an audience with His Presence (*Kun.dun, tib.*) the Dalai Lama. If you enquire from the Private Office (*of the Dalai Lama*) you can familiarise yourself with this matter. Their phone number is.....’. In conclusion, it gloats ‘By virtue of the resulting seeds of the criminal acts of great deception originating from the evil doings of Kel.gya of Sera Je (*Geshe Kelsang Gyatso*), Dagom of Drepung Gomang and Serkong Tritul of Ganden Jangtse, it is time to contemplate well as to whether all Lamas (*Tulkus*), monastics and others have preserved their commitments purely or not’.