

PART ONE: THE HUMAN RIGHTS ASPECT

Miscellaneous documents

(Please note that those accused of continuing to uphold their practice of Dorje Shugden as their Dharma Protector do nothing but fulfilling the instructions of their personal teachers (root Lamas, root Gurus) – this is their only ‘crime’. In Vajrayana Buddhism (the form of Buddhism practiced in Tibet), to abandon the practices given by one’s root Guru, and/or to have negative views of them is tantamount to abandon one’s spiritual practice (the Dharma) altogether.

"The disciple who has reverence for the guru always looks on the guru as follows:
The guru is the equal of all the enlightened ones. Always he himself is Vajradhara.
He holds all the qualities of the tathagata Ratnasambhava, the great ocean of
transcendental wisdom and the giver of the priceless wish-fulfilling gem.
Such a disciple does not consider, even in his thoughts, that the guru has any flaw."

Ornament of the Vajra Essence Tantra

*The forced and utterly one-sided signature campaign held in the Gelugpa Monasteries this spring, to give up Dorje Shugden practice and **any kind of association** with Dorje Shugden practitioners, or facing expulsion and becoming a complete social outcast (denied of even the green card necessary to travel etc.) with nowhere to turn, is unprecedented in the history of Buddhism and bare of any foundation in either monastic or Indian law. In fact, it even contradicts the constitution of the Tibetan Government in Exile (TGE) which also grants freedom of religion.*

We are looking thus at the very peculiar situation of an illegal theocracy (TGE) within a democracy (India) that breaks its own laws.

It seems also noteworthy that generally, in this fabricated conflict, the language used on the side of the Dorje Shugden practitioners has remained polite and based on logic, while that of the ‘accusers’ is most often vitriolic, slanderous and lacking any clear arguments. Considering the years and years of being demonized, ostracized and harassed, we find this remarkable indeed, indicating strongly which party is concerned about the Buddhist teachings, and which about politics.)

(See below a copy of the letter of the Dorje Shugden Devotee’s Charitable & Religious Society to the high court in Delhi. They have their own website <http://www.shugdensociety.info> which we recommend all to visit.)

། །འཇམ་མགོན་པསྟན་སྲུང་དྲེ་རྩུགས་རྒྱལ་མི་སྲུང་དང་སྟོབས་རྒྱ་མི་སྲུང་སློབ་ཚོགས་པ།



**DORJE SHUGDEN DEVOTEE'S
CHARITABLE & RELIGIOUS SOCIETY
SINCE 1996**

प्रधान मंत्री कार्यालय
Prime Minister's Office
डाक अनुभाग ३१३१२
Dak Section 31312
Ministry of Home Affairs
New Delhi

To:
His Excellency Dr. Manmohan Singh
Hon'ble Prime Minister
South Block, Raisina Hill,
New Delhi, India-110 011.
Telephone: 91-11-23012312 .
Fax: 91-11-23019545 / 91-11-23016857.

March 7, 2008

Handwritten notes: 27/3/08

Your Excellency,

With utmost deference, this is a continuation of our representation dated February 22, 2008, January 10, 2008, January 8, 2008, January 3, 2008, and November 5, 2007,

Dorje Shugden devotees have already been denied many privileges accorded other Tibetans in exile. Shugden devotees have been denied access to higher education in Tibetan Buddhist monasteries in India, as well as the jobs controlled by the Tibetan Government in Exile. New refugees from Tibet have also been turned away from the monasteries on the grounds that they refused to recant their religious belief.

As the result of the Dalai Lama's speech in January 9, 2008 (Exhibit 1), the biased referendum was initiated for monks not to worship Shugden and not to share religious and material resources with Shugden devotees, despite being Shugden devotees as a minority in Tibetan monasteries by the Dalai Lama's decades-efforts. Monks from Jangtse monastery has been expelled because they didn't recant their religious belief. And Shugden monks were prohibited to access to the monastic mess, shops and restaurants. A secret agency was set up to monitor whether non-shugden monks talk with or deal with Shugden monks or not.

On March 4, 2008, the 14th Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile (TPIE) began its fifth session at Dharamshala, HP. Speaker Karma Choephel has honored the movement to end the Shugden worship. And this session will present motions to strengthen the two resolution adopted in 1996 and 1997 against the worship of Shugden (Exhibit 2)

Despite the national and international outcry against the signature and campaign movement which put Shugden devotees into outcast and untouchability, Tibetan

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The Main Branches :

- DGTL Monastery, Bloomington, Indiana, USA • N.N. Dorje Shugden Society, Kathmandu, Nepal
- Shugden Society, Sera Monastery, Bylakuppe, K.S. South India • Shugden Society, Gaden Monastery, Mundgod, K.S. India
- Trokhang Dechen Chok, Gaden Monastery, Karnataka State, Mundgod, K.S. India

Parliament in exile will present motions to strengthen the resolution adopted before. (Exhibit 3)

The so-called referendum has already exported to Europe (Exhibit 4). And here enclosed document called "the Outcast Society Emerging among Tibetans" for your kind attention.

We love and practice peace, harmony and tolerance. This distinctly demonstrates in the ongoing tense scenarios in the monasteries. And a single word of the Dalai Lama can completely solve the ongoing Shugden Issue.

With utmost respect, we appeal to your government to send notice to the concerned offices to end the discrimination, abuses and new Buddhist apartheid against Shugden devotees, and let these Buddhist monks live peacefully and enjoy their religious freedom as enshrined in the noble constitution.

Respectfully yours,

Geshe Sopa Thomey



Acting President

CC To:

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two copies.

08/3/2008

Ministry of External Affairs
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HC notice to Dalai on sect's complaint

A little known sect of Tibetan Buddhism has approached Delhi high court complaining of persecution suffered at the hands of the Tibetan leader. Justice Gita Mittal on Tuesday issued notice to Dalai Lama and other respondents on a writ petition by one "Dorjee Shugden Devotees Charitable and Religious Society" - registered in Delhi - which alleged that Dalai Lama had ostracized the followers of this particular sect, not only in religious matters but also socially. TNN

Forced signature and ID card campaign

Taken from the website of the Dorje Shugden Devotees Religious and Charitable Society

Outcast Society Emerging among Tibetans

Tibetan Buddhism knows several hundred protecting deities. In the 1970-ies His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama abandoned his faith in one of these protectors, the deity Dorje Shugden. In the years to follow, His Holiness increasingly aimed his preachings at moving others to also abandon their faith in Lord Shugden. Not satisfied with the amount of converts by preaching alone, His Holiness started in 1996 to gear the leverage of his exile administration at imposing social obstacles to those not willing to follow His Holiness' own change of faith. As a result, access to various jobs, positions, schools, and monasteries in Tibetan exile became impossible without publicly renouncing Lord Shugden.

Ambitious aspirants on the contrary, showing their support for the new measures, were duly rewarded with key positions and visits of His Holiness to their establishments. An estimated one third of the Tibetan population and hundreds of the most renowned masters of Tibetan history used to rely on Lord Shugden in the past. His Holiness' measures effectively reduced this number to a minority. Still not satisfied with these results, His Holiness instigated public swearings in the monastic universities in South India in January 2008, aimed at making social life impossible for anyone not converting to the new line of faith.

Here a few documents used in these swearings:

གུས་པས་ཡགོང་ས་མཚོག་དང་དཔལ་
ལྷན་དམག་ཐོར་གྱི་རྒྱལ་མོ་དཔང་དུ་
བརྟུགས་ནས་དོལ་རྒྱལ་བརྟེན་གསོལ་
དང་རྒྱ་དངོས་སོགས་ཀྱི་འབྲེལ་བ་ནས་
ཡང་ལྷ་གི་མིན།

I swear on the name of His Holiness and glorious Maxor Gyalmo (Protectress Palden Lhamo) to never venerate and worship Dorje Shugden and to never have any relation on material and other levels with those who worship Dorje Shugden. (scanned in version)

༡༩༩༧ (བདག་.....)ཞེས་འབྲེལ་བའི་དམག་ཐོར་དུ་ལྷ་ལྷན་པའང་དོལ་རྒྱལ་བརྟེན་གསོལ་
ལེ་རྟེན་པའི་དམ་བཅའ་དང་། རོལ་རྒྱལ་བརྟེན་གསོལ་བྱེད་ལེགས་རིགས་དང་ཚོས་དང་མང་
མིང་ལ་མཉམ་དུ་ཡོངས་མི་རྒྱུད་ལ་བཅས་སྐབས་གནས་དགོན་མཚོག་གསུམ་དཔང་དུ་བརྟུགས་
སྟེ། རང་དོས་ཚམས་ལེན་དམ་འབྲེལ་གཅིང་མ་ལྷ་རྒྱ་གྱ།

I, who is called ...(name)...., vow that from now on, forever, at any time, that I will never venerate and worship Dorje Shugden. And regarding the type of people who venerate and worship Dorje Shugden, I vow never to share or experience any religious or material goods with them. (scanned in version)



Identity card for those who have sworn and submitted their vow (scanned in version)

ID No:
Name:
College:
Department:
House No:
Date of Issue: 16-02-2008

"Not to have any relation with those venerating Lord Shugden" is now being implemented in these monasteries as a complete social segregation. Those who remained non-convertible besides such drastic measures are now declared as 'unclean', 'traitors to the Tibetan cause', 'enemies of the Dalai Lama', and receive the treatment of an outcast society. Without the identity card for example, it is now impossible in Sera monastery to attend common prayers or to buy goods in the monastery shop. The 'unclean' ones have effectively been singled out, are now ostracized in every-day life, and religious Apartheid finally seems to be reality.

Such words, such swearings, and such proceedings are unprecedented in Tibetan history. They do in no way correspond to a Buddhist way of life. As Tibetans, we are ashamed to see this happening in the name of our most cherished people, beloved country, and precious history.

Recent "Vote Sticks" and Call for Help

The Vote Sticks

"Those who do not want to share spiritual and material relation with Dholgyal followers would pick the yellow colored vote-stick. Those who continue Dholgyal worship and who want to share spiritual and material relation with them need explanation of picking the red colored vote-stick. The time (for referendum) was divided among Gelug monastic establishments in Tibetan Settlement, South India, including Sera, Drepung and Ganden. As such, the vote-stick was taken on January 26/27, 2008 and February 9, 2008.

Response to the Vote Sticks: "Many monks in South India, although they are not shugden worshippers, express their concern among themselves about the disharmony, schism, and tense in the monastery as the result of the vote-stick referendum. They are not happy with this unprecedented destructive moment, but what can they do. Whether you agree or not, whether you like it or not, you must follow the words of the Dalai Lama and Tibetan government in exile, or you will land in troubles."

In a speech held on January 12th 2008 in Mundgod, H.H. Dalai Lama announced that he intends to have votes conducted in order to decide whether in future it should be permissible to venerate the Dharma protector Dorje Shugden and whether in future Tibetans should maintain any spiritual or material relation with anyone still venerating this deity.

Why this is wrong and a call for help

We here therefore declare, that the devotees of the Dharma protector Dorje Shugden do not agree to such proceedings and have no wish to participate in any such activities for the following reasons:

1. The action of the exile government, as announced by H.H. Dalai Lama, is not an honest proceeding. Due to many years of persistent threatening and pressure, the forming of what is now minority and majority is predetermined.
2. The intended proceeding are in complete contradiction to any democratic system. This action is called for from one side alone, without any dialogue with the other party and absolutely no mutual agreement.
3. The intended proceedings follow a manner we Tibetans call "get a decision by a single stroke of the sword". It is one person deciding for hundreds, by use of power, without even the slightest prior discussion with the involved. Therefore, these intended proceeding do not only contradict with any fundamental system of democracy, but they also disregard the basic human right of freedom of speech.
4. If the exile government were truly sincere to show a democratic nature of their policy, then why, until now, has there never been a call for a majority agreement by use of vote sticks for all those appointments by the power of the seal of H.H. Dalai Lama, both on religious and political levels? Therefore, at this time, the intended emergency proceedings can only be understood as pretentious, and thus by no means acceptable.
5. Since the founding of the renowned tradition of Glorious Mount Geden, or Gelug, by the omniscient master Je Tsongkhapa, various favourable and unfavourable situations may have occurred. However, a division of the sacred Sangha, the monastic community, under the pretext of

voting over such an issue like the veneration of a protecting deity, has never occurred. Thus, this is inappropriate.

6. No-one is endowed with the right to destroy the Gelug community by messing with veneration or non-veneration of a protector. The exile government never saw any need for a majority agreement on the question whether it should be permissible for Tibetans to have spiritual or material relations with China. This being the case, for them to look for a majority agreement within the Gelug community on the banning of spiritual and material relations with the devotees of Dorje Shugden lacks all significance.

7. The exile government makes much effort in world-wide publicising its decision to abide 'within the great family of China', by abandoning Tibetan independence. Then what meaning is there in this pressure within the spiritual family of the Gelug tradition, the children of our most venerable founding father Je Tsongkhapa, to vote by wood sticks, whether or not to live together, sharing the spiritual and material resources with the devotees of Dorje Shugden? This contradicts all rules and systems, and defies the basic law of karma and effect.

8. We are deeply saddened by the exile government's political attempt, under the pretext of religion, misusing the various members of Gelug-tradition, to divide the tradition and make it totally inefficient.

9. Stick-vote in addition to election has no separate meaning. In particular in this proposed event all the adjudicators are ministers, deputies, and regional officers of the exile government, who are lay persons. It contradicts the rules of Vinaya to appoint such functionaries for the Sangha, be it in a direct or indirect manner. It is this kind of mixture of religion and politics in the actions of the exile government, that confuses and deceives our people.

10. Cabinet ministers, lead by Samdong Lama, some local representatives of the exile government, and deputies have informed the monastic dignitaries of Drepung monastery on the 19th December 2007, that in case the planned voting should produce legal affairs, violent clashes, or injuries, the exile government will cover all expenses. Observing this makes it clear that apart from identifying us as an enemy belonging to a different race, there is not the slightest recognition of us belonging to the same Tibetan people. Therefore, how can the exile government have the right to impose decisions on us? How can they justify the use of financial resources belonging to the Tibetan people to break the heads of our own people? As long as these questions are not clarified, there is no possibility for us to participate in any of the planned proceedings.

11. Before announcing these proceedings of majority agreement, in the monasteries, schools, and various organisations, it has been propounded that continued veneration of the protector Shugden is considered a criminal act. Many persons have been expelled from their places, although they are in the same situation of refugee, thus forcing them to become double refugees. And when it occurs that they have no-more base, when they have to wander from country to country, can those responsible bear their physical and mental sufferings even for one day? Even if those victims cannot be recompensated for all their loss, until the general announcement of their readmission to the respective groups and organisations, there is no way that proceedings of majority-agreement can be accepted.

12. His Holiness has said many times: "What I have started, I will bring to the end." So there is obviously no need for a vote, besides, there is no agreement from our side. We can only state our dismay at exile government's deliberate pursuit of such religio-political activities, causing senseless conflicts and troubles among the people, and causing only sorrow for Tibet's friends and delight for

its enemies.

13. Many times, without any ill-will towards anybody, we have requested to allow us to venerate our own deity. But never have we requested anyone else to venerate our deity. Therefore, such voting has no purpose. For example, if a person called Lobsang venerates protector Shugden, this will not harm a person called Tenzin. In the same way, if a person called Tenzin venerates protector Nechung (Tibet's state protector), this will not harm a person called Lobsang, otherwise the law of Karma would be fallible - because then a person would encounter a karmic result of a cause it never accumulated. Not knowing a simple Buddhist philosophical point like that is impossible among the great logic-scholars of our Geden tradition. However, due to the supreme status and power of the speaker, there is no possibility even to utter a differing view. As a result many weird situations have occurred: some people had to give a signature five times, others had to swear three times, however, the pledge in a person's heart, which cannot be erased under the pretext of signature giving and swearings, is the witness of truth. This Dorje Shugden Devotee's Charitable Organisation, through the experience of many years, expresses full understanding for such helpless situations, without grudges, disappointments, or any other unwholesome thoughts.

14. Our veneration for this protector of Dharma is all in all - at the beginning, middle, and at the end - exclusively a practice of Dharma, and has no relation to political intentions of any kind. It is a baseless, unjust, and ill-intended allegation against us, to accuse us of bringing danger to the life of His Holiness, or to accuse us of political links with China. In all those many years since we came to India, such intrigues have been used by the exile government to cheat the government of India, the Tibetan people, and many others in the world. Whoever appeared undesirable to the exile government was harassed with such allegations. Thus many qualified, experienced, and capable people have been ruined, this is a fact never to forget. But time has taken a change, and it is the time for the exile government to become aware of consequences and its power-limits. From the side of our people, we take full responsibility to state with completely clear conscience, that we are in no way creating danger for the precious life of His Holiness, and that we do not have and do not entertain any direct or indirect political connections with China. This we have clearly stated in the past and this we are again clearly confirming here today - and we are requesting every honest, unbiased, truthful person to stand as our witness - and appeal for understanding, that we cannot participate in any proceedings of the exile government, as long as these unjust allegations are not ceased.

15. By humbly joining our two palms, we appeal to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, to please give his assistance, protection, and blessings for allowing us to experience in all sincerity the freedom of our own religious faith, the basic human right of freedom of speech, and in the name of democracy, that no devotee of Dorje Shugden will have to go through the suffering of being expelled from one's place.

16. The final point, which should be kept in mind by our own people: This great nation of India where we live, is a true democratic country, which protects the most important basic rights that human race deserves, such as freedom of faith and freedom of speech. We all should always be well aware of this, and be grateful for this immeasurable kindness of allowing us to live here until now in peace and security. While being aware of this favourable situation, we are also confident in our firm believe in everlasting care and protection given to us by the government and people of India. With heartfelt friendship for the people of India, with respect of the law, and towards any brothers and sisters belonging to our beloved snow-land Tibet, without causing any troubles, without keeping any grudge, without lamenting for any grief, without exchanging any complaints, without contributing for any disharmony, we should abide together in a noble, friendly, and dignified manner, even if it is not possible to merge like milk an water. Likewise, every devotee of Dorje Shugden, wherever they

may be in the world, may they give mutual support and assistance. Our people should have a deep knowledge of the rules and regulations of the country in which they live, and lead a life completely in accordance with it. From now on and in the future, if we are treated with the same abuse and maltreatment, may the devotees of Dorje Shugden dwelling in various distances in the world, and any honest and kind person understand our difficulty of becoming a double refugee, and thus listen to our desperate call for help.

The ban is illegal and unconstitutional

TIBETAN GOVERNMENT IN EXILE CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE 17. Every Tibetan shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. The right includes freedom to openly believe, practice, worship and observe any religion either alone or in community with others.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA CONSTITUTION

Adopted on: 26 Jan 1950

Preamble

WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC and to secure to all its citizens:

JUSTICE, social, economic and political;

LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;

EQUALITY of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation;

IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949, do HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.

Article 15 Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth

(1) The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them.

Article 25 Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion

(1) Subject to public order, morality and health and to the other provisions of this Part, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice and propagate religion.

UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Article 1

1. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have a religion or whatever belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.
2. No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have a religion or belief of his choice.
3. Freedom to manifest one's religion or belief may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.

Article 2

1. No one shall be subject to discrimination by any State, institution, group of persons, or person on the grounds of religion or other belief.
2. For the purposes of the present Declaration, the expression "intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief" means any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on religion or belief and having as its purpose or as its effect nullification or impairment of the recognition, enjoyment or exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis.

Article 3

Discrimination between human being on the grounds of religion or belief constitutes an affront to human dignity and a disavowal of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and shall be condemned as a violation of the human rights and fundamental freedoms proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and enunciated in detail in the International Covenants on Human Rights, and as an obstacle to friendly and peaceful relations between nations.



Persecution of monks at Sera Monasteries in 2008

(Statement of a fraternity house within Sera, one of the three main monasteries of the Gelugpa tradition.)

Delhi, January 23, 2008

Statement of Pomra Kamtsen (Kamtsen=monks' hostel by region which they come from, each monastic college consists of a few kamtsens)

- This community of the Sera-Mey College has remained in peace and harmony, without ever having any conflict or schism, since the founding of the Sera monastery by Jamchen Choeche Shakya Yeshe in the year 1419 in Tibet, until now.
- After coming to India we have shared spiritual and material experiences, with all the other monasteries mutually and in particular within our own college. The community has lived together harmoniously without any problems or discord, sharing good and bad times together.
- The deity Dorje Shugden has been worshipped in Tibet for the last 350 years. This Pomra department of Sera-Mey monastery has been relying on this deity as its special protector for the last 236 years. This is for us purely a practice of Dharma without any political implications.
- This Sera-Mey college is a community which is registered under the laws of the government of India. In its by-laws it is stated, that anybody who wishes to enter this college has the equal right to do so, without any discrimination regarding race, country, province, or whatever. However, last year, 28 Tibetans did not receive the right to enter into this monastery on the bases of being devotees of Dorje Shugden.
- Since the worship of this deity was banned in 1996 up until now the monastery gradually has prevented those people who worship the deity from obtaining higher positions in the monastic administration. However, we remained without complaint, concentrating on the study of the Dharma, and have thus sacrificed all monastic statuses.
- In this monastery Sera-Mey, the monks of our department have until now, and continually are, fulfilling diligently and wholeheartedly the various branches of activities for the service of the monastery. According to the rules of this monastery for the appointment of functionaries, suitable candidates are selected, and then the final decision is brought in front of the Dharmapala Ta-ok (the protector of the college). There, by throwing dough-balls with name (a kind of lottery) the functionaries are assigned. It is not permitted to refuse an appointment. Whoever does not want to take the responsibility after appointment has to be expelled. This being the rule for appointing monastic functionaries, it is obvious, that what has been mentioned before totally contradicts the principles of this monastery.
- Now we face the condition, that without any reason of contravening rules or regulations of the monastery, those who rely on the deity Dorje Shugden, are expelled from the monastery, from school, and from offices. Therefore we have made up our mind to oppose this injustice in accordance with the law.
- The procedures of the compulsory oath the monks had to take "not to share any spiritual or material relation with anybody who is worshipping Dorje Shugden", as well as the signature-campaigns to this effect, are not only in contradiction with the Dharma, but also in contradiction with any law. This problem is not created by us. So who has created it? Such behaviour is not in harmony with Buddhist view and conduct, and it contradicts the rules of

the peace-loving world. If there is no internal peace, then how can one speak about universal peace and harmony?

- From Dec. 20th 2007 until the 6th of this month, due to this emergency situation, there have been six meetings trying to deal with this situation in the monastery. But since the whole problem has not been created by the monastery, and also exists on an inter-college level, it is agreed unanimously that there is nothing we can do about it. There are two committees responsible for these new rules of swearing and voting, so they are fully responsible for the situation. We would therefore like to bring these committees to court and hopefully come to a final decision there.
- From the so-called Geden-committee a postponement has been given until the 9th of February 2008. Nevertheless, on the 26th of January, the republic day of India, the general kitchen of the monastery was closed, followed by a closing of the school and the medical clinic and all other branches.
- With regards to this trouble we make our request with great hope to the government of India and the human rights committee, to act as witness, and in accordance to the convenience of time, we want both sides to meet in court to have this issue decided there.
- Until now, thanks to the government and the people of India and thanks to the democratic constitution of this great country, we received a place to live, all the sustenance for our living, and have all the chance to enjoy all our religious activities. We can never forget this kindness of the government and the people of India. And also in future we have no-one else to go for help. We have clear proof of the points we are appealing for the be facts, so we request the government of this great nation as witness of truth.

MONKS EXCOMMUNICATED

(Note the vast difference in tone and style in the statement below)

Himalayan Buddhist Cultural Association & Himalayan Cultural For Action on Tibet

(South India Branch) (Translated from the Tibetan)

April 6, 2008

To brothers, monks and laypeople who are rich with patriotism, resolute intention and wisdom:

We will pinpoint the some actions by animals who are in the form of human, who are made of wealth and belittle law of cause and effect, and the inside rotten who gave up ones nationality and culture:

- 1 Thupten Kunsang is the resident of House no 19, and was a director of Sermay Health Service.
- 2 Thupten Samphel is the resident of House no 10 and his nickname is Gyakpa
- 3 Jampa Choegyul is the resident of House no 24
- 4 Wangyal is resident of House no 19
- 5 Ngawang Thapkey is the resident of House no 24 and his nickname is Kabkyo

Among them, the most rotten person is Pomra Thupten Kunsang. In March 2007, he has conducted the traitorous tour to France, America, Italy and so on. At that period, he has taken toxicant water by meeting Gangchen Gyawo, the leader of Dorje Shugden tradition.

Before that, Pomra Thupten Samphel, the ghost, went to Chinese embassy in Nepal on June 1, 2003 and July 12, 2004 respectively. Similarly, under the guidance of the barbarian Chinese, among the followers, When the followers of Dorje Shugden doctrine has launched campaign of harming the life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Amarnath Kalachakra in 2006, he the old donkey and ghost was said to be a participant of lunatic jumping. Intelligence Agency arrested them and their evil actions has fail.

After that, he went to China to give his corpse. He then went to Tibet and brought with him six Dorje Shugden ignorant children to Delhi, India and sent them to Dharmashala to accumulate evil karma. It is said that these Dorje Shugden children has launched some evil activities. After coming back to Sera, he follows the Nga Lama, the sinful ghost and the enemy of Buddhism, who wear monk dress in December 2006. The followers of Dorje Shugden doctrine has convened a gossip meeting, and passed four gossip resolutions which cause to them to go to hell:

- 1 pose threat to the wellbeing of the Dalai Lama
- 2 instigate schism between local people and Tibetan refugees
- 3 walk directly to wherever China force regime put its finger
- 4 to participate in 2008 Beijing Olympic in the name of delegate of the followers of Dorje Shugden doctrine.

In January 2008, during the visit by His Holiness the Dalai Lama at Mundgod, they distributed blankets the neighbor Indians with some trucks. When they launched evil activities, they aspired for benefit, but fail. On other hand, they incited Indian Auto drivers to increase the two third fare of the rickshaw. This is a part of their conspiracy to destroying the harmony between Indian and Tibetan.

After that, when the public give their volunteer signature and oath, they have nakedly shown their face which they hide for many years, exposing the lies. Therefore, as the result of their evil actions, Sera Lachi and Sera-May monasteries have been closed for two months: the purification day and

puja could not hold. Although their evil actions has been success and got some toxicant water from the hands of Communist China, this is merely movement of dying person.

However, we have plan to hold the purification day and puja as we used to, sooner or later, at that time, all Tibetan laypeople and monks must give them detail and profound repression on them for not entering our side. In case they continue come to instigate, we have a Tibetan saying that to the old bull who don't understand, the stick is more powerful than the words of King. Therefore, we will do the same. You, the ghost, must know that we are not fear, but we tolerate walking on the path of love and non-violence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. In nutshell, it is important to keep alert those with impure commitment for not entering our side, by cherishing ones interest.

Important Announcement -- Expulsion of Monks

April 8, 2008

To the Tibetan public and monks,

Since earlier time, those following monks under the affiliation of Sera-May pomra, whose names are listed together with their photos, have engaged in mere conceit exaggeration to around six thousands monks, in the name of Dorje Shugden. Therefore, the lords of law of Sera-Lachi monastery, disciplinarian Geshe Thupten Tendar and disciplinarian Geshe Tsultrim Gyaltzen have excommunicated them from the institution of Sera monastery. We thus call for Tibetan public and monks not share to religious and material resources with these persons.

Thupten Samphel (photo), Thupten Kunsang (photo), Tenzin Tsering (photo), Jampa Khetseun (photo), Jampa Choegyal (photo), Lobsang Jikmay (photo)

The attended Sera-Jay monks suggested expelling and putting Shugden monks in other place. The police said: **“According to your point view, we should single out Muslim from Hindu community and Hindu from Muslim community. This is not possible. The so-called referendum is non sense. You are saying they have only 200 monks. If they have 200, or 500, or 10, Indian government supports those who have truth.”**

The high-leveled polices gave 24 hours to make a decision. The dateline expires at 3 pm, April 4, 2008.

(The official order of Deputy Commissioner of Mysore is being blatantly ignored)

April 4, 2005

Lobsang Choedar of Sera-Jay monastery declared he and his people would stop Shugden devotees from attending tomorrow Puja at Sera Lachi monastery. He has formed a group named Himalayan Culture something (*see document above this one*). And Lobsang is from Tawang of Arnachal Pradesh, India.

He and his group defied the official order of Deputy Commissioner of Mysore. There is a widely spread report that the members of Tibetan Woman Association would come to Sera monastery to protest against Shugden devotees, and to physically drive them out of the monastery.

The police asked Shugden monks not to attend the puja. The police ensured them that there would be no puja in the monastery. Deputy Commissioner gave 24 hours to make a decision. But these no shugden monks defy and belittle the Indian authorities.

However, Lobsang Choedar and his group try to stir crackdown on Shugden monks. The situation in the monastery is tense.

We request each of you to alert Indian government and related office regarding emergent matter in South India now, in order to save these law-abiding and simple shugden monks in Sera monastery.

April 5, 2008

Mr. Lobsang Choeder reportedly set up a Himalayan Cultural organization to sacrifice their lives to fight against Shugden devotees.

Mr. Choeder gave inflammatory speech to Tibetans in Camp No 1. He distributed three pages letters. The gist of the letter is: he has begun the campaign against Shugden devotees, and he will finish it. Also, he would drive all Shugden devotees from India. The letter contains the hit-list of 12 monks from pomra. Tibetans were provoked and called today. And Lobsang Choedar is a leader and he organized the mob.

In the morning, Tibetan public gathered in the courtyard of Sera Lachi monastery, Bylakupee, Mysore District, Karnataka State. Most are old man and woman. The mobs are violent and ready to pounce upon Shugden devotees. In fact, these were brought to clash between two groups. It is the ultimate intention to create public riot or public clashes, on which basis, they file false cases against Shugden devotees, to make their lives miserable. Their intention and aims were doomed several times.

The conversation of a high level officer of Tibetan government in exile licked: you open the mess, if they come to collect food, tell them not to come; if they don't listen, ask sera-jay monks to come, if not, call Tibetans."

So they pursue the violent strategy at date. The public mob did not know the real intention of the mob leader.

Pomra monks were stopped on the way to Sera Lachi. Two monks were called and they including a monk cameraman escorted by police in their car. The mob tried to attack two monks from pomra. The cameraman was slapped on his face and tried to snatch his camera. It is said that pomra monks were cheated.

Tibetan Woman Association and Tibetan Youth Congress have threatened to come at night to attack Poma monastic building.

The Tibetan mob protested to police and Indian government, saying that we are not supported. And they used harsh words to their host country who gave them everything no country in the world could.

At 6 pm, Sera-May monastery announced to hold a debating class in its courtyard. But they did not, for probably, their aim is far away from fulfilled, since no riot or clashes emerged although the mobs were called.

First they said to the police that they were to a meeting for the Tibet Independence.

April 13, 2008

In the Tibetan school, Bylakupee, Tibetan students were asked to give signatures that they never worship Shugden, and also to pledge that they will never share religious and material amenities with Shugden people. 20 students refused to sign and pledge. So they face danger of expulsion from the school.

In the three different camps at Bylakupee, the signature and oath campaigns were carried out. It was presided by abbots of Sera and the Dalai lama's representative.

The situation is getting worse. And more miserable and suffering shugden devotees.

(Tibet has never been the Shangri-La, the peaceful paradise that most of us thought it to be. The below documents show examples of how this image is not compatible with historical facts and critical investigation, and how independent thinkers are awakening to this truth.)

Rough translation of Senator Melancon's (French Parliament member) article on his blog:

I DISAGREE WITH THE BOYCOTT OF THE GAMES OF PEKING AND THE ANTI CHINESE PROPAGANDA

I am no Chinese communist. I will never be one. But I disagree with the manifestations in favor of a boycott of the Olympic games. I disagree with the campaign of Robert Menard against the Olympic games of Peking. I disagree with rewriting the history of China as it happens due to those events. I don't share at all the blissful enthusiasm for the Dalai Lama or for the regime he embodies. For me, a foul smell of racism is coming out of this cooking pot.

For me, the boycott of the games is an unjustified and insulting aggression against the Chinese people. If we wished to act against the Peking government, we had to do it at the time of choosing Peking for the games. In this case, we should not have allowed China to be candidate. We had to say it in China.

What is done is an unwarranted and unjustified insult against the millions of Chinese who have wished and who are actively preparing the games.

A PRETEXT

If a boycott had to be organized, in a consequent aggressive logic, it would not happen on the ground of sport which is a matter of opening and fraternity. Why not rather on the grounds of business and finance? Naturally, no one among the actual mundane activists makes such a proposition neither does whatever in this direction. If we had really to come on wrong terms with the Chinese government, why the minimum of what is done in the normal relationship between nations is not done at this time?

Has the president of the Chinese republic be contacted (how many among the persons who are manifesting bother to know his name)? Did we ask him anything? What? What has he answered? Did we speak with their prime minister?(how many have tried to know his name?) Did we invite the Chinese ambassador to come and did we exchange points of view with him? Who bothers?

With an arrogance that looks like racism, we are protesting against a government without even citing the names of its leaders and we are acting as if they didn't exist. Would it not be because we happen to think that it is not really a government? In a typical looking down fashion of the western world, we even negate the names of the leaders of a country of 1 billion and 400 millions persons and have such a poor opinion of them that we think that they are simply controlled by a political police. In a general way, by seeing all this, I feel the same as if I was contemplating the contempt of the colons who imposed in their own time, with guns in hand, the opium business to the Chinese! If the wish is to confront the political regime of Peking, none of the used means is of a nature of modifying whatever else than a western thought already totally formatted on this topic.

It follows that the events happening about Tibet are a pretext. A pretext entirely built for the use of a public conditioned by the repetition of pictures that have as goal to create evidence rather than critical thought. For example: only the emission « arrêt sur image » reports that the events in Tibet have begun with a pogrom of Chinese business owners by Tibetans. In which country in this world such events would not be followed by repressive acts? Has the life of a Chinese business owner less worth than the life of a manifesting Tibetan who kills him by hitting him with a baton in the street ?

A good part of the manifested friendship for the Tibetans is nothing else than a smelly variant of racism against the Chinese. It is nourished by all the fantasmes favored by ignorance. It may well be true that the repression has been as heavy as reported. How do we know for sure? The only numbers repeated again and again are those of the Tibetan government in exile. However, if I have well heard, the Chinese government itself enumerates a number of deaths and hurt people that allows to understand that the situation is serious, as the government itself admits.

In any other circumstances, we would try to compare the information provided by both sides. We would try to understand how those events happened. If not, it would be as if we were saying that the two youngsters who died of electrocution in Clichy Sous Bois, died because the French government had ordered to push them for the reason that they had a hard policy when challenged by the youngsters of the banlieues. No one would dare to say such a silly and nasty thing. When there was rioting in the United States, a heavy hand repression followed also. All this is no excuse for anything. But it allows to compare different events.

A SUSPECT PERSON

I voice the greatest doubts about the political actions of Mr Robert Ménard, principal organizer of the anti Chinese manifestations. At the present time, concerning Tibet and the Olympic games, we only see Robert Ménard. It is said he speaks in the name of « Reporters sans frontière ». This association is reduced to the person of Robert Ménard. Many former members of its board of direction could enlighten us about the democratic conceptions of Mr Ménard in his own association. When I found myself interviewed by Radio France Culture about the topics of Tibet and the Olympic Games, Mr Marc Kravetz and Alexandre Adler have stayed silent during the explanations I gave about Robert Ménard. They cannot be suspected of wishing to please me. After the interview, both of them expressed strong reservations about the methods of Robert Menard. Maxime Vivas has documented an extremely disturbing analysis of this person and his finance sources. Whatever, it seems that from now on he substitutes for the journalist associations, the international human rights association, Amnesty, ... Sometimes, he even substitutes for the Dalai Lama. Robert Ménard is actively militating for the boycott of the Games, what the Dalai Lama is not doing, as on the contrary, he is saying that the Chinese people are owed those Games. Robert Ménard is an advocate of the human rights with a variable geometry. Has he even a single time, even symbolically, done anything when the United States have legalized torture? Has he even a single time done anything so that the prisoners of Guantanamo could be defended by lawyers ? Robert Ménard is doing things in such a

way that serious reservations about his motivation have to be expressed.

THE THEOCRACY IS INDEFENSIBLE

For what concerns Tibet. Tibet is Chinese since the 14th century. Lhasa was under the Chinese authority, then Mandchu, before Besançon or Dôle were under the authority of the kings of France. To speak of invasion in 1959 to qualify an event internal to the Chinese revolution is absurd.

Do we say that France has invaded Vendée when the armies of our Republic entered it against the royalist partisans of the place? The Dalai Lama and the other Tibetan lords have accepted all that was proposed and offered to them by the communist China, as for example the rank of vice president of the popular assembly that His Holiness duly accepted. This until this day of 1956 when the communist regime has decided to abolish the serfdom in Tibet and adjacent regions.

In a negation of traditions, and I wholly agree with that, the communists have abrogated the codes that classed the population in three categories and 9 classes, that fixed the price of a life, that gave to the owners of the serfs and slaves right on their life or death, right to torture them. We don't speak about the condition of the women under this regime. But for one who can stomach it, it is possible to find information. The communist regime has brought to an end the violent battles that opposed the local chieftains of this pretended paradise of non violence. It has also put an end to the bloody tortures that were inflicted by the monks to those who contravened their religious rules. The Tibetan version of the Charia has come to an end with the communists.

The revolt of 1959 was prepared, armed, supported and financed by the United States in the context of the Cold War. Such were the charming traditions of the government of the Dalai Lama before the communists and the horrible invasion that put an end to this government.

Since then, 81 % of the Tibetan children are going to school whereas at the blessed time of the tradition, only 2 % of them went to school. And the life span has extended from 35,5 to 67 years for the slaves in this valley of tears who are living in this contemporary Chinese hell.

How can we explain that whereas we speak of a genocide of the Tibetans the actual population has doubled from 1 million to 2,5 millions. For all this, we should be more circumspect, have more respect for the Chinese than what is warranted by the ridiculous propaganda disseminated by people who would neither for them, nor for their wives or their children, accept to live under such a pitiful rule as the one of the King of the Buddhist monks of Tibet.

At the time being, I have no sympathy for the Tibetan government in exile, for which His Holiness is the ultimate decider on practically all the topics, of which in a wholly unusual manner even for a government in exile, a number of members of his own family are members, not even speaking of their presence at the key posts for finance and business of this exile government. I respect the right of His Holiness to believe in what he wishes, and the same for his partisans. But I reserve for myself the right to totally disagree with the idea of their theocracy regime.

I am also opposed to the recruitment of children for the monasteries. I am opposed to the existence of serfdom. I am in favor of laicism everywhere and for all and totally opposed to the political authority in the hands of religious, even in the case of those that were made to be perceived as nice by the comics album « Tintin in Tibet » even though they were never like that. I also disagree with the declarations of the « King of the monks » against abortion and the homosexuals. Even non violent and with seducing smiles his declarations on those two topics are in my eyes as archaic as his project of political theocracy. I have never been a militant for the Ayatollah Khomeiny, even when I

opposed the Shah of Iran. In the same way, I am not a militant for the Dalai Lama and I am not encouraging him in his secessionist activities as I disapprove those. I am asking:

Why in order to practice his religion and be his leader would the Dalai Lama need a state? A state for the existence of which the China would have to be amputated of about one quarter of its territory. Does his actual moral and religious leadership suffer from the fact that he is seating on no kingdom?

WARMONGER

For what concerns the international right and the geopolitics, the Tibet case as presented by his partisans is a factor of violence, of wars and of a destabilization as considerable as that of the Balkans.

What kind of Tibet is fought for? The « Great Tibet » including regions like the Yunnan and the Sichuan, on the territories of the former lords of the land where trouble is fomented at the same time as in Lhasa.? Certainly, no one among those who are making noise at this time is trying to have knowledge about this topic. Nothing is more indicative of the neocolonial paternalism and of the underlying racist current behind enthusiasm of the pro Tibetans than the indifference to those questions that are vital for the life of millions of persons and hundreds of years of Chinese culture.

I have read that the French athletes would wear a shirt with a kind of that is presented as a political protest. I know very well that the writing of « for a better world » has no more meaning there than here. But it will certainly be taken as an injurious act if its pro Dalai Lama underlying thought is known. Maybe is it a little outside of the international sport rules. We should remember that the Serbian swimmer Milorad Cavic was excluded from the European Swimming championship because he was wearing a shirt proclaiming « Kosovo is Serb ». Will it serve as jurisprudence? Will the French sportsmen wearing a slogan perceived as political be excluded from the Games ? Certainly not ! As the goal is to posit Tibet for China in the same way that Kosovo was posited for the Serbs. But as it has nothing in common, apart from the wish to disintegrate the enemy and the media carrousel, it is almost certain that it will end with confusion for the aggressing side.

I wish it. I am a friend of China. And I know that the interest of my country and its values are not on the side where one would like to push them.

(Don't go here for perfect accuracy in spiritual terms or un-biasedness, but for a truer picture of the 'human rights' situation of the ordinary people in pre-invasion Tibet.)

<http://www.michaelparenti.org/Tibet.html>

Friendly Feudalism: The Tibet Myth
(updated and expanded version, January 2007)
Michael Parenti

I. For Lords and Lamas

Along with the blood drenched landscape of religious conflict there is the experience of inner peace and solace that every religion promises, none more so than Buddhism. Standing in marked contrast to the intolerant savagery of other religions, Buddhism is neither fanatical nor dogmatic--so say its

adherents. For many of them Buddhism is less a theology and more a meditative and investigative discipline intended to promote an inner harmony and enlightenment while directing us to a path of right living. Generally, the spiritual focus is not only on oneself but on the welfare of others. One tries to put aside egoistic pursuits and gain a deeper understanding of one's connection to all people and things. "Socially engaged Buddhism" tries to blend individual liberation with responsible social action in order to build an enlightened society.

A glance at history, however, reveals that not all the many and widely varying forms of Buddhism have been free of doctrinal fanaticism, nor free of the violent and exploitative pursuits so characteristic of other religions. In Sri Lanka there is a legendary and almost sacred recorded history about the triumphant battles waged by Buddhist kings of yore. During the twentieth century, Buddhists clashed violently with each other and with non-Buddhists in Thailand, Burma, Korea, Japan, India, and elsewhere. In Sri Lanka, armed battles between Buddhist Sinhalese and Hindu Tamils have taken many lives on both sides. In 1998 the U.S. State Department listed thirty of the world's most violent and dangerous extremist groups. Over half of them were religious, specifically Muslim, Jewish, and Buddhist.

In South Korea, in 1998, thousands of monks of the Chogye Buddhist order fought each other with fists, rocks, fire-bombs, and clubs, in pitched battles that went on for weeks. They were vying for control of the order, the largest in South Korea, with its annual budget of \$9.2 million, its millions of dollars worth of property, and the privilege of appointing 1,700 monks to various offices. The brawls damaged the main Buddhist sanctuaries and left dozens of monks injured, some seriously. The Korean public appeared to disdain both factions, feeling that no matter what side took control, "it would use worshippers' donations for luxurious houses and expensive cars."

As with any religion, squabbles between or within Buddhist sects are often fueled by the material corruption and personal deficiencies of the leadership. For example, in Nagano, Japan, at Zenkoji, the prestigious complex of temples that has hosted Buddhist sects for more than 1,400 years, "a nasty battle" arose between Komatsu the chief priest and the Tacchu, a group of temples nominally under the chief priest's sway. The Tacchu monks accused Komatsu of selling writings and drawings under the temple's name for his own gain. They also were appalled by the frequency with which he was seen in the company of women. Komatsu in turn sought to isolate and punish monks who were critical of his leadership. The conflict lasted some five years and made it into the courts.

But what of Tibetan Buddhism? Is it not an exception to this sort of strife? And what of the society it helped to create? Many Buddhists maintain that, before the Chinese crackdown in 1959, old Tibet was a spiritually oriented kingdom free from the egotistical lifestyles, empty materialism, and corrupting vices that beset modern industrialized society. Western news media, travel books, novels, and Hollywood films have portrayed the Tibetan theocracy as a veritable Shangri-La. The Dalai Lama himself stated that "the pervasive influence of Buddhism" in Tibet, "amid the wide open spaces of an unspoiled environment resulted in a society dedicated to peace and harmony. We enjoyed freedom and contentment."

A reading of Tibet's history suggests a somewhat different picture. "Religious conflict was commonplace in old Tibet," writes one western Buddhist practitioner. "History belies the Shangri-La image of Tibetan lamas and their followers living together in mutual tolerance and nonviolent goodwill. Indeed, the situation was quite different. Old Tibet was much more like Europe during the religious wars of the Counterreformation." In the thirteenth century, Emperor Kublai Khan created the first Grand Lama, who was to preside over all the other lamas as might a pope over his bishops.

Several centuries later, the Emperor of China sent an army into Tibet to support the Grand Lama, an ambitious 25-year-old man, who then gave himself the title of Dalai (Ocean) Lama, ruler of all Tibet. Here is a historical irony: the first Dalai Lama was installed by a Chinese army.

His two previous lama “incarnations” were then retroactively recognized as his predecessors, thereby transforming the 1st Dalai Lama into the 3rd Dalai Lama. This 1st (or 3rd) Dalai Lama seized monasteries that did not belong to his sect, and is believed to have destroyed Buddhist writings that conflicted with his claim to divinity. The Dalai Lama who succeeded him pursued a sybaritic life, enjoying many mistresses, partying with friends, and acting in other ways deemed unfitting for an incarnate deity. For these transgressions he was murdered by his priests. Within 170 years, despite their recognized divine status, five Dalai Lamas were killed by their high priests or other courtiers.

For hundreds of years competing Tibetan Buddhist sects engaged in bitterly violent clashes and summary executions. In 1660, the 5th Dalai Lama was faced with a rebellion in Tsang province, the stronghold of the rival Kagyu sect with its high lama known as the Karmapa. The 5th Dalai Lama called for harsh retribution against the rebels, directing the Mongol army to obliterate the male and female lines, and the offspring too “like eggs smashed against rocks.... In short, annihilate any traces of them, even their names.”

In 1792, many Kagyu monasteries were confiscated and their monks were forcibly converted to the Gelug sect (the Dalai Lama’s denomination). The Gelug school, known also as the “Yellow Hats,” showed little tolerance or willingness to mix their teachings with other Buddhist sects. In the words of one of their traditional prayers: “Praise to you, violent god of the Yellow Hat teachings/who reduces to particles of dust/ great beings, high officials and ordinary people/ who pollute and corrupt the Gelug doctrine.” An eighteenth-century memoir of a Tibetan general depicts sectarian strife among Buddhists that is as brutal and bloody as any religious conflict might be. This grim history remains largely unvisited by present-day followers of Tibetan

Buddhism in the West.

Religions have had a close relationship not only with violence but with economic exploitation. Indeed, it is often the economic exploitation that necessitates the violence. Such was the case with the Tibetan theocracy. Until 1959, when the Dalai Lama last presided over Tibet, most of the arable land was still organized into manorial estates worked by serfs. These estates were owned by two social groups: the rich secular landlords and the rich theocratic lamas. Even a writer sympathetic to the old order allows that “a great deal of real estate belonged to the monasteries, and most of them amassed great riches.” Much of the wealth was accumulated “through active participation in trade, commerce, and money lending.”

Drepung monastery was one of the biggest landowners in the world, with its 185 manors, 25,000 serfs, 300 great pastures, and 16,000 herdsmen. The wealth of the monasteries rested in the hands of small numbers of high-ranking lamas. Most ordinary monks lived modestly and had no direct access to great wealth. The Dalai Lama himself “lived richly in the 1000-room, 14-story Potala Palace.”

Secular leaders also did well. A notable example was the commander-in-chief of the Tibetan army, a member of the Dalai Lama’s lay Cabinet, who owned 4,000 square kilometers of land and 3,500 serfs. Old Tibet has been misrepresented by some Western admirers as “a nation that required no police force because its people voluntarily observed the laws of karma.” In fact, it had a professional army, albeit a small one, that served mainly as a gendarmerie for the landlords to keep order, protect their property, and hunt down runaway serfs.

Young Tibetan boys were regularly taken from their peasant families and brought into the monasteries to be trained as monks. Once there, they were bonded for life. Tashi-Tsering, a monk, reports that it was common for peasant children to be sexually mistreated in the monasteries. He himself was a victim of repeated rape, beginning at age nine. The monastic estates also conscripted children for lifelong servitude as domestics, dance performers, and soldiers.

In old Tibet there were small numbers of farmers who subsisted as a kind of free peasantry, and perhaps an additional 10,000 people who composed the “middle-class” families of merchants, shopkeepers, and small traders. Thousands of others were beggars. There also were slaves, usually domestic servants, who owned nothing. Their offspring were born into slavery. The majority of the rural population were serfs. Treated little better than slaves, the serfs went without schooling or medical care. They were under a lifetime bond to work the lord's land--or the monastery's land--without pay, to repair the lord's houses, transport his crops, and collect his firewood. They were also expected to provide carrying animals and transportation on demand. Their masters told them what crops to grow and what animals to raise. They could not get married without the consent of their lord or lama. And they might easily be separated from their families should their owners lease them out to work in a distant location.

As in a free labor system and unlike slavery, the overlords had no responsibility for the serf's maintenance and no direct interest in his or her survival as an expensive piece of property. The serfs had to support themselves. Yet as in a slave system, they were bound to their masters, guaranteeing a fixed and permanent workforce that could neither organize nor strike nor freely depart as might laborers in a market context. The overlords had the best of both worlds.

One 22-year old woman, herself a runaway serf, reports: “Pretty serf girls were usually taken by the owner as house servants and used as he wished”; they “were just slaves without rights.” Serfs needed permission to go anywhere. Landowners had legal authority to capture those who tried to flee. One 24-year old runaway welcomed the Chinese intervention as a “liberation.” He testified that under serfdom he was subjected to incessant toil, hunger, and cold. After his third failed escape, he was mercilessly beaten by the landlord's men until blood poured from his nose and mouth. They then poured alcohol and caustic soda on his wounds to increase the pain, he claimed.

The serfs were taxed upon getting married, taxed for the birth of each child and for every death in the family. They were taxed for planting a tree in their yard and for keeping animals. They were taxed for religious festivals and for public dancing and drumming, for being sent to prison and upon being released. Those who could not find work were taxed for being unemployed, and if they traveled to another village in search of work, they paid a passage tax. When people could not pay, the monasteries lent them money at 20 to 50 percent interest. Some debts were handed down from father to son to grandson. Debtors who could not meet their obligations risked being cast into slavery.

The theocracy's religious teachings buttressed its class order. The poor and afflicted were taught that they had brought their troubles upon themselves because of their wicked ways in previous lives. Hence they had to accept the misery of their present existence as a karmic atonement and in anticipation that their lot would improve in their next lifetime. The rich and powerful treated their good fortune as a reward for, and tangible evidence of, virtue in past and present lives.

The Tibetan serfs were something more than superstitious victims, blind to their own oppression. As we have seen, some ran away; others openly resisted, sometimes suffering dire consequences. In feudal Tibet, torture and mutilation--including eye gouging, the pulling out of tongues, hamstringing, and amputation--were favored punishments inflicted upon thieves, and runaway or resistant serfs.

Journeying through Tibet in the 1960s, Stuart and Roma Gelder interviewed a former serf, Tsering Wang Tui, who had stolen two sheep belonging to a monastery. For this he had both his eyes gouged out and his hand mutilated beyond use. He explains that he no longer is a Buddhist: "When a holy lama told them to blind me I thought there was no good in religion." Since it was against Buddhist teachings to take human life, some offenders were severely lashed and then "left to God" in the freezing night to die. "The parallels between Tibet and medieval Europe are striking," concludes Tom Grunfeld in his book on Tibet.

In 1959, Anna Louise Strong visited an exhibition of torture equipment that had been used by the Tibetan overlords. There were handcuffs of all sizes, including small ones for children, and instruments for cutting off noses and ears, gouging out eyes, breaking off hands, and hamstringing legs. There were hot brands, whips, and special implements for disemboweling. The exhibition presented photographs and testimonies of victims who had been blinded or crippled or suffered amputations for thievery. There was the shepherd whose master owed him a reimbursement in yuan and wheat but refused to pay. So he took one of the master's cows; for this he had his hands severed. Another herdsman, who opposed having his wife taken from him by his lord, had his hands broken off. There were pictures of Communist activists with noses and upper lips cut off, and a woman who was raped and then had her nose sliced away.

Earlier visitors to Tibet commented on the theocratic despotism. In 1895, an Englishman, Dr. A. L. Waddell, wrote that the populace was under the "intolerable tyranny of monks" and the devil superstitions they had fashioned to terrorize the people. In 1904 Percival Landon described the Dalai Lama's rule as "an engine of oppression." At about that time, another English traveler, Captain W.F.T. O'Connor, observed that "the great landowners and the priests... exercise each in their own dominion a despotic power from which there is no appeal," while the people are "oppressed by the most monstrous growth of monasticism and priest-craft." Tibetan rulers "invented degrading legends and stimulated a spirit of superstition" among the common people. In 1937, another visitor, Spencer Chapman, wrote, "The Lamaist monk does not spend his time in ministering to the people or educating them. . . . The beggar beside the road is nothing to the monk. Knowledge is the jealously guarded prerogative of the monasteries and is used to increase their influence and wealth." As much as we might wish otherwise, feudal theocratic Tibet was a far cry from the romanticized Shangri La so enthusiastically nurtured by Buddhism's western proselytes.

II. Secularization vs. Spirituality

What happened to Tibet after the Chinese Communists moved into the country in 1951? The treaty of that year provided for ostensible self-governance under the Dalai Lama's rule but gave China military control and exclusive right to conduct foreign relations. The Chinese were also granted a direct role in internal administration "to promote social reforms." Among the earliest changes they wrought was to reduce usurious interest rates, and build a few hospitals and roads. At first, they moved slowly, relying mostly on persuasion in an attempt to effect reconstruction. No aristocratic or monastic property was confiscated, and feudal lords continued to reign over their hereditarily bound peasants. "Contrary to popular belief in the West," claims one observer, the Chinese "took care to show respect for Tibetan culture and religion."

Over the centuries the Tibetan lords and lamas had seen Chinese come and go, and had enjoyed good relations with Generalissimo Chiang Kaishek and his reactionary Kuomintang rule in China. The approval of the Kuomintang government was needed to validate the choice of the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama. When the current 14th Dalai Lama was first installed in Lhasa, it was with an armed escort of Chinese troops and an attending Chinese minister, in accordance with centuries-old

tradition. What upset the Tibetan lords and lamas in the early 1950s was that these latest Chinese were Communists. It would be only a matter of time, they feared, before the Communists started imposing their collectivist egalitarian schemes upon Tibet.

The issue was joined in 1956-57, when armed Tibetan bands ambushed convoys of the Chinese Peoples Liberation Army. The uprising received extensive assistance from the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), including military training, support camps in Nepal, and numerous airlifts. Meanwhile in the United States, the American Society for a Free Asia, a CIA-financed front, energetically publicized the cause of Tibetan resistance, with the Dalai Lama's eldest brother, Thubtan Norbu, playing an active role in that organization. The Dalai Lama's second-eldest brother, Gyalo Thondup, established an intelligence operation with the CIA as early as 1951. He later upgraded it into a CIA-trained guerrilla unit whose recruits parachuted back into Tibet.

Many Tibetan commandos and agents whom the CIA dropped into the country were chiefs of aristocratic clans or the sons of chiefs. Ninety percent of them were never heard from again, according to a report from the CIA itself, meaning they were most likely captured and killed. "Many lamas and lay members of the elite and much of the Tibetan army joined the uprising, but in the main the populace did not, assuring its failure," writes Hugh Deane. In their book on Tibet, Ginsburg and Mathos reach a similar conclusion: "As far as can be ascertained, the great bulk of the common people of Lhasa and of the adjoining countryside failed to join in the fighting against the Chinese both when it first began and as it progressed." Eventually the resistance crumbled.

Whatever wrongs and new oppressions introduced by the Chinese after 1959, they did abolish slavery and the Tibetan serfdom system of unpaid labor. They eliminated the many crushing taxes, started work projects, and greatly reduced unemployment and beggary. They established secular schools, thereby breaking the educational monopoly of the monasteries. And they constructed running water and electrical systems in Lhasa.

Heinrich Harrer (later revealed to have been a sergeant in Hitler's SS) wrote a bestseller about his experiences in Tibet that was made into a popular Hollywood movie. He reported that the Tibetans who resisted the Chinese "were predominantly nobles, semi-nobles and lamas; they were punished by being made to perform the lowliest tasks, such as laboring on roads and bridges. They were further humiliated by being made to clean up the city before the tourists arrived." They also had to live in a camp originally reserved for beggars and vagrants--all of which Harrer treats as sure evidence of the dreadful nature of the Chinese occupation.³³

By 1961, Chinese occupation authorities expropriated the landed estates owned by lords and lamas. They distributed many thousands of acres to tenant farmers and landless peasants, reorganizing them into hundreds of communes.. Herds once owned by nobility were turned over to collectives of poor shepherds. Improvements were made in the breeding of livestock, and new varieties of vegetables and new strains of wheat and barley were introduced, along with irrigation improvements, all of which reportedly led to an increase in agrarian production.

Many peasants remained as religious as ever, giving alms to the clergy. But monks who had been conscripted as children into the religious orders were now free to renounce the monastic life, and thousands did, especially the younger ones. The remaining clergy lived on modest government stipends and extra income earned by officiating at prayer services, weddings, and funerals.

Both the Dalai Lama and his advisor and youngest brother, Tendzin Choegyal, claimed that "more than 1.2 million Tibetans are dead as a result of the Chinese occupation." The official 1953 census--six years before the Chinese crackdown--recorded the entire population residing in Tibet at 1,274,000. Other census counts put the population within Tibet at about two million. If the Chinese killed 1.2 million in the early 1960s then almost all of Tibet, would have been depopulated,

transformed into a killing field dotted with death camps and mass graves--of which we have no evidence. The thinly distributed Chinese force in Tibet could not have rounded up, hunted down, and exterminated that many people even if it had spent all its time doing nothing else.

Chinese authorities claim to have put an end to floggings, mutilations, and amputations as a form of criminal punishment. They themselves, however, have been charged with acts of brutality by exile Tibetans. The authorities do admit to "mistakes," particularly during the 1966-76 Cultural Revolution when the persecution of religious beliefs reached a high tide in both China and Tibet. After the uprising in the late 1950s, thousands of Tibetans were incarcerated. During the Great Leap Forward, forced collectivization and grain farming were imposed on the Tibetan peasantry, sometimes with disastrous effect on production. In the late 1970s, China began relaxing controls "and tried to undo some of the damage wrought during the previous two decades."

In 1980, the Chinese government initiated reforms reportedly designed to grant Tibet a greater degree of self-rule and self-administration. Tibetans would now be allowed to cultivate private plots, sell their harvest surpluses, decide for themselves what crops to grow, and keep yaks and sheep. Communication with the outside world was again permitted, and frontier controls were eased to permit some Tibetans to visit exiled relatives in India and Nepal. By the 1980s many of the principal lamas had begun to shuttle back and forth between China and the exile communities abroad, "restoring their monasteries in Tibet and helping to revitalize Buddhism there."

As of 2007 Tibetan Buddhism was still practiced widely and tolerated by officialdom. Religious pilgrimages and other standard forms of worship were allowed but within limits. All monks and nuns had to sign a loyalty pledge that they would not use their religious position to foment secession or dissent. And displaying photos of the Dalai Lama was declared illegal.

In the 1990s, the Han, the ethnic group comprising over 95 percent of China's immense population, began moving in substantial numbers into Tibet. On the streets of Lhasa and Shigatse, signs of Han colonization are readily visible. Chinese run the factories and many of the shops and vending stalls. Tall office buildings and large shopping centers have been built with funds that might have been better spent on water treatment plants and housing. Chinese cadres in Tibet too often view their Tibetan neighbors as backward and lazy, in need of economic development and "patriotic education." During the 1990s Tibetan government employees suspected of harboring nationalist sympathies were purged from office, and campaigns were once again launched to discredit the Dalai Lama. Individual Tibetans reportedly were subjected to arrest, imprisonment, and forced labor for carrying out separatist activities and engaging in "political subversion." Some were held in administrative detention without adequate food, water, and blankets, subjected to threats, beatings, and other mistreatment.

Tibetan history, culture, and certainly religion are slighted in schools. Teaching materials, though translated into Tibetan, focus mainly on Chinese history and culture. Chinese family planning regulations allow a three-child limit for Tibetan families. (There is only a one-child limit for Han families throughout China, and a two-child limit for rural Han families whose first child is a girl.) If a Tibetan couple goes over the three-child limit, the excess children can be denied subsidized daycare, health care, housing, and education. These penalties have been enforced irregularly and vary by district. None of these child services, it should be noted, were available to Tibetans before the Chinese takeover.

For the rich lamas and secular lords, the Communist intervention was an unmitigated calamity. Most of them fled abroad, as did the Dalai Lama himself, who was assisted in his flight by the CIA. Some discovered to their horror that they would have to work for a living. Many, however, escaped that fate. Throughout the 1960s, the Tibetan exile community was secretly pocketing \$1.7 million a year

from the CIA, according to documents released by the State Department in 1998. Once this fact was publicized, the Dalai Lama's organization itself issued a statement admitting that it had received millions of dollars from the CIA during the 1960s to send armed squads of exiles into Tibet to undermine the Maoist revolution. The Dalai Lama's annual payment from the CIA was \$186,000. Indian intelligence also financed both him and other Tibetan exiles. He has refused to say whether he or his brothers worked for the CIA. The agency has also declined to comment.

In 1995, the News & Observer of Raleigh, North Carolina, carried a frontpage color photograph of the Dalai Lama being embraced by the reactionary Republican senator Jesse Helms, under the headline "Buddhist Captivates Hero of Religious Right." In April 1999, along with Margaret Thatcher, Pope John Paul II, and the first George Bush, the Dalai Lama called upon the British government to release Augusto Pinochet, the former fascist dictator of Chile and a longtime CIA client who was visiting England. The Dalai Lama urged that Pinochet not be forced to go to Spain where he was wanted to stand trial for crimes against humanity.

Into the twenty-first century, via the National Endowment for Democracy and other conduits that are more respectable sounding than the CIA, the U.S. Congress continued to allocate an annual \$2 million to Tibetans in India, with additional millions for "democracy activities" within the Tibetan exile community. In addition to these funds, the Dalai Lama received money from financier George Soros.

Whatever the Dalai Lama's associations with the CIA and various reactionaries, he did speak often of peace, love, and nonviolence. He himself really cannot be blamed for the abuses of Tibet's ancien régime, having been but 25 years old when he fled into exile. In a 1994 interview, he went on record as favoring the building of schools and roads in his country. He said the corvée (forced unpaid serf labor) and certain taxes imposed on the peasants were "extremely bad." And he disliked the way people were saddled with old debts sometimes passed down from generation to generation. During the half century of living in the western world, he had embraced concepts such as human rights and religious freedom, ideas largely unknown in old Tibet. He even proposed democracy for Tibet, featuring a written constitution and a representative assembly.

In 1996, the Dalai Lama issued a statement that must have had an unsettling effect on the exile community. It read in part: "Marxism is founded on moral principles, while capitalism is concerned only with gain and profitability." Marxism fosters "the equitable utilization of the means of production" and cares about "the fate of the working classes" and "the victims of . . . exploitation. For those reasons the system appeals to me, and . . . I think of myself as half-Marxist, half-Buddhist.

But he also sent a reassuring message to "those who live in abundance": "It is a good thing to be rich... Those are the fruits for deserving actions, the proof that they have been generous in the past." And to the poor he offers this admonition: "There is no good reason to become bitter and rebel against those who have property and fortune... It is better to develop a positive attitude."

In 2005 the Dalai Lama signed a widely advertised statement along with ten other Nobel Laureates supporting the "inalienable and fundamental human right" of working people throughout the world to form labor unions to protect their interests, in accordance with the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In many countries "this fundamental right is poorly protected and in some it is explicitly banned or brutally suppressed," the statement read. Burma, China, Colombia, Bosnia, and a few other countries were singled out as among the worst offenders. Even the United States "fails to adequately protect workers' rights to form unions and bargain collectively. Millions of U.S. workers lack any legal protection to form unions...."

The Dalai Lama also gave full support to removing the ingrained traditional obstacles that have kept Tibetan nuns from receiving an education. Upon arriving in exile, few nuns could read or write. In

Tibet their activities had been devoted to daylong periods of prayer and chants. But in northern India they now began reading Buddhist philosophy and engaging in theological study and debate, activities that in old Tibet had been open only to monks.

In November 2005 the Dalai Lama spoke at Stanford University on “The Heart of Nonviolence,” but stopped short of a blanket condemnation of all violence. Violent actions that are committed in order to reduce future suffering are not to be condemned, he said, citing World War II as an example of a worthy effort to protect democracy. What of the four years of carnage and mass destruction in Iraq, a war condemned by most of the world—even by a conservative pope--as a blatant violation of international law and a crime against humanity? The Dalai Lama was undecided: “The Iraq war—it’s too early to say, right or wrong.” Earlier he had voiced support for the U.S. military intervention against Yugoslavia and, later on, the U.S. military intervention into Afghanistan.

III. Exit Feudal Theocracy

As the Shangri-La myth would have it, in old Tibet the people lived in contented and tranquil symbiosis with their monastic and secular lords. Rich lamas and poor monks, wealthy landlords and impoverished serfs were all bonded together, mutually sustained by the comforting balm of a deeply spiritual and pacific culture.

One is reminded of the idealized image of feudal Europe presented by latter-day conservative Catholics such as G. K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc. For them, medieval Christendom was a world of contented peasants living in the secure embrace of their Church, under the more or less benign protection of their lords. Again we are invited to accept a particular culture in its idealized form divorced from its murky material history. This means accepting it as presented by its favored class, by those who profited most from it. The Shangri-La image of Tibet bears no more resemblance to historic actuality than does the pastoral image of medieval Europe.

Seen in all its grim realities, old Tibet confirms the view I expressed in an earlier book, namely that culture is anything but neutral. Culture can operate as a legitimating cover for a host of grave injustices, benefiting a privileged portion of society at great cost to the rest. In theocratic feudal Tibet, ruling interests manipulated the traditional culture to fortify their own wealth and power. The theocracy equated rebellious thought and action with satanic influence. It propagated the general presumption of landlord superiority and peasant unworthiness. The rich were represented as deserving their good life, and the lowly poor as deserving their mean existence, all codified in teachings about the karmic residue of virtue and vice accumulated from past lives, presented as part of God’s will.

Were the more affluent lamas just hypocrites who preached one thing and secretly believed another? More likely they were genuinely attached to those beliefs that brought such good results for them. That their theology so perfectly supported their material privileges only strengthened the sincerity with which it was embraced.

It might be said that we denizens of the modern secular world cannot grasp the equations of happiness and pain, contentment and custom, that characterize more traditionally spiritual societies. This is probably true, and it may explain why some of us idealize such societies. But still, a gouged eye is a gouged eye; a flogging is a flogging; and the grinding exploitation of serfs and slaves is a brutal class injustice whatever its cultural wrapping. There is a difference between a spiritual bond and human bondage, even when both exist side by side.

Many ordinary Tibetans want the Dalai Lama back in their country, but it appears that relatively few want a return to the social order he represented. A 1999 story in the Washington Post notes that the Dalai Lama continues to be revered in Tibet, but . . . few Tibetans would welcome a return of the corrupt aristocratic clans that fled with him in 1959 and that comprise the bulk of his advisers. Many Tibetan farmers, for example, have no interest in surrendering the land they gained during China's land reform to the clans. Tibet's former slaves say they, too, don't want their former masters to return to power. "I've already lived that life once before," said Wangchuk, a 67-year-old former slave who was wearing his best clothes for his yearly pilgrimage to Shigatse, one of the holiest sites of Tibetan Buddhism. He said he worshipped the Dalai Lama, but added, "I may not be free under Chinese communism, but I am better off than when I was a slave."

It should be noted that the Dalai Lama is not the only highly placed lama chosen in childhood as a reincarnation. One or another reincarnate lama or tulku--a spiritual teacher of special purity elected to be reborn again and again--can be found presiding over most major monasteries. The tulku system is unique to Tibetan Buddhism. Scores of Tibetan lamas claim to be reincarnate tulkus.

The very first tulku was a lama known as the Karmapa who appeared nearly three centuries before the first Dalai Lama. The Karmapa is leader of a Tibetan Buddhist tradition known as the Karma Kagyu. The rise of the Gelugpa sect headed by the Dalai Lama led to a politico-religious rivalry with the Kagyu that has lasted five hundred years and continues to play itself out within the Tibetan exile community today. That the Kagyu sect has grown famously, opening some six hundred new centers around the world in the last thirty-five years, has not helped the situation.

The search for a tulku, Erik Curren reminds us, has not always been conducted in that purely spiritual mode portrayed in certain Hollywood films. "Sometimes monastic officials wanted a child from a powerful local noble family to give the cloister more political clout. Other times they wanted a child from a lower-class family who would have little leverage to influence the child's upbringing." On other occasions "a local warlord, the Chinese emperor or even the Dalai Lama's government in Lhasa might [have tried] to impose its choice of tulku on a monastery for political reasons."

Such may have been the case in the selection of the 17th Karmapa, whose monastery-in-exile is situated in Rumtek, in the Indian state of Sikkim. In 1993 the monks of the Karma Kagyu tradition had a candidate of their own choice. The Dalai Lama, along with several dissenting Karma Kagyu leaders (and with the support of the Chinese government!) backed a different boy. The Kagyu monks charged that the Dalai Lama had overstepped his authority in attempting to select a leader for their sect. "Neither his political role nor his position as a lama in his own Gelugpa tradition entitled him to choose the Karmapa, who is a leader of a different tradition..." As one of the Kagyu leaders insisted, "Dharma is about thinking for yourself. It is not about automatically following a teacher in all things, no matter how respected that teacher may be. More than anyone else, Buddhists should respect other people's rights—their human rights and their religious freedom."

What followed was a dozen years of conflict in the Tibetan exile community, punctuated by intermittent riots, intimidation, physical attacks, blacklisting, police harassment, litigation, official corruption, and the looting and undermining of the Karmapa's monastery in Rumtek by supporters of the Gelugpa faction. All this has caused at least one western devotee to wonder if the years of exile were not hastening the moral corrosion of Tibetan Buddhism.

What is clear is that not all Tibetan Buddhists accept the Dalai Lama as their theological and spiritual mentor. Though he is referred to as the "spiritual leader of Tibet," many see this title as little more than a formality. It does not give him authority over the four religious schools of Tibet

other than his own, “just as calling the U.S. president the ‘leader of the free world’ gives him no role in governing France or Germany.”

Not all Tibetan exiles are enamoured of the old Shangri-La theocracy. Kim Lewis, who studied healing methods with a Buddhist monk in Berkeley, California, had occasion to talk at length with more than a dozen Tibetan women who lived in the monk’s building. When she asked how they felt about returning to their homeland, the sentiment was unanimously negative. At first, Lewis assumed that their reluctance had to do with the Chinese occupation, but they quickly informed her otherwise. They said they were extremely grateful “not to have to marry 4 or 5 men, be pregnant almost all the time,” or deal with sexually transmitted diseases contacted from a straying husband. The younger women “were delighted to be getting an education, wanted absolutely nothing to do with any religion, and wondered why Americans were so naïve [about Tibet].”

The women interviewed by Lewis recounted stories of their grandmothers’ ordeals with monks who used them as “wisdom consorts.” By sleeping with the monks, the grandmothers were told, they gained “the means to enlightenment” -- after all, the Buddha himself had to be with a woman to reach enlightenment.

The women also mentioned the “rampant” sex that the supposedly spiritual and abstemious monks practiced with each other in the Gelugpa sect. The women who were mothers spoke bitterly about the monastery’s confiscation of their young boys in Tibet. They claimed that when a boy cried for his mother, he would be told “Why do you cry for her, she gave you up--she's just a woman.”

The monks who were granted political asylum in California applied for public assistance. Lewis, herself a devotee for a time, assisted with the paperwork. She observes that they continue to receive government checks amounting to \$550 to \$700 per month along with Medicare. In addition, the monks reside rent free in nicely furnished apartments. “They pay no utilities, have free access to the Internet on computers provided for them, along with fax machines, free cell and home phones and cable TV.”

They also receive a monthly payment from their order, along with contributions and dues from their American followers. Some devotees eagerly carry out chores for the monks, including grocery shopping and cleaning their apartments and toilets. These same holy men, Lewis remarks, “have no problem criticizing Americans for their ‘obsession with material things.’”

To welcome the end of the old feudal theocracy in Tibet is not to applaud everything about Chinese rule in that country. This point is seldom understood by today’s Shangri-La believers in the West. The converse is also true: To denounce the Chinese occupation does not mean we have to romanticize the former feudal régime. Tibetans deserve to be perceived as actual people, not perfected spiritualists or innocent political symbols. “To idealize them,” notes Ma Jian, a dissident Chinese traveler to Tibet (now living in Britain), “is to deny them their humanity.”

One common complaint among Buddhist followers in the West is that Tibet’s religious culture is being undermined by the Chinese occupation. To some extent this seems to be the case. Many of the monasteries are closed, and much of the theocracy seems to have passed into history. Whether Chinese rule has brought betterment or disaster is not the central issue here. The question is what kind of country was old Tibet. What I am disputing is the supposedly pristine spiritual nature of that pre-invasion culture. We can advocate religious freedom and independence for a new Tibet without having to embrace the mythology about old Tibet. Tibetan feudalism was cloaked in Buddhism, but the two are not to be equated. In reality, old Tibet was not a Paradise Lost. It was a retrograde repressive theocracy of extreme privilege and poverty, a long way from Shangri-La.

Finally, let it be said that if Tibet's future is to be positioned somewhere within China's emerging free-market paradise, then this does not bode well for the Tibetans. China boasts a dazzling 8 percent economic growth rate and is emerging as one of the world's greatest industrial powers. But with economic growth has come an ever deepening gulf between rich and poor. Most Chinese live close to the poverty level or well under it, while a small group of newly brooded capitalists profit hugely in collusion with shady officials. Regional bureaucrats milk the country dry, extorting graft from the populace and looting local treasuries. Land grabbing in cities and countryside by avaricious developers and corrupt officials at the expense of the populace are almost everyday occurrences. Tens of thousands of grassroots protests and disturbances have erupted across the country, usually to be met with unforgiving police force. Corruption is so prevalent, reaching into so many places, that even the normally complacent national leadership was forced to take notice and began moving against it in late 2006.

Workers in China who try to organize labor unions in the corporate dominated "business zones" risk losing their jobs or getting beaten and imprisoned. Millions of business zone workers toil twelve-hour days at subsistence wages. With the health care system now being privatized, free or affordable medical treatment is no longer available for millions. Men have tramped into the cities in search of work, leaving an increasingly impoverished countryside populated by women, children, and the elderly. The suicide rate has increased dramatically, especially among women.

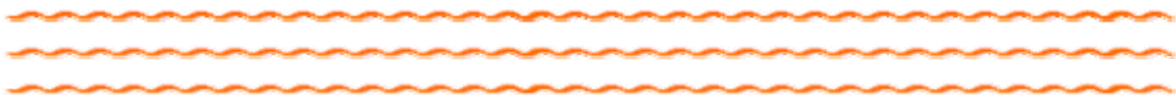
China's natural environment is sadly polluted. Most of its fabled rivers and many lakes are dead, producing massive fish die-offs from the billions of tons of industrial emissions and untreated human waste dumped into them. Toxic effluents, including pesticides and herbicides, seep into ground water or directly into irrigation canals. Cancer rates in villages situated along waterways have skyrocketed a thousand-fold. Hundreds of millions of urban residents breathe air rated as dangerously unhealthy, contaminated by industrial growth and the recent addition of millions of automobiles. An estimated 400,000 die prematurely every year from air pollution. Government environmental agencies have no enforcement power to stop polluters, and generally the government ignores or denies such problems, concentrating instead on industrial growth.

China's own scientific establishment reports that unless greenhouse gases are curbed, the nation will face massive crop failures along with catastrophic food and water shortages in the years ahead. In 2006-2007 severe drought was already afflicting southwest China.

If China is the great success story of speedy free market development, and is to be the model and inspiration for Tibet's future, then old feudal Tibet indeed may start looking a lot better than it actually was.

Biography

Michael Parenti received his Ph.D. in political science from Yale University. He has taught at a number of colleges and universities, in the United States and abroad. Some of his writings have been translated into Arabic, Azeri, Bangla, Chinese, Dutch, French, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Serbian, Spanish, Swedish and Turkish.



PART TWO: BACKGROUND OF THIS CONFLICT

(Helmut Gassner's speech has been the only outspoken and publically available document containing critical observation and well-founded research for a number of years and is still an excellent point of reference. Helmut Gassner is a monk whose root teacher has been the most venerable Geshe Rabten, chosen by HH the Dalai Lama as one of his two main philosophical assistants and sent by him to Switzerland, where he founded the still-flourishing Tharpa Choeling (renamed Rabten Choeling after his passing.

*Geshe Rabten has said of Dorje Shugden: **"This manifestation of the Buddha has no equal. If you truly wish to tame your mind, he will even give his heart to help you."***

Ven. Geshe Rabten's statement sums up the activity of an enlightened Dharma Protector and specifically of Dorje Shugden in a particularly moving way.)

Full text here:

<http://www.dorjeshugden.com/articles/HelmutGassner01.pdf>

(Ursula Bernis' paper is utterly unexcelled in its depth of research, understanding, and presentation of the interweaving complex spiritual, cultural and political dimensions of this apparent conflict. After years of research work including hundreds of interviews, the author passed away before its completion – what we have here, even though lacking final polishing, is a monumental contribution that is enormously convincing in its sheer authority and scientific, non-polemic approach.)

(Note: The Tibetan Government in Exile has to this day not allowed any fair discussion of this subject and the spiritual/historical arguments presented by them are easily refuted upon closer investigation. Note here for example how the 5th and 13th Dalai Lama's, whom HH the current 14th Dalai Lama quotes as having been against Dorje Shugden's propitiation, have composed a praise and crafted a statue [the former] and relied on his advice and praised eminent Gelugpa saints – Domo Geshe Rinpoche and Serkong Dorje Chang – as Je Tsongkhapa and Buddha in person respectively [the latter]. Bewilderingly, the same can be said even of HH the 14th Dalai Lama himself! If one reads his prayer to Dorje Shugden, he is clearly defined there as an enlightened being...)

Full text here:

<http://shugdensociety.info/Bernis0.html>

(A lovely example of very recent research, Trinley Kalsang's work here adds a most welcome addition to this discussion.)

Trode Khangsar
Dorje Shugden's Ornament in Lhasa's Mandala
By Trinley Kalsang



Just as the Buddhist monuments and structures in the Indian subcontinent are undeniable testaments to Buddhism's past establishment in these regions, similarly Trode Khangsar (spro bde khang gsar) in the heart of Lhasa illustrates how the protector deity Dorje Shugden was officially established in Tibet. In the 17th century Trode Khangsar was designated as a "protector house" (btsan khang) for the deity Dorje Shugden by the Fifth Dalai Lama. By the end of the 17th century its role was expanded as it was entrusted to the Gelug monastery Riwo Choling (ri bo chos gling) by the Fifth Dalai Lama's regent¹ (sde sris) Sangye Gyatso. As a result relations between Dorje Shugden and the Gelug sect, the Tibetan government, Ganden Podrang (dga' ldan pho brang), were firmly established early in the existence of this deity.

Lhasa Real Estate: Location, Location, Location

Trode Khangsar is part of the dwindling a number of historical buildings amongst a sea of encroaching development in the Lhasa valley. Not only is the city expanding on a course to soon exceed the valley itself, but historical buildings in its epicenter, critical elements of Central Asia's holy city, are being torn down and replaced with modern urban housing, commercial buildings and other structures.

The Tibet Heritage Fund has been chronicling historical buildings in Lhasa since the 1990's as they disappear like icicles in the sun. They provide this startling statistic²: "Out of the 600 buildings recorded by Peter Aufschnaiter in the city's central area in 1948, an average of 35 buildings per year have been torn down since 1993, except in 1999 and 2000." In other words by 2011 virtually all of the historical buildings will be gone except those few that enjoy a protected status.

The lot of Trode Khangsar itself exemplifies this trend. A modern building obscures the front western half of the building. Another small historical protector house on its lot dedicated to Dorje Shugden's attendant deity Khache Marpo was removed in the 1990's to make room for surrounding development. The Dagpo Drumpa mansion, a historical neighbor building, was

demolished and replaced with other structures in the late 1990's. The basement of Trode Khangsar is now used as a dwelling (TOL, 196-198).

Lhasa's Inner Sanctum

Like many other historic religious structures, Trode Khangsar is just outside the perimeter of the Barkor (bar skor). The Barkor is the innermost circumambulation or pilgrimage route as it encircles the Tsuklhakhang temple in the center of historical Lhasa. This is Lhasa's holiest temple, which hosts the Jowo Shakyamuni Buddha statue³. The Tsuklhakhang is the center of the Lhasa's mandala like design, which the city has followed since the seventh century when the king Songtsen Gampo extended the establishment of Buddhism in Tibet.

This mandala design included various shrines in groups of four just outside the perimeter of the Barkor in a sparse, peripheral arrangement. In particular there were Rigsum Lhakhang⁴ of four cardinal directions (phyogs bzhi'i rigs gsum mgon po lha khang), another set of Rigsum Lhakhang for the four intermediate directions, and four protector houses (btsan khang). Although Trode Khangsar is not included in this group of four, it

exists in the same zone, being just outside the perimeter of the Barkor. As for the exact location of Trode Khangsar, it is just south of the Barkor, approximately 200 meters south of the Tsuklhakhang. From a Tibetan pilgrimage (GCJ, 33) guide:

Trode Khangsar is also orally pronounced "Pute Khangsar". It is also referred in shortened form as Trokhang. On the east side of Dagpo Drumpa [mansion] in the Pal Ling [neighborhood] you will encounter this tsen khang [protector house].

Encompassing all of historic Lhasa is the Lingkor (gling skor), the outermost circumambulation route. It encircles the Barkor on the south east side and extends far to the northwest to encompass the majestic Potala palace. The Lingkor passes by an access way on the south east corner of its loop that leads north to Trode Khangsar, which is accessible at about 100 meters. Pilgrims visiting Lhasa for the last 300 years have been circumambulating Trode Khangsar whether they were aware of its existence and significance or not.

The Role of a Tsen Khang or Protector House

The Trode Khangsar temple is classified as a tsen khang. A tsen is a type of fierce, warrior-like spirit. Most of these tsen are regional deities (yul lha) not even stable and reliable enough to be recognized as local protector deities. Yet this term only provides an etymological origin for term tsen khang, which in context should be considered a "protector house", as the tsen khang-s in Lhasa are integrated with monastic institutions and serve multiple roles. Moreover the tsen khang-s in Lhasa are related to protectors that are not simply part of the tsen class. ⁵ Temples of Lhasa gives an overview of the nature and role of the tsen khang-s in Lhasa (TOL, 173): "Several Lhasa tsen khang-s became monastic institutions, usually branches of a larger community, and even participated in affairs of state. The oracle would then generally be a monk, and caretaker monks would service the shrine... They were all branches of larger Gelug communities in the Ganden Po-trang period, but their earlier history is obscure." Although most of these tsen khang-s predate the establishment of the Gelug sect, this later transition to institutionalization and entrustment to the Gelug monasteries was culminated at the time of the Fifth Dalai Lama.⁶

Of the original group of four tsen khang-s mentioned earlier, each one has its own history and houses a particular protector.

1. Rabsel - The Rabsel tsen khang is for Lutsen Thutob Wangchug who is the protector of the Jowo Shakyamuni statue in the Tsuklhangkhang. This naga spirit protected the Jowo Shakyamuni statue originally in India. Later, when it was transferred to China and finally to Tibet this protector followed the statue. Rabsel tsen khang was originally managed by the Nyingma sect, but it was transferred to Sera Me monastery by the Fifth Dalai Lama (GCJ, 32).
2. Karmashag - Sera Me was also entrusted by the Fifth Dalai Lama (GCJ, 32) to manage Karmashag tsen khang although it was originally associated with the Karmapa (TOL, 183).
3. Darpoling - Darpoling is associated with the Lhasa valley protector Chingkarwa and during the Fifth Dalai Lama's reign it was entrusted to the Dalai Lama's personal monastery Namgyal (TOL, 175).
4. Tengyeling - Finally, Tengyeling, a regency seat owned by Demo Rinpoche, contained a tsen khang for the protector Tsiu Marpo, a protector associated with Samye and bound by Padmasambhava (GDT, 115).

Although Trode Khangsar is not part of these original four, its purposes and relation to the Gelug institution, Riwo Choling (ri bo chos gling) in its particular case, does not differ. However, its relatively later origin gives a better understanding of its inception. One unresolved matter is regarding the early history of Trode Khangsar's related tsen khang on the same plot of land. One possibility is that the previously existent tsen khang on this lot, for the tsen spirit Khache Marpo, was related to Tsiu Marpo. Khache Marpo is one of the "seven brothers" ('bar ba spun bdun) of Tsiu Marpo's retinue (TSH, 55), and also assumed the role as Dorje Shugden's attendant (bka' sdod) when Dorje Shugden came into existence in the 17th century.

The Fifth Dalai Lama Gains Power over Tibet

Just as historical buildings in Lhasa are becoming sparser by modern development, so are accounts of Trode Khangsar's origin. A short chronology and a background of the key figures here will clarify the events leading up to the founding of Trode Khangsar. The Fifth Dalai Lama, Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso (1617-1682), was the first Dalai Lama to hold temporal power in Tibet. Earlier in his life the influence of the short lived empire in the neighboring region of Tsang (gtsang) exerted its control over central Tibet (dbus) and was at odds with the affairs of the Gelug sect in both regions (AOK, 32-39).

The Fourth Dalai Lama, Yonten Gyatso, was Mongolian and his incarnations came to be revered by the Mongolians. Sonam Rabten was the Fifth Dalai Lama's associate⁷ since his recognition at childhood (FDL, 256). He sought the help of the Qoshot Mongols to intervene in the situation in Tibet (HPP, 447). Eventually the Mongol leader Gushri Khan came to Tibet and proceeded to overthrow the king of Tsang, Karma Tenkyong Wangpo (kar ma bstan skyong dbang po), in 1642. Effective power was granted from Gushri Khan, who retained the title of "King of Tibet", to the Fifth Dalai Lama through appointment of various governors⁸ (sde sri) (HPP, 448). The Fifth Dalai Lama traveled to China to meet with the Qing Emperor in 1652 which sealed his recognition of sovereignty⁹ (FDL, 263). Other military campaigns went eastward to Kham and seized control of Ngari, Western Tibetan from Ladakh's control (TGF, 13). As a result, the provinces of Central Tibet, Kham, Tsang and Amdo all came under the control of newly created Tibetan government called the Ganden Phodrang under the leadership of the Dalai Lama.

The Fifth Dalai Lama and his peer Tulku Dragpa Gyaltzen

In Drepung monastery¹⁰ near Lhasa at this time there were two principal recognized reincarnation lineages: the upper and lower residences. Tulku Dragpa Gyaltzen (1619-1656) was the recognized reincarnation of the upper residence (gzim khang gong ma) just as the Fifth Dalai Lama was the

recognition of the lower residence (gzim khang 'og ma) (ATT, 129). This was the Dalai Lama's original reincarnation title, while "Dalai" was an epithet given by the Mongolians. Both reincarnations were students of the great Gelug master Lobsang Chokyi Gyaltsen and took Vinaya ordination¹¹ him on the same year of 1638 (COT, 192).

As expected both masters were spiritually realized beings, but according to the worldly view it would appear there was a rivalry due to the various power struggles by the administration of the Fifth Dalai Lama. In 1634, before the arrival of Gushri Khan and overthrow of the Tsang kingdom it is clear, according to the Fifth Dalai Lama's autobiography, that there were no personal rivalries (SPF, 12): "From this time right through to the iron-serpent [year] (1641) the incarnate lama of the gZims-khang-gong, next to me in rank, continued to attend the smon lam [prayer] (f. 75a5)."

However Sonam Rabten saw this equal status as a threat to the Dalai Lama's prestige. An incident in the Fifth Dalai Lama's autobiography recounts how in 1639 Sonam Rabten objected to a lineage prayer listing Tulku Dragpa Gyaltsen's previous incarnations, and this resulted in a disagreement with a senior monk (SPF, 12-13). As illustrated in the overthrow of the Tsang regime described above, Sonam Rabten was regarded as an assertive figure¹². On the eve of assumption of power, he allegedly killed Karma Tenkyong Wangpo, the deposed Tsang king, himself (AOK, 39) after Gushri's forces were victorious.

Sonam Rabten's protege, Nangso Norbu¹³ already had some previous entanglements with Tulku Dragpa Gyaltsen's family called the Gad-kha-sa. According to the Fifth Dalai Lama's autobiography in 1638 he seized their land after some members of the family were killed by Mongols (SPF, 13). After the assumption of power by Fifth Dalai Lama and Sonam Rabten, there were more signs of rivalry against Tulku Dragpa Gyaltsen. From the Fifth Dalai Lama's autobiography (SPF, 15): "until then [his] seating and so forth were accorded the respect due to a great lama, but since the water-horse [year] (1642) he had been downgraded to the third rank by the decision of the Regent [de sris Sonam Rabten] himself. (f137a1-3)."

On the year of Tulku Dragpa Gyaltsen's demise, 1656, the Fifth Dalai Lama himself, according to his autobiography, set off to perform a ritual on behalf of Tulku Dragpa Gyaltsen who had fallen ill, but his plan was called off by an order of Sonam Rabten (SPF, 15). Using this illness as a cover, Sonam Rabten and Nangso Norbu¹⁴, with the motivation to suppress Tulku Dragpa Gyaltsen's rising fame, murdered him (SPF, 16). The Dalai Lama's autobiography notes Nangso Norbu took on the aspect of guilt for his murder (DCG, 104), which is the only authoritative source on culpability of this incident.

Normally after an incarnate lama dies his successor is sought out. After Tulku Dragpa Gyaltsen's murder there was never another reincarnation of the upper residence sought or recognized. Instead, according to the Fifth Dalai Lama's autobiography, on the advice of the Nechung oracle, Tulku Dragpa Gyaltsen's residence at Drepung was dismantled and his reliquaries were relocated by Sonam Rabten (SPF, 18).

A Spiritual View of This Incident: the Birth of Dorje Shugden

This gruesome incident was merely a condition necessary to allow Tulku Dragpa Gyaltsen to fulfill a pledge from several lifetimes earlier. According to the law of interdependent origination, a rule Buddha posits as definitive truth, Tulku Dragpa Gyaltsen arose as the protector deity Dorje Shugden as a result of being killed¹⁵. Tulku Dragpa Gyaltsen made a promise lifetimes earlier to the official state protector, Nechung (gnas chung), in the presence of Je Tsongkhapa, the founder of the Gelug

sect, to become a protector himself. The situation with Sonam Rabten, provided the catalyst or conditions (rkyen) for this to happen.

Although this story may sound peculiar to non-Tibetans¹⁶, nearly all protectors in Tibetan Buddhism have an origination story in which a set of grisly events leads to their transformation into a protector deity. This account is relatively mild by comparison to other protectors such as Pehar, Four Faced and Four armed Mahakala and Tsiu Marpo¹⁷. Not only that, Tulku Dragpa Gyaltsen's life and murder has been historically accepted by many as true, not a myth¹⁸, with no official explanation why his reincarnation lineage was not sought out or continued after this.

Trode Khangsar is Offered to Dorje Shugden by the Fifth Dalai Lama

As a result of the incarnate master Tulku Dragpa Gyaltsen of being killed there were many ill omens and strange occurrences in Lhasa that year that even affected the Dalai Lama himself according to his autobiography (ESG, 119). At first the Fifth Dalai sought to subdue the effects by inviting masters to subdue Dorje Shugden through wrathful rituals. This was not ultimately successful.

As for the final events that led up to his reconciliation of the events regarding Tulku Dragpa Gyaltsen and his recognition of Dorje Shugden as a protector, Kangyur Rinpoche gives the following account (TSH, 32-34):

The Fifth Dalai was on retreat in the Potala when the Potala began to shake.

When the Potala began to shake Dorje Shugden had his right foot pressing on the top of the "mi drug" boulder mountain [smi drug rdza ri] and his left foot pressing on the top of Drepung Gepel mountain. His pressed down on the Potala with his trident... The Fifth Dalai Lama felt remorseful and confessed to Dorje Shugden. He founded Trode Khangsar in which he placed a statue of Dorje Shugden. He then wrote Manjushri's Own Words [a famous Lam-Rim text], and offered it to Panchen Rinpoche who was almost 100 years old. Panchen Rinpoche said, "I am a happy old monk, now by this the Gelug tradition will flourish" and he passed away soon after.

This account of how the Fifth Dalai Lama acquiesced to Dorje Shugden through a vision again may be difficult to accept as historical. As shown with the institutionalization of the various protectors, both secular and mystic affairs are difficult to separate from the accounts of the Fifth Dalai Lama's life¹⁹. The nature of his retreat at this time was on visionary rituals. In his autobiography it is well documented that he regularly consulted with the state oracle, Nechung, on the important matters regarding the state.

As for how the Fifth Dalai Lama initially designated Trode Khangsar to Dorje Shugden, this account gives a historical account. From Choepal's pilgrimage guide (GCJ, 33):

As for the tsen khang, the Fifth Dalai Lama offered it as an abode [gnas] to Dorje Shugden. Originally, because this place had a "picnic house" [spro khang] that belonged to the Fifth Dalai Lama, it came to be called Trode Khangsar. Initially this tsen khang had statues of Dorje Shugden and Setrap and was also used for invocations. Later Desi Sangye Gyatso, because he earlier lived at Riwo Choling monastery, entrusted ownership of the tsen khang to Riwo Choling. By this Riwo Choling was required to send 11 monks and an oracle to permanently stay in Trode Khangsar.

Thus the official establishment of Dorje Shugden begins with the Fifth Dalai Lama and is further culminated through Sangye Gyatso who ruled Tibet (as sde srid) before and after the Fifth Dalai Lama's demise. Although Desi Sangye Gyatso is very famous and well known, there is very little translated into English about his eventful life. A glimpse into his life and education is required to fully understand the implications of the entrustment of Trode Khangsar to Riwo Choling.

Riwo Choling Monastery: Sangye Gyatso's Sabbatical

Sangye Gyatso (1653-1705) was remarkably ambitious. He was born in 1653, about ten years after the Dalai Lama assumed power in Tibet. Not only did he assume the role of governance (sde srid) at the young age of 26, in 1679, he was a prolific scholar that wrote definitive books on Tibetan medicine, astrology and history. His rule was ambitious as he completed the construction of the Potala, established the Chagpori medical school and other governmental reforms. He hid the Fifth Dalai Lama's death in 1682 for most of his reign to avoid interference from foreign powers such as the Qing Empire²⁰.

Sangye Gyatso was a nephew to Trinley Gyatso (ESG, 112), the regent appointed by the Fifth Dalai Lama after Sonam Rabten. Sangye Gyatso first came to the Potala in 1660, when he was eight, and was personally looked after and mentored by the Dalai Lama himself (HPP, 453). In 1675 he was asked to become a regent, which he declined in favor of tending to a spiritual life (HPP, 455). In 1679, after the interim desi was no longer able to serve, he finally relented to accepting the desi position after the Fifth Dalai Lama demanded it based on the Lhamo oracle's advice, his relation to the former desi and predictions in various terms²¹ (HPP, 455).

Riwo Choling is a remote, but relatively large Gelug monastery south of Lhasa in the Yarlung valley region. The origin of Riwo Choling monastery goes back to the 14th century when Je Tsonkhapa was traveling through the area with some other monks. This area contains two mountains and Je Tsonkhapa remarked since it was shaped like a sword in the future it would be a place amicable to learning²². The sword is the implement of the Bodhisattva of Wisdom, Manjushri, and represents discriminating wisdom.

Yarlung valley contains many important holy sites such as Tradrug (khra 'brug), the first temple in Tibet created by the Dharma king Songtsen Gampo. The Yarlung valley and its temples have been very important spiritually and geopolitically throughout Tibetan history. The Fifth Dalai Lama and Desi Sangye Gyatso both integrated centers of the dynastic period into their ritual calendar to reconstruct themselves in the tradition of "rightful perpetrators of the Buddhist tradition in Tibet." (TF, 33). The Ganden Phodrang invested a lot into restoring Tradrug, such as furnishing a golden roof and sponsoring daily rituals such as butter lamp offerings similar to that done in Jokhang in Lhasa (TF, 34).

Due to the geographic proximity of Tradrug to Riwo Choling, monks from Riwo Choling primarily rendered service to Tradrug (TF, 31). Riwo Choling was known as one of the residences of Dorje Shugden (TF, 110), and Dorje Shugden was also known as the protector (srung ma) of Riwo Choling (TF, 312). The village below Riwo Choling is called Tsharu, which is 2 km south of Tradrug, the oldest temple in Tibet built by Songtsen Gampo. From Choepel's pilgrimage guide (GCJ, 48): This monastery was initially founded by Je Tsonkhapa's disciple Khedrup Dondrup Palzang in the 15th century. At first it had one college with 8 monks but gradually grew to one hundred monks. As this is the monastery famed for where the Desi Sangye Gyatso entered the religious life, there is a three story fortress of his on the side. As Desi Sangye Gyatso looked after this monastery it came to be protected by the government. Monks of this monastery were permitted to study at the three great monasteries [Ganden, Sera, Drepung], Ngari Dago college, and traditional Tibetan medical schools such as Chagpori [lcags po ri]. You will encounter here a one story building that hosts a silver reliquary ornamented by gold which contains the skull [broken into 8 pieces that has 21 self-arisen Taras visible] of Marpa's son, Darma Dode, placed by the Fifth Dalai Lama at this monastery. You will also find a three story Maitreya statue and a monk assembly hall that has 30 pillars [which indicates the size is large].

Tragically Sangye Gyatso's life was cut short after the resumption of power by Qoshot Mongolians by Lhazang Khan, a descendent of Gushri Khan. There were controversies about him hiding the Fifth Dalai Lama's death from the Qing emperor, Kangxi, and finally the situation with the Sixth Dalai he recognized not meeting the Mongolians' criteria. However, many of his and Fifth Dalai Lama's reforms left their mark on Tibet and its monastic and various institutions for centuries to come.

Trode Khangsar: the Protector House Itself

The Trode Khansar tsen khang itself is a two story structure. Previously there was also a third story that housed the Dorje Shugden oracle, but it was removed during the Cultural Revolution (TOL, 196). The first story is slightly below ground level and is not used for religious purposes. On the south side stairs lead up to the front entrance which is enclosed in a portico. This portico's walls are painted with the four direction protectors (rgyal chen sde bzhi) as is typical with most temples and monasteries.

The front entrance leads directly into the main eight pillar hall of the building and is approximately 10 meters wide. On the east and west sides of the main hall are residential rooms for monks. Behind the main hall, protruding from the north side of the building is a room (lcog)²³ used for rituals by the resident monks. This room has a skylight and black colored walls with paintings of various protectors. On the north side of the room are statues of statues of Je Tsongkhapa, founder of the Gelug sect, and his principal students Gyaltsab Je and Khedrup Je.

The murals of the main hall are of important historical significance. In relation to Dorje Shugden are murals of his Jataka ('khrung rabs) or previous life stories. This includes a mural featuring his lives as previous masters:

- 1 Manjushri during the life of Buddha,
- 2 Birwawa as one of the Mahasiddhas in medieval India,
- 3 Khache Panchen Shakya Shri as a Kashmiri scholar that traveled to Tibet and disseminated some important lineages,
- 4 Sakya Pandita and Buton as early Tibetan translators and scholars,
- 5 Panchen Sonam Dragpa, Sonam Yeshe Wangpo, Ngawang Sonam Geleg Pelzang and Tulku Dragpa Gyaltsen as a series of masters of the Gelug tradition founded in the 14th century.

The Temples of Lhasa also has photographs of murals of Manjushri as Jampel Mawa'i Senge (TOL, 198) and Avalokiteshvara as Yellow Amoghapasa²⁴ (TOL, 194). Other murals feature important stories of how he was urged to become a protector in the presence of Je Tsongkhapa as his student Dulzin Dragpa Gyaltsen. In particular Je Tsongkhapa is surrounded by other monks and depicts the protector Nechung arriving riding a snow lion holding a bow and arrow. Nechung in the form of a boy interrupted the teachings three times when Dulzin Dragpa Gyaltsen told him to stop. Dulzin Dragpa Gyaltsen is then depicted standing up, at which time he promises Nechung to protect Je Tsongkhapa's tradition in the future. Next Je Tsongkhapa is depicted as being delighted and offers Dulzin Dragpa Gyaltsen a skull cup filled with nectar²⁵.

There are several popular known manifestations of Dorje Shugden, such as him riding a black horse which is popular in the Sakya tradition. The form of him riding a snow lion and holding a sword is the most popular in the Gelug tradition starting in probably the 19th century. One interesting difference in the iconography of the several of the statues and paintings of Dorje Shugden in Trode Khangsar is that he is holding a club instead of a sword. The significance of this particular iconographic detail is due the manifestation the Fifth Dalai Lama witnessed, which is evident in his praise and confession written by him:

"Robes of a monk, crown adorned with rhinoceros leather hat,
Right hand holds ornate club, left holds a human heart,
Riding various mounts such as nagas and garudas,
Who subdues the mammo's of the charnel grounds, praise to you!"

Trode Khangsar throughout History

The Tibet Heritage Fund database lists origin of the Trode Khangsar building to the 17th century²⁶. Like most of the other temples in Lhasa, it was desecrated during the Cultural Revolution and left untended until the 1980's. It is currently an active monastery, managed by Riwo Choling housing seven of their monks and was restored starting in 1986 (TOL, 195-196).

Unlike the Fifth Dalai Lama, the Seventh Dalai Lama Kelsang Gyatso (1708-1757) was not involved much in secular affairs but was an erudite master. In his collected works there is a text on fasting (smyung gnas) through the practice of Avalokiteshvara in the tradition of the great Kashmiri nun Palmo. Listed among those who requested this teaching are Jaya Pandita, Tagphu Tulku Lobsang Tenpa'i Gyaltzen and Lhasa Trode Khangsar assembly amongst many others.

At the time of the Eighth Dalai Lama, Jampel Gyatso (1758 – 1804), there was an Amban (an official from the Chinese Qing dynasty) present in Lhasa. This Amban had some important matters which he brought before the Dorje Shugden oracle at Trode Khangsar. The answers to these questions were brought to the Qing Emperor Daoguang (1782 1850). Daoguang rewarded Dorje Shugden with a pandit hat and official praise. The Eighth Dalai Lama, Retreng Rinpoche, the Amban, the Dorje Shugden oracle and various official monks partook of a grand ceremony in the courtyard of Trode Khangsar, and the pandit award was placed over the door (DCG, f.139-140).

A survey of Tibetan wood printing blocks in monasteries was conducted while Tagdrag (stag brag) Rinpoche was regent (1941-1950)²⁷. Included in the catalog are contents of the various hostels (khams tshan) of the three major monasteries (Sera, Ganden, Drepung), various regent seats, various hermitages and Trode Khangsar. It lists Trode Khangsar having wood blocks for having an extensive Dorje Shugden fulfill ritual (chos skyong shugs ldan gyi bskang chog rgyas pa) authored by Ganden Jangtse Serkong Dorje Change, the most important Gelug Lama at the turn of the 19th century.

Conclusion

Many of the events during the Fifth Dalai's time are shrouded in conflicting accounts of events and various power struggles. One thing is certain: from the Fifth Dalai onward the Gelug tradition enjoyed more power and its influence spread to the nearly all of the Mongol tribes and even to the Qing Emperors themselves. On the other hand, from this the Gelug tradition suffered from more power struggles, scandals involving enlightened beings and opened the door in Tibet to the influence from foreign powers.

Further complicating deciphering the history is the fact that Tibetans did not write extensive accounts on the history of events and various buildings and mostly relied on disseminating history orally. Many can personally attest to the last generation of Tibetan-born lamas and geshe being master story tellers, leaving their audience in a suspended state of drama while they recount events from 500 years ago down to the most minute detail. The objective with this is in imparting the moral of the story with an unforgettable impact, not for historical documentation.

In today's modern climate oral history is treated with suspicion, as it has been in the West, as it is often exaggerated or altered to suit political inclinations. Most of the educated Tibetans that were knowledgeable of Tibet's history have already passed away. Furthermore, as Tibet never even had typewriters or a modern printing press, many of the writings not having wood blocks for reproduction were lost after the Chinese invasion and consequent systematic destruction of these materials in the 1950's and 1960's. Nevertheless the mere existence of a temple with centuries old paintings can hardly be dismissed as important source for researching the historical development of the deity Dorje Shugden in Tibet.

Ironically, writing this now is probably easier than it would have been ten years previously. More information is available and searchable to the masses thanks to fruitful projects such as Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center and the Tibet Heritage Fund. This short account could be expanded on as more sources are found.

Images

Image 1: Original historic murals in the main hall depicting the earlier incarnations (Jataka) of Tulku Dragma Gyaltsen, amongst other figures.



Image 2: This is inside of the portico, on the east side of the entrance to the main hall. Depicted are restored murals depicting two of the four direction protectors (rgyal chen sde bzhi).



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1 The word sde sris in general means governor, one who holds governmental power. In some cases, I will translate the word as governor, in other contexts as regent, such as when there is no other contending peer power, and other contexts just the word sde sris itself.

2 THF: demolition map subheading:

http://www.tibetheritagefund.org/old_web/2_lhasa/2_04_en.html.

3 This statue was crafted in India, allegedly within several hundred years after Buddha passed away. It was later brought to China. During the 7th century it was brought to Tibet by the King Songtsen Gampo's Chinese wife.

4 Rigsum refers to the "Three Lords", who are the main bodhisattvas: Avalokiteshvara, Manjushri and Vajrapani. In particular each embodies all of the Buddhas' compassion, wisdom and power respectively. There is a saying without all three of these there is no Buddha. These particular shrines are dedicated to these three bodhisattvas.

5 There is a nominal division of eight types of spirits (lha srin sde brgyad) in Tibetan Buddhism of which one type is tsen. The protector Tsiu Marpo is sometimes considered a yaksha (gnod sbyin) and sometimes considered a tsen. It is unclear if protector of Rabsel is a naga (klu) or tsen. Dorje Shugden is usually considered to be in the gyelpo (rgyal po) class, although there is an occasional reference to him as a tsen. This may indicate sometimes tsen can be used more loosely as a more general term to refer to any other one of these types of spirits as a protector. Therefore translation as "protector house" is appropriate.

6 From Women in Tibet (WIT, 151) "It is well-known that at the time of the Fifth Dalai Lama oracle came to occupy significant positions in the establishment, since they were of primary importance in installing new reincarnations as the head of state. The prominence of high-level oracles like Nechung, Gadong and Lhamo Choyong in political and religious affairs goes back to this era... In a 1792 decree the emperor Qianlong confirmed the use of oracles in selecting the Dalai and Panchen Lamas."

7 The term "associate" is used due to the number of roles he assumed in his relation to the Fifth Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government, Ganden Phodrang. Ahmad's translation of Desi Sangye Gyatso's biography of the Fifth Dalai Lama notes Sonam Choepel, who is also called Sonam Rabten, was present when the Dalai Lama first came to Drepung when he was 6 years old. He was also the treasurer for the Fourth Dalai Lama at the end of this life, Yonten Gyatso, which led him to be involved in recognizing his successor.

8 According to Richardson, the title king of Tibet was kept by the Gushri Khan and his descendents who provided armed protection to the Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama was to be the spiritual leader and appointed various governors (sde sris) to manage the state affairs. It appears these various roles were never clearly defined and as a result most likely lead to the Qoshot Mongolian resumption of power in Tibet by Qoshot Lhazang Khan, a descendent of Gushri Khan, overthrowing and killing Desi Sangye Gyatso over 50 years later.

9 Again this is a sensitive interpretation of the significance of this event. On one hand its

significance is downplayed by those to assert Tibet's independence over China. On the other hand it is an event that clearly indicates the Fifth Dalai Lama's rise to sovereignty.

10 One of the three principal Gelug monasteries (gdan sa gsum).

11 In the original Mulasarvastivada tradition of monk ordination which was brought to Tibet (smad 'dul).

12 There are noted disagreements between domineering Sonam Rabten and the Dalai Lama himself. Also, according to a Cultural History of Tibet by Snelling and Richardson Sonam Rabten was "a capable, though arrogant and self-seeking man, and he is said to have urged the Dalai Lama to assert himself over the Pan-chen Lama, his own teacher, an old and greatly revered figure."

13 According to some Nangso Norbu is Sonam Rabten's son, and to some his nephew. According to Yamaguchi in SPF he is adopted son (sras po). The safest term is protege, because whether or not he is a blood relative he was apparently groomed by Sonam Rabten. Nangso means majordomo, and Nangso Norbu was also a local governor (sde ba) in the Dalai Lama's administration. After Sonam Rabten's death there was a standoff between Nangso Norbu and the Fifth Dalai Lama in 1659. The Fifth Dalai Lama did not want Nangso Norbu to replace Sonam Rabten as sde sris, but Nangso Norbu would not stand down. Many lamas in Lhasa, including the Panchen Rinpoche, became involved as the use of force loomed. Ultimately Trinley Gyatso was appointed sde sris by the Fifth Dalai Lama (SPF, 20-23).

14 According to TBRC, which cites bod rig pa'i tshig mdzod chen mo shes bya rab gsal, responsibility of his murder rests with nang so nor bu.

15 Just the same as a reincarnate lama (sprul sku) depends on a father and mother to take birth as a human Buddha (skye ba sprul sku), all the conditions consistent with the phenomenal world must be met. Similarly, a state of anger, such as when one is murdered, is concomitant with taking birth as a spirit.

16 Whether one accepts protector deities as true or not, they have been officially involved in the Mongolian and Tibetan government's affairs for at least the last 350 years. Moreover, whoever has witnessed an oracle under the influence of a recognized deity such as Dorje Shugden will mostly likely realize it is not an act. For more account read....

17 For these accounts see Ladang Kalsang's The Guardian Deities of Tibet.

18 There are some accounts that claim he committed suicide but these most likely distorted oral accounts or politically motivated to cover up the Fifth Dalai Lama's administration.

19 The Fifth Dalai Lama has an entire volume of experiences from retreats called a secret biography in which various visions of his are described. This has been translated into English as Visions of the Fifth Dalai Lama. Not only that, there is an entire tradition of teachings, called pure vision (dag snang), for meditation practices passed down since this time that are based on the visions of the Fifth Dalai Lama as well.

20 This caused a strong response from the Qing Emperor Kangxi, who ordered an edict built at the Potala. See Ching dynasty inscriptions at Lhasa by Hugh Edward Richardson for a translation of this edict.

21 The claim by the terma is the Fifth Dalai Lama was the reincarnation of the eighth century king of Tibet Trisong Detsen, and Desi Sangye Gyatso was the reincarnation of his son Mu-ne Tsan-po (ESG, 114).

22 Source: interview with anonymous visitor to Riwo Choline in the 1940's 3/2008.

23 The word lcog refers to the shape of a building, which is square but walls slightly taper inward going toward the ceiling. This shape of the room is typically used for protectors and has come to be used interchangeably as the protector room.

24 There is a tradition of Yellow Amoghapasa coming from Kashmir Pandit Shakya Shri (kha che paN chen), a previous life of Tulku Dragpa Gyaltsen, which is probably why this mural is present.

25 Source: interview 2/2008, with anonymous person who stayed at the neighboring Trijang Labrang in the 1940's before the Chinese invasion.

26 THF archive database [http://www.tibetheritagefund.org/old_web/item CA90](http://www.tibetheritagefund.org/old_web/item_CA90).

27 See Three Karchacks (Gedan sungrab minyam gyunphel series, v. 13), published 1970 New Delhi: Gangs can gyi ljongs su bka' dang bstan bcos sogs kyi glegs bam spar gzhi ji ltar yod pa rnam nas dkar chag spar thor phyogs tsam du bkod pa phan bde'i pad tshad 'byed pa'i nyin byed.



PART THREE: SPIRITUAL BACKGROUND

(The most definitive and complete document on VAJRADHARA DORJE SHUGDEN, his nature, function and history, written by His Holiness the Dalai Lama's root Guru, Kyabje Trijang Dorje Chang.)

Full text here:

<http://www.dorjeshugden.com/articles/musicdelighting.pdf>



(The prayers composed by the 5th and 14th Dalai Lamas. Perhaps the briefest clear indication that this conflict is fabricated and has nothing to do with Dorje Shugden.)

PRAYER BY THE FIFTH DALAI LAMA TO GYELCHEN DORJE SHUGDEN

HUM

**Though unmoving from the sphere of primordial spontaneity,
With wrathful turbulent power, swifter than lightning,
Endowed with heroic courage to judge good and bad,
I invite you with faith, please come to this place!**

**Robes of a monk, crown adorned with rhinoceros leather hat,
Right hand holds ornate club, left holds a human heart,
Riding various mounts such as nagas and garudas,
Who subdues the mammo's of the charnal grounds, praise to you!**

**Samaya substances, offerings and tormas, outer, inner and secret,
Favorite visual offerings and various objects are arranged.
Although, previously, my wishes were a bit dense,
Do not stop your powerful apparitions, I reveal and confess!**

**Now respectfully praising with body, speech, and mind,
For us, the masters, disciples, benefactors and entourages,
Provide the good and avert the bad!
Bring increase like the waxing moon in spiritual and temporal realms!**

**Moreover, swiftly accomplishing all wishes,
According to our prayers, bestow the supreme effortlessly!
And like the jewel that bestows all wishes,
Always protect us with the Three Jewels!**



MELODY OF THE UNCEASING VAJRA

A Propitiation of Mighty Gyalchen Dorje Shugden By His oliness the 14th Dalai Lama

HUM

**Glory of the wisdom, compassion and power of infinite Buddhas
Miraculously powerful protector of Manjusri Tsongkhapa's Teachings
Arisen as a lord of all wrathful worldly hosts
Come from the abodes of Tushita, Kechara, and so forth!**

**Prostrating with devotion of body, speech, and mind
I confess all mistakes and faults in which
Out of delusion, I have contradicted your holy mind:
Accept with forbearance and show your smiling face!**

**Arising from the sport of non-dual bliss and void
Are offerings and torma of flesh and blood heaped like a mountain
First portions of milk, yogurt, beer and tea swirling like the ocean**

**Auspicious signs and substances and various animals
Peaceful and wrathful ornaments, enemy-destroying weapons and armor
Amassed samaya substances, outer, inner, and secret, without exception!**

**Having fulfilled your heart commitment and purified degeneration
By making these actually arranged and visualized offerings
Increase Lozang the Victorious One's Teachings
And the life span and activities of the Teachings' upholders!
Further the happiness of beings in the Gaden [Podrang] dominion!**

**Especially pacify all harm to us, the yogis and entourages
That arises because of previous karma and immediate conditions
And spontaneously accomplish, just as we wish
All good things, both spiritual and temporal!**

**Grind to dust without remainder
Enemy hordes that think and act perversely
Towards the teachings and lay and ordained people
With potent, accurate, powerful great vajra fire!**

**Especially, cause the saffron-clad community of Dungkar Monastery
Brightly beautiful in bonds of pure morality
To soar the path of immortal liberation
On unified wings of Sutra and Tantra!**

**In brief, we enthrone you, O Deity, as the supreme
Collected nature of all Gurus and Protective Deities!
From densely gathered clouds of the four activities
Pour down a cool rain of the two siddhis!**



(Another gem from Ursula Bernis' uncompleted work: the biography of one of Tibet's greatest saints – Domo Geshe Rinpoche. Domo Geshe Rinpoche (also spelled 'Tomo' or 'Tromo' Geshe Rinpoche) was beyond the shadow of a doubt one of the greatest Mahasiddhas in Tibetan history. His kindness and compassion are still legendary throughout Tibet. People of all traditions held him in utmost reverence, many never even knew which of the four schools he belonged to. In the Dromo region many added his name to the Mani Mantra (DOMO GESHE RINPOCHE OM MANI PEME HUNG). Dungkar Monastery had a Guru Rinpoche statue blessed by Guru Rinpoche himself, and Domo Geshe Rinpoche performed annual special ceremonies to Guru Rinpoche. The 13th Dalai Lama proclaimed that he had met Je Tsongkhapa after meeting him. There was a saying to the extent that "While Pabongkha, Trijang and Domo Geshe Rinpoche are alive, all is well in Tibet." His Holiness Kyabje Trijang Dorje Chang said of him: he is exactly like me. He had very special spiritual connections with Vajrayogini (of whom he had the first vision at the age of four) and Dorje Shugden. One of the most famous miracles that accompanied Domo Geshe Rinpoche wherever he went is depicted on a wall of his Monastery: the vision of a whole 'procession' of Buddhas and deities that was witnessed by Rinpoche and his entire entourage. It is beautifully described in "The Way of the White Clouds" by Lama Anagarika Govinda, the first of its kind book that continues to inspire countless seekers.

Full text here:

<http://www.dorjeshugden.com/lineagemasters/KyabjeDomoGesheRinpoche.doc>

(A praise to Kyabje Domo Geshe Rinpoche Ngawang Gyalten Jigme Choekyi Wangchuk, whose previous incarnation had been declared an embodiment of Je Tsongkhapa by the 13th Dalai Lama, spontaneously spoken by Dulzin Drakpa Gyaltzen (Dorje Shugden's peaceful form) through the famous oracle of Dungkar Gompa.

An especially moving example of Dorje Shugden's activities not 'only' as a Dharma Protector in the classical sense, but as an incredible teacher and poet. Again, such are very clear indications of an enlightened being.)

CALLING THE LAMA



O noble, great Master Ngawang Kalsang
In reality Manjushri, you dwell amidst white clouds.
Filled with faith and longing desire, I hold you in my mind:
O root Guru, be my refuge and protection!
I entreat you by remembering your immense kindness.

Behold each of us sentient beings with compassion,
And whoever turns to you with deep devotion,
Lead him to the heavenly pure fields of Khachö:
O root Guru, be my refuge and protection!
I entreat you by remembering your great kindness.

May I hear your holy name in each and every life
And remember your lineage deep within my heart.
Please emerge and be actually present right here:
O root Guru, be my refuge and protection!
I entreat you by remembering your extensive kindness.

O great, kind Master, the fusion of the three refuges,
Gaze upon this and all future lives with compassion.
I invite you by recalling you with body, speech, and mind:
O root Guru, be my refuge and protection!
I entreat you by remembering your vast kindness.

Whatever action of yours appears to me as faulty,
My mind will not succumb to any such wrong views.
Having no other source of hope, behold me with compassion:
O root Guru, be my refuge and protection!
I entreat you by remembering your pervasive kindness.

When you turn the Dharma wheel of ocean-like fortune,

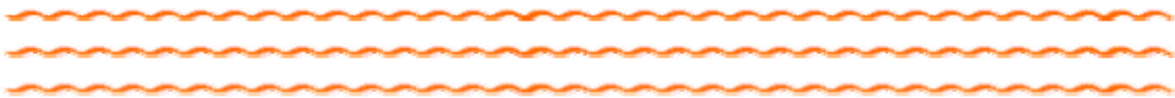
All sacred pledge-holders and Dharma protectors engage in their activities.
Grant us the two attainments, the common and uncommon:
O root Guru, be my refuge and protection!
I entreat you by remembering your amazing kindness.

When you turn the wheel of Dharma goodness,
Illness, gloom, panic, and all conflicts vanish,
My long life, glory, happiness, and joy prevail:
O root Guru, be my refuge and protection!
I entreat you by remembering your immense kindness.

O saffron-robed guide through Buddha's holy words,
Mighty ruler over doctrine holders and treasure of compassion,
For fortunate disciples, your glorious goodness shines brightly like the sun:
O root Guru, at your holy feet I make requests.

From the noble Master's speech come the riches of sutra and secret mantra;
Please disseminate completely the great deeds and actions of this mighty treasure
And, to turn the wheel of Dharma's goodness for the sake of sentient beings,
Abide completely and continuously throughout the eon.

Through the blessings of the non-deceptive and truthful Three Jewels
And by the force of my prayers and aspirations expressed here,
O Dharma protectors and deities of wealth,
Let all things desired, all enjoyments, be obtained like gently falling rain.



PART FOUR: TWO OPEN LETTERS AND A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

(One day the website www.dorjeshugden.com received a request demanding one of their contributors – who called himself Chatrengpa – to change his (pen)name, by Samdhong Rinpoche, prime minister of the Tibetan Government in Exile. The moderator of the site felt this was a great opportunity to express his concerns to him and to share how many independent Westerners perceive this conflict. Neither Chatrengpa nor Samdhong Rinpoche have written on that forum again. As an aside: it is well known amongst Tibetans that the monthly pujas (ceremonial offerings and prayers) at Samdhong Rinpoche's estate (labrang) back in Tibet were of epic proportions. If Dorje Shugden was indeed a 'vengeful spirit' randomly punishing those who go against him/Je Tsongkhapa's tradition – as he has been accused of doing – Samdhong Rinpoche amongst many others would be a 'primary target'. Yet, Dorje Shugden has shown no such signs and has not too long ago advised again to "Keep His Holiness [the Dalai Lama] in one hand, and me [Dorje Shugden] in the other".)

Venerable Samdhong Rinpoche,

as far as i am aware, Chatreng is a region in Tibet where His Holiness Kyabje Trijang Dorje Chang has many faithful disciples, who have among others requested His Holiness the Dalai Lama to compose the long life prayer quoted at the end of this message. Chatrengpa would therefore mean 'the one from Chatrengpa' - please correct me if i'm wrong; i am not from Tibet. What can be so wrong with someone choosing Chatrengpa as pen name that you request him without any explanation to change it?

The point i would like to make here is that we are trying very hard here not to succumb to mental modes of judgement, 'us against them', 'good versus evil', and so forth. Instead, we strive to share objective information and constructive criticism, something which in any democratic society legions of journalists and authors with access to unbiased facts and without fear of being ostracized or worse, would have provided en masse over the past twenty years. I am sure you agree that if this were the case, the image of our holy transmission lineage, its masters and monasteries would appear in a very different, much brighter light in the eyes of the world. This world, who consists now to a great extent of educated, independently thinking people, has learned at least as much about the Vajrayana vehicle to know that it depends entirely on a pure unbroken lineage and pure samaya.

While the general masses are still fascinated by the Shangri-la like image of Tibet and smiling monks, those who have actually entered the path of study and practice - tens- or hundred thousands - are profoundly shaken, confused and hurt to the core by the display of politics and power struggles which they had to witness to an ever increasing degree for two decades now, without a single rational or valid spiritual explanation. Many many many, venerable Samdhong Lama, keep up their outward practice but the true faith in the actual possibility of transformation has vanished from their hearts. And so many, too many to think of without despairing, have given up the Dharma altogether. You see, we are not tulkus with indelible Dharma imprints in our minds, most of us are beginners who felt the Buddhadharma with its logic and clarity could be our saving grace, who experienced the indescribable kindness and wisdom of our root Gurus and have therefore gained faith in our lineage. I think it would take a highly attained practitioner not to be severely disturbed if suddenly demanded to believe that our holy Lamas, their Lamas and their Lamas' Lamas have been demon worshippers, which is nothing else than saying they are entirely un-attained and in fact lower than us - after all, stupid as we were, at least we haven't worshipped demons before we met them!

It doesn't take much study to know that if this indeed were so, the simple fact of having taken refuge with any of these Lamas (are there any Gelug Lamas who aren't directly or indirectly disciples of Kyabjes Pabongkha, Trijang or Zong Dorje Changs???) would mean a one-way ticket to hell... and irreversibly so because refuge is a bond for all lives. Are the fates of countless sentient beings something to be played with and manipulated through devious misinformation and indirect hints with direct implications, by politicians who are by definition beyond morals and care for their subject, blinded by hunger for power as they are?

And if it is not politicians who are orchestrating this, can anybody explain to us why there hasn't been a SINGLE neutral public discussion or debate on the subject of Dharmapala Dorje Shugden, and the chances of it happening are getting less instead of more? It is absolutely unbelievable and indescribably detrimental to the flourishing of the Dharma that in a tradition famous for debate and checking any point of argument from all angles without bias, this has not EVER happened in Tibetan history until today, the 21st century, where we talk about democracy, respecting all spiritual traditions, on and on and on. There is not a day without Tibet, Buddhism, HH the Dalai Lama in the newspaper, on television and all over the internet. And yet, there is never a day with an open discussion about what has become an open wound of doubt, loss of faith and fear in the minds

of the millions of practitioners all over Tibet, India, Bhutan, Mongolia, China, Taiwan, North and South America, Europe with Dorje Shugden as their protector and - probably more important to you - the millions and millions of general masses who are starting to smell that something strange is happening, that the argumentation is utterly one sided and based purely on the reputation of HH the Dalai Lama and the power of his office. These people are beginning to say, "I don't wish to be catapulted back to medieval times and forced to blind belief in one dogma because supposedly God said so, only to maybe find that God turned out to be not God but a politician of religion. This is what i thought i left behind when i turned to Buddhism. Thanks but no thanks!"

You may laugh these people off as stupid Westerners, as many Tibetans do, but it is these people who give your government power now, media presence globally, daily and trillions of US\$ of donations. Once the credibility of His Holiness the Dalai Lama is ruined - because Tibetan Buddhism as a whole hinges on it - Tibet will be just another minority whom nobody cares about, and everyone will return to buying cheap shoes made in China with a happy conscience. Please realize that modern society is highly cynical, and once the flirt is over, the entire subject will be dropped like a hot potato and HH the Dalai Lama (never mind Je Tsongkhapa's tradition) will be filed as yet another failure and fraud and reason to give up spirituality altogether. Who could take responsibility for this?

As for those Westerners actually interested in the Dharma itself, allow me to use myself as an example. Having taken refuge, read countless books and heard many teachings by many holy Lamas, received empowerments which were given freely to anyone, my practice has been wavering at best, without actual application in daily life, without really understanding or heeding the fundamentals of our refuge commitments or mindfulness of karma. Twenty years i have wasted in this way. Why is it that since the very evening i first practiced a sadhana of Dorje Shugden the importance of clean ethics has dawned on me, that i have suddenly found the determination and energy to muster real effort to subdue my body, speech, and mind? Why is it that my faith in the Buddhadharma and Je Tsongkhapa's teachings have finally become real, based on study and experience, however humble? Why is it that i have since met a Lama whom i KNOW can guide me all the way, and who teaches me ethics, contemplation on impermanence and karma again and again, whom i have never heard speaking a single negative word against any teacher or tradition, who perceives His Holiness the Dalai Lama as Chenrezig and never stops praising him? Why is it that since i've met this Lama my life has completely changed? Why is it that i want to study Lamrim? Why is it that i care for others more than i ever did before? Why is it that the Lojong teachings have become my guiding light, and i don't care if it takes me a thousand years to attain even the first point? I wish to convey to you that i have started to propitiate Dorje Shugden without anyone, Lama or layperson, telling or advising me so. In fact, i was living in precisely the same environment as most of Western practitioners, where whatever HH the Dalai Lama says, or is said to have said, is the golden untouchable rule. But after a while of sitting around tables with Tibetan friends and slandering Dorje Shugden in the usual way, the subject started to intrigue me. Where did in this cosmos of compassionate deities suddenly a demon deity come from, and who were the human demons who prayed to such a one? Since i am a person who likes to read and investigate, i did so, and soon after digging a little deeper i couldn't help realizing that this whole production was about something else entirely; i didn't know what exactly, but the point is that along the way i also found so much actual information about Dorje Shugden and the masters who practice him, that my views changed more and more. An example, very simple - clairvoyant HH the Dalai Lama worshipping a demon for 25 years and then suddenly finding out and stopping? How can an educated person believe such a thing? ALL the most influential and important Gelug masters of our times satan worshippers? This kind of argumentation and sudden change of everything that was holy yesterday being evil now, we usually know only from right-wing populists, and we have become very weary of it.

On the other hand, by simply reading the prayers to Dorje Shugden and the biographies of the lineage masters, an entirely new picture emerges, one that is made up entirely of bodhicitta motivation.

At some point i stumbled upon the book HEART JEWEL by Geshe Kelsang Gyatso (with whom or his NKT i have no association whatsoever apart from rejoicing in his efforts in presenting Je Tsongkhapa's teachings in the English language) which is by the way, incredibly, the only official publication with detailed explanation on the Gaden Lhagyama, this most fundamental practice for lay and even ordained Gelugpas (does anybody really care??).

Allow me to digress for a moment and ask how many of all those who spend their time degrading Dorje Shugden and the Gelug lineage masters, have come out with a single translation of one of Je Tsongkhapa's biographies, or anything to inspire ordinary people to discover and practice in Je Tsongkhapa's tradition which is so indescribably precious? Apart from the age-old compilation edited by Bob Thurman, which nobody reads, what have the professor of Jey Tsongkhapa studies and all his famous friends given the world except mega-academic materials that will invite no one new to practice?

The one wonderful precious Lamrim book that everyone reads - who has given the teachings, who has edited it, who has translated it? That's right, Dorje Shugden practitioners Pabongkha, Trijang and Khensur Lobsang Tharchin Rinpoches. So who is it that cares for our tradition? Who is it that cares for sentient beings?

To return to my story - after reading HEART JEWEL a few times i felt compelled to recite the practice text given in the books appendix, did so, went to sleep, dreamt about Je Tsongkhapa in the most vivid way, and the rest is as described above - my life changed completely (for the better, as all my friends and family will assure you).

Am i a demon worshipper, venerable Samdhong Rinpoche? Whatever i am, i am boring you with my story because i am an ordinary average educated person of the 21st century, and there are many like me.

There is one last thing i would like to share with you, and would like to beg you to relay to His Holiness the Dalai Lama's entourage: please start (sincerely) speaking of, viewing and treating us as human beings, lest you degrade the holy Dharma's essence in the saddest way. In spite of all that happened, i don't know a single Gelug practitioner that doesn't love the Dalai Lama, that doesn't pray for his well being. Why is this?

Yours, beggar

Long Life Prayer
Of Trijang Chogtrul Rinpoche

Om Svasti

The illusory form of the Great Bliss and the Sphere of Reality in inseparable union,
Which is embraced by the hue of a hundred thousand moons,
Oh Victorious Heruka, who holds the Glory of Immortality,
Bestow the supreme gift of eternal Vajra-Life.

To hold and propagate the essence

Of the Teaching of the Mighty One (Buddha),

You follow the example

Of the Master Manjushri Lobsang (Tsongkhapa).

You have attained the equality in Wisdom with all the Buddhas.

I make requests to You, the Protector of the ocean-like beings.

Led by the aurora of Your long time motivation
To fulfill the great purposes of the Teaching and the beings,
The sun of the matchless supreme incarnation,
I request You
To abide in this world always without ever setting.
The essence of the treatises
Of the multiple aspects of Sutras and Tantras,
Sharing with the fortunate ones for their life force,
With the glory of Your scholarly qualities all complete,
Oh Venerable Master,
May You as Lord of the Speech remain with Your feet steady.
From the very age of youth,
By the ethics of the Mighty One,
The conducts of Your Three Doors are completely disciplined.
By holding the Vinaya dharma
Which is both the Teaching and the Teacher,
May You live as the Great Upali.
To give the breath of Enlightenment
To the beings beyond number,
May the strength of Your wholesome supreme thought increase.
With the supreme conducts of the Six Paramitas and the Four Collections
May You fulfill the intention of the Buddhas without exception.
The Graduated Stages of the Path and so forth,
Praised as the Great Ocean of Teaching
In which gather thousands of excellent treatises,
Taught by Atisha and Guru Manjunatha (Tsongkhapa),
May You remain stable forever
As the Supreme Holder of their Tradition.
By the infallible truth of the Supreme Three Jewels,
By the power of the all-pervading reality
Of the Union of the Two Truths,
By the power of faith and respect,
May the meanings of our prayers be fulfilled
And may the auspicious signs always flourish.

Colophon

This is a Long Life Prayer of the Venerable Supreme Tulku Tenzin Losang Yeshe Gyatso, the
reincarnation of our kind Master
Kyabje Trijang Dorje Chang, for his long abiding and for holding, protecting and propagating the
Buddha's Teaching through his
qualities of wisdom, discipline and goodness.
Tenzin Gyatso (Dalai Lama), a monk of Shakya, has composed this with pure connecting prayers by
being requested with
offerings by the general monastery of Gaden, Shartse and Jangtse Colleges, Sera Je and Me Colleges,
Upper and Lower Tantric
Colleges, Donkhang House and Dokhang Regional Group of Shartse, Sera Pombora House, the
monastery and the people of
Chatreng Land, the monastery and people of Nasang Land, Gyalthang Monastery, Dromo Dungkar
Samten Choeling Monastery
and the manager and all the members of Trijang Ladang.

Venerable Samdhong Rinpoche,

i hope these lines find you well. Yesterday, i have told you my story, a story that not even my best friends know. We are taught not to speak about personal spiritual experiences. Moreover, being utterly unattained, sharing my life could only embarrass me! However, we all have to start somewhere, and since meeting Dharmapala Dorje Shugden and being set on a valid path has not only changed but literally saved my life, i hoped this could be of a little inspiration to those in a similar predicament and to share with you my motivation in creating this website. We are meeting here in virtual space, and i cannot think of another way to show you what is in my heart. In relation to you, this means that i truly care about His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the countless Tibetans who rely on him as their sole hope. I am begging you, **PLEASE DO SOMETHING THAT THESE PEOPLE CAN LIVE AND PASS ON WITH THE DALAI LAMA THEY HAVE ALWAYS KNOWN IN THEIR MINDS! PLEASE ACKNOWLEDGE OPENLY THAT THE DANGER TO DHARMA AND HIS HOLINESS IS NOT ANY DEITY BUT POLITICS!**

Please allow me to reiterate using the example of the below quote i came across last night. -

"On 22 of this month, in the reception room above Sera-Jay Assembly Hall, Sera-Jay disciplinarian Lobsang Choedar and Lobsang Choedar has convened the local press conference, where he released the statement contained the [following] four points.

- 1) In the year 1998, the resolution of the stand on Dholgyal devotees, presided by Gaden Tripa. The resolutions during the Gaden National Conference must be effectively implemented from the year 2008.
- 2) There is no condition at all to co-exist with those two who contradict the spiritual commitment according to religious tenet.
- 3) In terms of politics, since those who worship Dholgya are the organization tool of Chinese government, there is no meaning to co-exist.
- 4) It is worthwhile to act Dholgyal followers' saying that the decision of Gelupa (followers of Gelug Traditon) must be taken by the general Gelugpa.

It was explained, base on these four points, a campaign of collecting signatures among monks are carried out. This campaign supports His Holiness the Dalai Lama and benefits Tibetan politics and religion. Earlier, the signature campaign has already conducted among over two thousands monks."

Point two can only either relate to a practice itself or to samaya with one's root Guru. If it relates to the practice of Dorje Shugden, anyone reading his prayers, kangso, etc will only find advice and aspirations that are completely 100% in accord with the holy Vinaya, Bodhisattva and Tantric vows and commitments. If we listen to oracular advices, they are of purest lamrim content, of tender care for "the holder of the white lotus" (HHDL) and urge us to never disparage other lineages. Many such utterances are recorded and can be produced to prove these points.

If point two relates to pure bonds with one's root Guru - we all know that HH the Dalai Lama, however great, is a single being and cannot be the root Guru of everyone. Neither can he decree new rules on his own accord. Therefore to say we must stop any practice given to us by our personal Gurus will have to be seen as a direct order to break samaya and thus destroy all hopes for attainments, and to have negative views of our Gurus, of which the texts say one moment will result in a very long time in the depths of the hell realms.

If anyone could say we cannot co-exist, it would then by logic be those with Dorje Shugden as their protector. But this we don't, as all we want is to practice in peace, and peace with all beings is actually our aim and aspiration as Buddhists.

Point three - "since those who worship Dholgyal are the organization tool of Chinese government"... How could anyone state something so entirely ludicrous and not offend the intelligence and arouse serious suspicion in the minds of an independent sane person? We are countless nobodys scattered around the planet, usually practicing in secret for obvious reasons - how could anyone find us, file us, organize us, never mind use us as a tool??

And a tool for what? Can Tibet become any more un-free? It is beyond dispute that Dorje Shugden urged HH the Dalai Lama to leave Tibet and even provided the exact route of escape. Days, not weeks before the Chinese communists bombed Norbulinka and the Potala, His Holiness's life was thus saved... what could be a more graphic prove of our Dharmapala's intentions regarding Tibet and HH the Dalai Lama?

To use myself as an example again: i have created this website in the same way i have begun my practice of Dorje Shugden - without anyone telling me so, without ANY affiliation to any organization, Dharmic or otherwise, as an independent western student of Dharma.

The only people of the republic of China i have seen so far are tourists in front of tourist attractions in Europe. I have never spoken a word to a person from the republic of China, nor exchanged an email or any kind of message, much less received any 'interesting offers' to be used as an 'organizational tool', nor even a congratulatory mail or whatever in comment to this website. May i go to avici hell if this is a lie.

Why do i keep talking about myself, and revealing myself further to you, venerable Samdhong Rinpoche?

(It is not that i am not scared of possible consequences 'bestowed' on me. I am, but i do feel that the fate of all the numberless Dharma practitioners within and without Tibet is so much more important.)

It is because i feel the urgent need to tell you that ANYONE with access to libraries and internet can create a website such as this one, write articles in newspapers, or books. And the more agitation and sad injustice (dharmically and otherwise) is being created such as now in Drepung monastery, the more independent journalists will become interested. For example this referendum - they'll take one look and see how completely one-sided such a 'vote' would be. Once they smell scandal - and negative always sells better - they will start to dig. Once they start to dig, they won't stop. There is much sad information known to thousands of the older Dharma students about the politics in Tibet, and in 'Tibet in exile' - they and we have chosen to remain silent because we know what the disastrous consequences would be, for all the good and simple people in Tibet, and for the Dharma altogether.

Yet it looks as if the Tibetan government is forcing this to happen by staging such irrational and irresponsible dramas again and again - more and more before the eyes of the world. How long can one keep all this under the carpet as 'internal Tibetan affairs'?

IT IS NOT THE DALAI LAMA'S LIFE THAT IS IN DANGER, IT IS HIS REPUTATION!

ONCE THE BIG TABLOID JOURNALISTS START... THERE WILL BE NO END, NO CONSIDERATION OF TIBETANS' PEACE OF MIND NOR DHARMA SPREADING IN THE WORLD.

ONCE THE DISMANTLING OF A MYTH HAS BEGUN, IT WILL GO ON UNTIL THERE IS NOTHING LEFT!


PLEASE CONSIDER THIS!!

How easy it would be now just to declare that the referendum was held and everyone agreed to let everyone do what they believe is good and let the whole case rest... It is not too late, if peace is what we want.

Venerable Samdhong Rinpoche, i am certain that you realize that this website exists FOR the Dharma, FOR His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and FOR the practitioners of all lineages, which are perfect in themselves while at the same time interdependent.

PLEASE HELP US. PLEASE HELP TO KEEP THE HOLY DHARMA FREE FROM POLITICS. PLEASE HELP THE DALAI LAMA'S GOLDEN FACE TO REMAIN AS SUNSHINE IN THE HEARTS OF THE MILLIONS!

i am begging you with folded hands -
yours, beggar



(May we leave you with a simple and touching example of Dorje Shugden's sublime love and care which literally countless people have experienced over the generations.

Kuten Lama means an oracle priest through whom deities – in this case Dorje Shugden – speak to us. Dorje Shugden is often simply called 'Dharmapala', and 'Vajradhara' refers to his enlightened nature).

FROM KESANG, INDIA:

Allow me to share my experience with Vajradhara Dharmapala. My noble father became seriously ill for very long time. At that time I was young and my dear mother was very worried about the state of my father's deteriorating state. She knew that the end was near. Although my father was bed ridden for three years he never had a unbearable pain and mental anguish. Every morning he would recite Lama choepa puja in his bed. As he does not have enough strength to hold his body upright he has to recite his morning prayer by lying down. My mother knew that the end was near and she requested his Eminence Choyang Duldzin Kuten lama make visit to our home. Kuten Rinpoche agreed immediately and came to our home. There was no elaborate preparation just a chair near my father's bed instead of throne. After the trance Vajradhara blessed my father and gave long discourse about the impermanence and Karma. There was glow in my father's face. Throughout the discourse Vajradhara spoke with very gentle voice as if speaking with small baby. The kindness in Holi vajradhara's voice has immediate effect on my father's soul.

Soon after that my father remained blissful till the end of his day. He passed away with his Holy prayer Book (Pecha) on his chest. My mother used to tell me that has it not been for the kindness of Vajradhara Dorjeshugden we would be suffering under Chinese oppression. It was because of Vajradhara advice that they left their newly build home in Tibet (without attachment) and were able to come to India.

I for one can never agree with Dalai lama's statement of calling Holy Vajradhara an (evil spirit). I am writing because many people believes Dalai Lama blindly – especially our fellow Tibetan. I hope very soon all these disharmony within the Gelukpa sect will subside and once again the world will learn the truth about Holy Dharmapala Vajradhara.

OM VAJRA WIKKI WITRANA SOHA.

