

## **Declaration concerning the demonstrations against His Holiness the Dalai Lama**

We, the undersigned, as former members of the New Kadampa Tradition (NKT), and ex-practitioners of Dolgyal Shugden, are appalled and saddened that those who were once our NKT sangha demonstrate against and defame His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

The NKT, led by their teacher Kelsang Gyatso, operates as the 'Western Shugden Society' (WSS) and more recently as the 'International Shugden Community' (ISC). These groups attack His Holiness with unwarranted allegations and distortions of what we know to be the truth. We now believe it is time to speak out!

1) The NKT call His Holiness the Dalai Lama a 'liar'. His Holiness holds a different view from Kelsang Gyatso concerning the nature and history of Dolgyal Shugden and the effects of this practice upon the well-being of His Holiness, the Tibetan people and their cause. A difference of opinion is not lying.

2) The NKT claim that His Holiness the Dalai Lama has broken samaya with all his teachers by rejecting the practice of Dolgyal Shugden. This practice was viewed as problematic by His Holiness' Senior Tutor, Ling Rinpoche. After extensive historical investigation His Holiness saw that Dolgyal Shugden worship was often associated with sectarian views and 'distorted aspiration'. He explained to his Junior Tutor Trijang Rinpoche why it was his duty to avoid this practice and advise others to do so. Masters of other traditions have also dismissed this practice after investigation. According to Buddhist scriptures and past masters, these are correct and appropriate actions.

3) Kelsang Gyatso claims that by rejecting Dolgyal Shugden, His Holiness is rejecting all the lineage teachings of the Gelug tradition of Je Tsongkhapa. Shugden was not taught by Je Tsongkhapa and His Holiness still holds his lineage gurus and all Gelug teachings in the highest esteem. Kelsang Gyatso, however, is never seen in public with teachers connected to the lineage he claims to represent. He is alone, with no influence from either peers or superiors. He created his NKT in 1992 after a schism with another Tibetan Buddhist group whose property he kept as his own. In 1996 he was unanimously expelled from Sera Je Tibetan Buddhist monastery for being a 'holder of broken commitments and wrong view'. Kelsang Gyatso has made his own tradition of 'Modern Buddhism' and

his own ordination system without the traditional monastic code of conduct. He has isolated his students from the wider Buddhist world.

4) The allegation that the Dalai Lama is repressing Freedom of Religion is more relevant to the way the NKT operates. NKT centres are dedicated to the exclusive devotion of Kelsang Gyatso and Dolgyal Shugden. No other Tibetan teachers are allowed. NKT centres only sell Kelsang Gyatso's books. Students only study Kelsang Gyatso's books with teachers trained in the NKT and appointed by Kelsang Gyatso. Teachers at all critical of the NKT are removed from their posts. Ordained NKT people and others are told they may never get enlightened if they leave the NKT.

5) The Tibetan people number little more than 6 million. An unknown number of Tibetans, often quoted as being more than one million, have been slaughtered due to the Chinese occupation and colonisation. Claims made by the ISC such as '4 million Dorje Shugden practitioners are suffering' from His Holiness' abuse of their Human Rights are obviously untrue.

No established Human Rights group or court has ever confirmed any of the NKT, WSS or ISC's claims of intentional Human Rights abuses by His Holiness the Dalai Lama or the Central Tibetan Administration. In 2010 the Indian High Court rejected a law suit by Dolgyal Shugden followers because of 'vague averments' and 'absence of any specific instances of any such attacks'.

6) There are many documented cases where the NKT has threatened to sue using libel law to silence other Buddhist organisations, umbrella groups, internet discussion forums and academics, authors and publishers. People inside the group can realistically fear social exclusion, illegal eviction or police arrest if they criticise policies. In our experience, the NKT generally prioritises the expansion of the group over the welfare of individuals. The NKT Survivors internet group numbers over 1,200 subscribers. There is no Dalai Lama Survivor's group.

7) In 2008 Kelsang Gyatso stated that he was personally organising the NKT's participation in the protests led by the Western Shugden Society (WSS). All the Directors of the WSS were and are members of the New Kadampa Tradition. However, the NKT has denied that they have any connection to the WSS. The latest NKT front group, the International Shugden Community (ISC) actively recruits protestors and

fundraises for demonstrations against His Holiness the Dalai Lama inside NKT centres.

8) Misleading and deceitful media techniques are used in NKT campaigns. In his YouTube "News Broadcasts" for the ISC, senior NKT monk Kelsang Rabten hides his bias and status as a monk by not wearing his robes. An ISC video uses footage of young Burmese monks to fraudulently misrepresent the situation in India regarding the supposed 'ostracism' of Dolgyal Shugden followers. The mainstream press has published NKT accounts without confirming their accuracy.

9) Both in 1996-7 and in 2008 the NKT organised demonstrations against His Holiness the Dalai Lama that coincided with the public exposure on the internet of the alleged sexual misconduct of the Deputy Spiritual Directors of the NKT. His Holiness has not changed his view or his actions since 1996. Therefore we question what has caused NKT followers to start their demonstrations and defamations again in 2014.

We offer our support to the Tibetan people in their struggle to preserve their lives and their culture. We question the intentions of those who use their culture but do not support this struggle, not even acknowledging the kindness given in training their own teacher.

We feel that Kelsang Gyatso and his students have no basis in fact for making any attempts to discredit and disparage His Holiness the Dalai Lama. We request them to stop misleading and disturbing others with this false campaign.

**26<sup>th</sup> September 2014**

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### **Supporters**

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