

# Dorje Shugden Devotee's Charitable & Religious Society

## Latest News and Press Releases

**Contact:** Geshe Konchok Gyaltzen, Dorje Shugden Society  
House No 105, Old Tibetan Camp  
Majnu Ka Tilla, Delhi-54  
**Phone:** (91) 11-23921169, Mobile:(91) 9910262029  
**Mail:** shugdensociety@yahoo.com, www.shugdensociety.info

### MONKS SEEK INDIAN GOVERNMENT PROTECTIONS

For Release: March 1, 2008

New Delhi, India –In response to actions that threaten to cast a minority of Tibetan Buddhist monks out of their own monasteries, a society supportive of the monks has formally petitioned the Indian government to protect them.

The petition to the Prime Minister of India, by the Dorje Shugden Society in Delhi, claims discrimination and other abuses against Buddhist monks who worship Dorje Shugden, a protector deity denounced by the Tibetan Government in Exile. It also asks the Indian government to protect Shugden monks who in the wake of a recent referendum will no longer be allowed to share material and spiritual resources with other monks in their monasteries.

In the referendum, called in January by the Dalai Lama, the majority of monks in the Tibetan Buddhist monasteries in India took a public oath renouncing the Dorje Shugden deity and voted to stop sharing material and spiritual resources with those who refused to do the same.

Since 1996, the Tibetan Government in Exile has called Dorje Shugden a “worldly spirit,” whose continued worship poses a threat both to the Dalai Lama’s life and to the future of Tibet. Dorje Shugden followers vehemently deny these charges, saying Dorje Shugden threatens no one; he is an enlightened being who seeks to preserve the integrity of their lineage of Tibetan Buddhism, they say, and they are merely acting on religious conscience, choosing to do a beneficial practice that was given to them by their teachers and asking for the religious freedom to do so.

Since it erupted in the mid-1990s, the conflict over Dorje Shugden has severely disrupted relations between Tibetans in both Tibet and in exile, including monks, family members, neighbors, and even children, with occasional threats of violence, confusing many in a religion long noted for its religious tolerance.

Without help from the Indian government, the Shugden Society has expressed a fear that the referendum will succeed in making Dorje Shugden followers, who only want to practice their religion freely, India’s new “untouchables.”

Shugden followers have already been denied many privileges accorded other Tibetans in exile, according to the Shugden Society. Shugden devotees have been denied access to higher education in Tibetan Buddhist monasteries in India. Children of Shugden followers have been denied access to Tibetan schools. Shugden followers have been denied jobs controlled by the Tibetan Government in Exile. New refugees from Tibet have also been turned away from the monasteries if they refuse to renounce the deity.

In response to such charges, the Indian Minister of External Affairs announced in November 2007 that it would formally investigate Shugden followers' claims of discrimination against them by the Tibetan Government in Exile.

The Dorje Shugden Society on Feb. 22 petitioned the Indian government for additional protection following the referendum that has denied material and spiritual resources to Shugden monks. Three days later, on Feb. 25, an estimated 200 local Indian police took up positions to protect the peace during an annual prayer festival at Sera monastery at Bylakupee in South India. The monks were forced to stay outside the monastery, where prayers were recited, but no violence was reported.

Some of the monks at this monastery who practice Dorje Shugden crossed the rugged Himalayas into India with the Dalai Lama. They were his personal bodyguards. Now elderly, many are distraught by these latest actions against Shugden followers, experiencing a second exile, this time among their own people. "Where are all living beings?" asked one Shugden follower in an email sent to supporters outside the country. "Where are peace, harmony, tolerance, and compassion that Tibetan Lamas talk and teach to the West?"

The Tibetan Government in Exile has issued a statement saying it will provide "allotments" to the repudiated monks and "facilities" if necessary. Concerns are growing among the followers that actions that shun Shugden devotees will not stop there, but will come to include residents of the 35 settlements offered Tibetan people under terms with the Tibetan Government in Exile.

The Tibetan Government in Exile is calling for similar referendums in Tibet, and in Nepal, which has 10 settlements, and in Bhutan, which has seven. The Shugden Society hopes that attention to the Indian issue will protect the religious freedom of Shugden monks and their followers in these other nations.

