

H.H. Dalai Lama's Words in the Mirror of Reality

July 2008

The justifications His Holiness the Dalai Lama gives for his ban of the worship of the deity Dorje Shugden vary considerably depending on the audiences.

The justification given to the Tibetan public, which destroyed the entire harmony of the Tibetan community, is: *"Worshipping this evil deity is a danger for my life and for the freedom of Tibet. If you Tibetans want me to be damned and don't care at all about the cause of Tibet, then go ahead with the worship of this deity."*

On the contrary, to Western audiences His Holiness repeatedly say that he issued this ban *"in order to save this pure and profound Tibetan Buddhism from degenerating into spirit worship"*. And *"this ban is applied in order to promote peace and harmony between the four Tibetan Buddhist traditions."*

A further justification, which His Holiness mentions sometimes, and has repeated on his recent visit to New York in July 2008: *"This is for my personal gaining of religious freedom. I had the wish to ask Khunu Lama Tenzin Gyaltzen to give me the transmission of the Sangwa-Nyingpo-Tantra, and I consulted my teacher Ling Rinpoche about it, and he responded negatively, saying, there is a lot of discussion about it. Actually my teacher was afraid of Dolgyal (Dorje Shugden). Thus I lost my religious freedom."*

What is the reality behind these statements?

Any person, who would accept anything His Holiness says as literal, infallible, and unquestionable, would not make any attempt even to doubt any of these points for a second. However, if an analytical mind investigates the validity of these words of His Holiness, comparing their meaning to reality, a big surprise about the enormous discrepancy between His Holiness' statements and the factual truth will be inevitable.

Justification for Tibetans:

"Worshipping this evil deity is a danger for my life and for the freedom of Tibet....."
(HH Dalai Lama)

Justification for Westerners, first point:

"In order to save this pure and profound Tibetan Buddhism from degenerating into spirit worship....." (HH Dalai Lama)

Let us leave aside the discrepancy between the justifications for Tibetans and Westerners and just look at the validity of the points repeatedly given to the Western public:

The fact is, that all four schools of Tibetan Buddhism, and in particular HH Dalai Lama, his government, and his entourage, intensively rely upon not only one so-called protector deity, but a great number of such deities from various origins. In Tibetan society hundreds

of such deities are regularly worshipped with elaborate rituals. Despite His Holiness claiming to 'save this pure and profound Tibetan Buddhism from degenerating into spirit worship', worship of such deities has never decreased, nor has there been any effort to make it decrease. On the contrary, since the end of the 1980-ies a new fervour of worshipping such protector deities has flourished among the Tibetans in exile, and this fervour originates nowhere else but in Dharamsala. Five oracles are regularly invoked at every ceremony around His Holiness, special temples were built and new rituals and prayers were composed, a number of them even by the present His Holiness himself. The traditional trio-photo of His Holiness with his two masters, Kyabje Ling Rinpoche and Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche on each side, has been fully replaced by another trio-photo with His Holiness and the protectors Nechung and Palden Lhamo on both sides. Except for the ban on Dorje Shugden, not a single Tibetan god or demon has been discriminated, persecuted or abolished.

Justifications for Westerners, second point:

"This ban is applied in order to promote peace and harmony between the four Tibetan Buddhist traditions." (HH Dalai Lama)

His Holiness implies as though followers of Dorje Shugden are impossible sectarian Gelugpas, who can't stand any other school, and are thus 'de-harmonizers'.

However, the reality is that adherents of Dorje Shugden are like any other Tibetan Buddhist, practising their own Dharma given by the great masters of their tradition, without causing any trouble to any other fellow Dharma practitioner. There is more than enough evidence to proof this fact. To give just one example:

After Tibetans came into exile about 1500 Tibetan monks and lamas of all four Tibetan traditions lived together in a place called Buxaduar in West Bengal in the years from 1960 till 1968. Among the Gelug- and Sakya-monks the majority were practitioners of Dorje Shugden. They lived harmoniously without any problems or tensions with monks from Nyingma and Kagyu-traditions, all sharing the same houses, same food and same prayer gatherings in a true sense of brotherhood.

In general, the relations between the four Tibetan Buddhist schools, in comparison to many other religious groups in the world, is very wholesome and harmonious - as long as the exile Tibetan government does not mess in their affairs.

A good proof of such brotherhood has also been demonstrated in South India in Bylakuppe, when the monks of Sera Mey Pomra Kamtsen were recently expelled from the rest of the Sera monastery as well as Tibetan society as a whole by means of signature campaigns, due to their refusal to renounce their faith in Dorje Shugden. In the course of events some Tibetan groups in the settlements completely denied these new outcasts every access to Tibetan shops, the monastery's clinic, as well as its food supplies and distribution. With no nearby source left for purchasing daily living necessities, the 'Tibetan Camp Number Four', headed by His Eminence Penor Rinpoche, openly welcomed the monks of

Pomra Kamtsen to purchase their living-necessities such as milk and so on from the camp's shops and outlets. 'Camp Number Four' is populated by a majority of Nyingmapas, who had no hesitation to help Gelugpas worshipping Dorje Shugden. Isn't this a clear sign of the solidarity of Dharma-practitioners far beyond the boundaries of schools?

Justifications, third point:

"..... to give me the transmission of the Sangwa-Nyingpo-Tantra. I consulted my teacher Ling Rinpoche about it, and he responded negatively, saying, there is a lot of discussion about it. Actually my teacher was afraid of Dolgyal (Dorje Shugden). Thus I lost my religious freedom."

(HH Dalai Lama)

His Holiness blames the negative response received from his teacher Ling Rinpoche about taking the teaching of Sangwa-Nyingpo-Tantra to Dorje Shugden. There is in fact 'a lot of discussion' about this Tantra, but these discussions have nothing to do with Dorje Shugden whatsoever. Many great earlier Tibetan scholars, especially those with a precise knowledge of Sanskrit, such as master Jangchub Woe, translator Goe, translator Chak, great Sakya pandita, the great master Bhutoen, etc., have classified a number of Tibetan Tantras as lacking the authenticity of being original Indian Buddhist Tantras. These texts, including the Tantra in question, were classified separately. Kyabje Ling Rinpoche's comment that 'there are a lot of discussions about this Tantra' refers to these discussions of many earlier and later Tibetan scholars about the authenticity of the Sangwa-Nyingpo-Tantra.

Ling Rinpoche's answer has therefore nothing to do with protector Dorje Shugden. Ling Rinpoche neither had any reason to be afraid of the deity, nor did he have any reason to frighten His Holiness of such a deity. Unfortunately, the former Kyabje Ling Rinpoche is no longer among us, but many respectable and trusted disciples of Kyabje Ling Rinpoche are still living.