

# Students and Followers of Geshe

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**Simon Drye**

20 June at 12:21

Dear Friends,

Having recently been invited to join the protests around the Shugden issue in London, I had a number of questions. These questions are asked sincerely and out of faith. They are not intended to be inflammatory in any way; they are simply posed in order that you who have more wisdom than me can help me to eliminate doubt and understand this action of protesting. Thank you for kindly reading my thoughts and helping me with your responses.

1) What effect do our protests have on those who rely sincerely upon the Dalai Lama (DL) as their root guru. Even though we can say that the Dalai Lama is performing actions that cause Shugden practitioners to unnecessarily suffer, if some followers of the DL are following his teachings on compassion and are unaware of the Shugden issue – are our actions not causing them to lose faith? Perhaps they are bodhisattvas to be and this news could cause them to give up their spiritual path?

2) Does our way of demonstrating bring bad press to the New Kadampa tradition? Even though the recent Guardian and Observer articles were incorrect, biased and harmful – one condition for them arising is the protesting. From the protests – these incorrect articles appear and many people may develop disturbing thoughts about our tradition – yes they may be wrong and yes we can refute them; however they may be new to practicing Buddhism and Meditation and be put off because of articles like this. Note that the protests were a “condition” but not cause of the articles. What can we say was the cause? We do not understand karma precisely but can we use wisdom to try to understand this?

3) Are we actually changing anything by making these protests – or is it just catalyzing the schism across the Buddhist communities. I feel like change could be measured in at least two ways – the DL wishing to retract the ban and publicly announce this (or at least his mind making gradual movement towards this decision) , or Shugden practitioners being less persecuted for example by having more access to hospitals, shops etc. and facing less public ostracizing. This conflict has been going on for many years and it seems (perhaps I am incorrect) that we are no closer to any resolution. If I am wrong and you feel that things are changing – I would appreciate your response.

4) Are we externalizing the issue? Shugden practitioners have the unfortunate karma of facing obstacles to their practice. It is our collective karma for the DL to appear in this world and to continue such issues. Everything is created by mind, including the DL and his entire retinue. The appearance of DL is not outside our mind. The DL that we normally see does not exist. Can Shugden practitioners not pray sincerely in their hearts to purify this karma – we can even pray and dedicate for Shugden practitioners worldwide and dedicate on their behalf? We are organizing protests – but surely we could be organizing collective prayer gatherings on this issue. My understanding from venerable Geshe La is that mental actions are supremely more powerful than physical actions. With prayers we need to have faith and check our intentions. With physical actions – it is more difficult to know that we will bring pure results especially if we are not equipped with miracle powers such as clairvoyance.

5) With regards to point 4 – if we are to turn to physical actions (protests) as opposed to mental actions (prayer) , why stop at protesting Shugden issues – since we wish to help all living beings (or aspire to this mind) why are we not trying to solve human rights injustice across the entire world. Is this because we have a particular karmic connection with Shugden, or a particular ability to refute and solve? If this continues – does our practice

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not change from trying to purify our mind and all that it appears into purifying the things that it has already appeared? In other words – are we not trying to change “externals” rather than work on our internal minds. Despite many years of seemingly no change with the segregation and banning (again please kindly refute this if I am wrong), we are still performing physical actions such as protest. Are there not other method practices to help others who are suffering where we are more likely to effect change. If I had been protesting for 10 years or more on this issue – unless I had a mind made of iron and unbounded armour-like effort and steadfastness I would be likely to feel disheartened and discouraged. I see in my personal life that with some people I have a strong wish to help them; keeping my Guru at my heart and say/do whatever I can to help them. 5 years later it feels that I have done little to really help (I lack the skill or karmic connection perhaps) – whereas with other people – I may say one or two sentences and immediately they can relate to my words, comfort or advise. Yes we do want to keep a mind of affectionate love and a wish to help all living beings – but at any particular time we can help person A more than person B – should we keep an mind of love towards both, but focus our physical actions with person A?

6) Are we attached to Shugden? Shugden is mere name – if we search with wisdom we will not find anything other than this mere name – mere collection of parts of a Dharma protector. Surely as all things exist as mere imputation we could impute the function of Dharma protector onto another form (such as Kalarupa). The primary function of Buddhism in terms of method practicing is to help others and ourselves? Why does it matter who we name our protector. We could use another word for the same purpose. My point here is that even if the DL is wrong in persecuting “Shugden” practice – for the purpose of harmony and causing less suffering – rather than fighting this prejudice – can we not suggest others to impute dharma protector upon another form. Perhaps we can say that they have made a life long commitment to venerate a deity protector, however if their intention is to bring the most benefit to themselves and others, doesn't their Bodhissatva wish rule supreme. It seems to me that this is like accepting defeat and mentally offering the victory. All Shugden practioners can keep this deity in their heart until death but if they have sincere faith – do they

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significance for us – but equally he has taught us that our primary role is to help others and remove as much suffering as we can from others. Forgive me if I am completely wrong and misguided – I am foolish and have little wisdom; I am just looking for the path of least resistance so that those who are facing persecution could get rest bite from this – with regards to point 3 – if the protests actually could bring change and we helping to do so – yes this would be ideal – but in the absence of this – I am just trying to think of other ways around the issue.

I have others questions that I will take into my prayers

Thank you in advance for kindly helping.

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**Will Smith** I don't know about all of that. It's very simple in my mind. I just try to do what my Root Guru, Venerable Geshe Kelsang, asks of me, such as to demonstrate, and have faith that he knows because he is Buddha. For the rest of it we pray for the best outcome for everyone. It really depends everyone's karma. Who gives a crap about political correctness anyway? All the hats, robes, sand mandalas and rituals are completely meaningless without an actual lineage and experience of Dharma in the mind.  
20 June at 13:11 · [Like](#) · 4

**Guarionex D Marin** In regards to question #3, I could answer that one, at least partially. The answer is yes: I live thousands of miles away from you, in a US Territory called Puerto Rico (Spanish Speakers). In a small island like this one, we have 3,5 million people and believe it or not we have about 4 or 5 types of Buddhisms: Two types of Zen, Nygma, our brethren Gelugpas and us kadampa. Before the protests, other Buddhist practitioners called us a cult, and some still do, but the difference is that many of them, like Zen, are realizing the ostracism the False Dalai Lama is causing and are changing, little by little their attitude.  
20 June at 14:49 · Edited · [Like](#) · 14

**Thomas Ythan Jones** Simon, thank you for writing these very thoughtful questions. Many of us, including people deeply involved in the protests, have asked similar questions and we all continue to discuss them, which I think is healthy and the best thing to do.

The way the protests have been conducted has evolved over time and will continue to do so. When the gentle approach didn't work, they become a bit louder and brasher, which has certainly drawn much more attention. That's not to say they'll always be this way, just that this is the tactic considered most appropriate/effective at the moment. It appears that the ISC organisers are continually tweaking the way the protests are done, to ensure maximum impact and minimum backlash.

Another point is that protests generally make people uncomfortable and that's kind of the point, to shake them up and make them rethink their ingrained beliefs. Do you think the suffrage movement would have succeeded if the suffragettes had spent all their time trying not to offend anyone? Emily

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Davidson clearly wasn't worried about offending the king.

A lot of us do engage in other forms of activism. Just like the ISC demonstrations, these are outside the auspices of the NKT - there's really very little difference, and we engage in all of it as a matter of conscience and personal choice, perhaps as an expression of our spiritual practice, but not actually part of it (not a formal part, anyway - technically, everything we do should be part of our spiritual practice).

Many Tibetans have gone underground and openly rely on other protectors (Damchen Choegyial, aka Kalarupa, being particularly popular as they're both emanations of the same Buddha) while retaining their faith in Dorje Shugden secretly in their hearts. But why should they have to do this? It's unconscionable. Also, it's impractical. The gurus of our lineage have clearly explained that at this time our karma is best suited to the practice of Dorje Shugden. Ultimately, all buddhas are exactly the same, but in terms of their manifold emanations, living beings have different karma towards each one. By suggesting that we follow other protectors, because they're all just the same really, we miss out on getting the most out of dharma practice, condemning ourselves to remain longer in samsara and therefore condemning others longer suffering too. This is not the choice of a bodhisattva.

20 June at 14:20 · [Like](#) · 19



**Guarionex D Marin** In regards to question #6: we are not worldly attached to Dorje Shugden. D Shugden's duty is to be our spiritual personal trainer, who helps us enhance our practice and achieve spiritual realizations. If you observe our practice you would realize we do other Pujas such as Tara and Medicine Buddha: does that mean that we are (worldly) attached to them? Think about it.

20 June at 14:25 · [Like](#) · 9



**Carole Britton** You have just put into very good words, all my inner thoughts about this issue. Thank you, we seldom see posts like this and it helps to know that other Kadampa Buddhists are having these thoughts.

20 June at 14:27 · [Like](#) · 9



**Demo Fischer** As far as i know, the protest will be over soon as they have been succesful enough-why dont you adress the ISC directly with your questions? This would be more logical and honest to me....?

20 June at 16:03 · [Like](#) · 3



**Rose Bryan** I had many of these questions myself initially. So I read about the history ban and the Dalai Lama's words and actions around it from the beginning. I also actually attended protests rather than sitting around, hand wringing and lamenting what I imagined them to be. Once I attended, I found that the majority of my concerns were based on ideas about the protests that existed solely in my imagination rather than reality. Until I participated, it hadn't occurred to me how much inspiration these activities provide for Tibetan Shuggdens who have been directly effected by the ban - namely, the idea that you can question a leader's policies and speak up about persecution without being killed, beaten, or your family back home being harmed. We have brought enough media attention to the issue in the last two years that the Dalai Lama's handlers have been instructing members of the exile community who attend his talks to behave themselves and stop threatening Shuggdens. That alone makes it all worthwhile to me. Tibetans who attend have told me stories about calling family inside Tibet to tell them about what they have witnessed at the protests. One friend told me how many of his friends and family cry when they hear about hundreds of people who care enough about their well-being to load busses at 4:30am, travel all over America, spend all day tirelessly chanting, ignore insults, continuing in the cold, intense heat, rain and wind, load the buses again and joyfully do it again and again day after day all while spending their own money to do so. He said they have never had anyone do this for them because the Dalai Lama is so popular and everyone is too afraid of hurting their own reputation to publicly stand up to him. Specifically, he said to me (while crying), "Geshe Kelsang's students are Heroes. No one else ever listened or cared about how hard it is for us. It has been so hard for so long." Pictures and videos by the Tibetan community during the protests have spread and the ability to SEE people disagreeing with the Dalai Lama without anger and without punishment is a huge step in people feeling free to think for themselves.

20 June at 17:32 · [Like](#) · 17



**Carole Britton** Oh dear, a good letter marred by a few words. We are not all in the enviable position of many of these protestors to leave jobs,families etc and don't have the resources either. Also we don't need to attend a protest to find out. We read and listen and watch and think but sometimes it still troubles us. The Karma issue is never really addressed unless I have missed it somewhere.

20 June at 17:42 · [Like](#) · 1



**Rose Bryan** I made absolutely no comments about what others should or shouldn't do. I merely shared what I have witnessed and how it has effected my thinking on the topic.

20 June at 17:48 · [Like](#) · 6



**Rose Bryan** That said, with all due respect, if you want to talk about karma, plenty of people have no problem prioritizing vacations, going to movies, gardening, going to the gym, paying for cable subscriptions, spending money eating and drinking out at pubs, etc. without this same depth of examination that they apply to selfless acts like speaking up for those who lack a free press and are experiencing a full religious apartheid by their own government. Being of service to others has never required me to stop working, stop helping my family or live in poverty. Attending one or two days of a protest definitely doesn't require anyone to do those things. It's simply a choice. We all have choices. People are free to prioritize whatever activities they think will make them happy.

20 June at 18:03 · Edited · [Like](#) · 13



**Simon Drye** Some amazing, inspiring and insightful responses so far. I'm very blessed. Thanks.

20 June at 18:28 · [Like](#) · 7



**Melissa Lynne Rose**, thank you for your thoughtful and well written words, as always!

20 June at 18:49 · [Like](#) · 1



**Jose M Velez** I'll be the first to admit that I don't know too much about the politics of this issue. I attend the protests in the U.S. because I believe in the freedom of religion. The DL may be the spiritual authority within Tibet, but here in the United States every citizen has the right to follow their own spiritual journey without interference from a foreign policy/power. The DL's ban on Dorje Shugden is not recognized in this country (even though some choose to follow the guidance of the DL) and I protest to remind the Tibetans and DL to be aware of the difference of culture and country.

20 June at 19:34 · [Like](#) · 1



**Rob Wisniewski** I'll be honest; I am ambivalent about the protests. I am happy that someone is bringing attention to the discrimination and persecution against Shugden Buddhists, but I think the rhetoric - casting the Dalai Lama as false, evil, a dictator, a muslim, etc. - is unskillful and inappropriate. When we take refuge vows, we commit to seeing anyone wearing a monk's robes as a Sangha Jewel; we know from the Kadampa teachings that he, like every other living being, is our kind mother; Geshe Langri Tangpa advises us to accept defeat and offer the victory; and we know that it is at least possible that HHDL is an emanation of a Buddha who has come to help us learn patience and lessen our attachment to the eight worldly concerns. So I think we should take a different approach. I certainly don't condemn those who participate in the protests; they are shedding light on a shameful situation. But if we were to protest with the utmost kindness and respect for the Dalai Lama, I think that would be much more effective. We could help to show the world that Buddhism is a religion of love and compassion.

20 June at 19:42 · Edited · [Like](#) · 6



**Kelsang Pagpa** There's no question in Venerable Geshe-la's mind that without the protests, Je Tsongkhapa's tradition will be destroyed by the false Dalai Lama. That's good enough for me and trumps any other considerations.

20 June at 19:45 · [Like](#) · 15



**Carole Britton** Some of us still struggle with it even having heard so many explanations Rob, above, states exactly what I think. Be heard but be kind.

20 June at 19:53 · [Like](#) · 4



**Rob Wisniewski** With all respect, I have never previously heard that Venerable Geshe-la believes Je Tsonkhapa's tradition will be destroyed. Since Dorje Shugden has sworn to uphold the tradition, how is this possible? Can a Buddha fail to fulfill his promise? I ask with genuine interest and with humility.

20 June at 19:54 · [Like](#)



**Kelsang Pagpa** There are a number of common misunderstandings that stop people from getting behind the protests -

1. Protesting is not Buddhist
2. It's wrong to denigrate the Dalai Lama regardless of what he's doing - good Buddhists don't focus on others' faults.
3. Protesting is political and Buddhists shouldn't be involved in politics, so we shouldn't be involved in the protests.
  1. Protesting can be a spiritual action. Nothing exists from it's own side - actions that are seemingly spiritual can be worldly and vice-versa, it depends on our motivation, not on what we do. Bodhichitta makes everything a spiritual action, even killing.
  2. ISC is not denigrating the Dalai Lama because we are simply telling the truth - the Dalai Lama is lying and he does need to give religious freedom to Shugden Buddhists because he has instituted a ban on the practice. Everything ISC says about the Dalai Lama is nothing but the truth. He is a spiritual conman and his actions are hurting Buddhism so someone needs to stand up and protect it.
  3. The protests are not political. Politics is worldly, the protests are pure spiritual actions that are bringing to public awareness the truth about the Dalai Lama and his Shugden ban. They are also a direct message for the Dalai Lama - if he is really practising Buddhism or has any conscience or sense of shame he would reflect on his actions and realise he has done wrong. However, he's just a worldly politician and so he doesn't care. If he genuinely was a Buddhist and really did care he would have fixed this problems a long time ago using the dialogue he famously frequently talks about but he hasn't spoken to Shugden Buddhists since he instituted the ban nearly twenty years ago.

Conclusion - the Dalai Lama is a hard-as-nails politician who cares nothing for others or for Buddhism and therefore his actions are a legitimate target for protests, especially since these actions of protest ARE protecting Je Tsongkhapa's tradition. I rest my case.

PLEASE SUPPORT THE PROTESTS

20 June at 20:04 · Edited · [Like](#) · 18



**Kelsang Pagpa** I heard it from his own lips, Rob. Dorje Shugden can protect the tradition, but if you harm the protector, this indirectly harms the tradition. Also, it's a dependent relationship. Dorje Shugden doesn't protect the tradition from his own side but with the help of faith and devotion from those who practice. My offering to my Guru Dorje Shugden is my commitment to the protests.

20 June at 20:00 · Edited · [Like](#) · 13



**Rob Wisniewski** Thank you. I believe I'll bow out of this discussion now.

20 June at 20:00 · [Like](#) · 3



**Kelsang Pagpa** My question to everyone who is resisting being involved in the protests is: if no one protests the Dalai Lama and he succeeds in destroying our tradition (he's trying very hard to do so), how will you feel about having done nothing? Will you be wondering if you could have or should have

done something?

By then it will be too late! Now is the time to act.

Of course, you need to act in accordance with your heart, but this is something to consider.

20 June at 20:09 · Edited · Like · 17



**Jim Hall** Perfectly said Pagpa. How wonderful it is to have you explain and for us to understand so easily. Thank you and many Blessings.

20 June at 20:18 · Like · 1



**Lisa Goddard** Kelsang Pagpa ur words are powerful and so glad u have the bravery to speak out!!! It's time to protect wat we believe in most  
□□□□□xxx

20 June at 20:19 · Like · 2



**Rose Bryan** I also do not agree with the choice to call the Dalai Lama a muslim as an insult and have said so openly in the past. Who cares if he was born to a muslim family? To emphasize that as a reason to call his credentials into question is to imply that one is either born Buddhist or not when Buddhist logic and reasoning is a way of thinking that is available to anyone no matter what they call themselves or where they are born. But I am comfortable with calling attention to his actions and the gap between his words in his talks in the West versus his words and policies within the exile community. After I researched his actions, I found that his policies and words within the Tibetan community have been those of a theocratic dictator and so decided I was not only comfortable calling him that but also felt that the hypocrisy of the Dalai Lama presenting himself as a beacon of democracy while behaving like a dictator in the exile community needed to have be known. For me, concerns about how the message was being expressed are precisely why I choose to get directly involved in early 2014. I find it futile to critique something from the outside without any direct involvement. I prefer to be involved and add my perspective if there's something that I think needs to be considered. But I go in with the open mind of knowing that its possible that my opinion is unfounded or that the majority of other people simply disagree and, if that's the case, I accept the small differences.

20 June at 20:20 · Like · 2



**Kelsang Pagpa** That's a strawman Rose - no one is calling him a Muslim. He was nicknamed 'the Saffron-Robed Muslim' when he was a child; this is true. Question: how likely is it that the incarnation of the 13th Dalai Lama would choose to be born in a Muslim family? This is the point - it calls into question the Dalai Lama's authenticity - there's nothing negative being said about being a Muslim, it's just a further indication of the Reting Lama's deception that he chose a boy from a Muslim family, that's all that's being said. The Dalai Lama himself wants to make this into an issue and to make it seem that ISC is anti-Muslim; that's not the case, please don't assist him with this task

20 June at 20:24 · Like · 7



**Rose Bryan** I agree Pagpa. Which is precisely why I didn't find it useful for the ISC to hand out pamphlets examining those details about his life. The tulku system is easily corrupted so why give it validity by examining whether the Dalai Lama is the "real" reincarnation or not? A person's actions can speak for themselves no matter what string of holy beings they allege to have come from. I think a focus on his reincarnation status just distracts from shining a light on his actions. Giving mystical credence to the tulku system is what led to so many Westerners during the 1960's and 70's blindly accepting lamas who engaged in the abuse of drugs and alcohol, had sex with students, and engaged in all kinds of harm without critique from their Western students all in the name of a twisted understanding of guru devotion. Guru yoga is about working to take on the qualities of someone you admire and to develop the same type of mind they have, not slavishly prasing them in word no matter what they do. But, through involvement in the protests, I also grew to understand that Westerners are not the only audience for the pamphlets and books. In other cultures (including Tibetan) and to some people effected by the ban, whether he is the actual reincarnation of the 13th Dalai Lama is a big deal and so I accepted that this information was examined and included in materials.

20 June at 20:42 · Like · 3



**Dan Brown** This is such a divisive issue. With all due respect for the greater wisdom of others posting here - if you can't protest with love and compassion, don't protest.

20 June at 20:55 · Edited · Like · 5



**Kelsang Jima** Having just participated in protests here I can confirm that it is like a wrathful action - powerful & peaceful - never separate from compassion for all involved; compassion has to be the motivator

20 June at 21:01 · Like · 10



**Dan Brown** Thanks Carole, I just corrected that.  
Kelsang Pagpa, I take the long view - our tradition doesn't have to beat the Dalai Lama to win, it only has to outlive him. Whom ever takes over for him will not be a popular world renowned figure. At that point, with the correct causes and conditions, we win.

20 June at 21:03 · Like · 3



**Kelsang Jima** For me, it's important to stand up for what is right; it's important to take action, as much as possible without delusion or unkindness

20 June at 21:06 · Like · 5



**Sarah Neal** If we do nothing then we are not creating the causes for the ban to be lifted and for harmony to flourish again within the Buddhist community. If we do nothing pure Dharma will die out. As well as standing up for human rights we are fighting for the survival of the pure teachings of Buddha and Je Tsongkapa. Xxxx

20 June at 21:06 · Like · 8



**Dan Brown** I can see there is a need to do something, but it seems to me that nothing can stop us from keeping the pure teachings alive.  
However, I can easily envision a mistake on our part, or even a perceived

insult on our part, allowing the media to paint us as the enemy. In my personal list of worries for our tradition, I see that as the bigger threat to Je Taingkapa's tradition.

20 June at 21:13 · Like · 1



**Kelsang Jima** Mmmm... One of the main ways to keep the tradition alive is to practice purely - we need people with realisations of the stages of the path;

20 June at 21:16 · Like · 8



**Kelsang Pagpa** I think it's a big misconception to think that all we have to do is keep our head down and keep practising and everything will be a-okay. Don't you think that if that was the case the protests wouldn't be necessary?

20 June at 21:17 · Like · 5



**Kelsang Jima** We don't need to worry about our reputation - it's a worldly concern to be abandoned; it cannot be a motivator - I think some of the things said are too harsh but that I won't throw the baby out with the bath water

20 June at 21:18 · Like · 6



**Kelsang Jima** I agree Pagpa - we need to keep our own practice pure & take action; both are necessary, in my opinion

20 June at 21:20 · Like · 1



**Kelsang Pagpa** It doesn't matter what we think - it's what Geshe-la sees that counts. I trust his judgement, everything else is secondary. What do I know?

20 June at 21:21 · Like · 6



**Kelsang Jima** You know the Dharma - he also says we need to be our own Spiritual Guide - trust our wisdom that he has helped us develop

20 June at 21:23 · Like · 5



**Kelsang Jima** We're not passive robots

20 June at 21:24 · Like · 3



**Carole Britton** It is very obvious that there will never be agreement on this issue. Is it Geshe-la who agrees the wording used in the protest please?

20 June at 21:24 · Like



**Rose Bryan** Who said that the goal was agreement?

20 June at 21:25 · Like · 3



**Kelsang Pagpa** These are all points to consider.

20 June at 21:26 · Like · 2



**Carole Britton** No one did I merely meant agreement on the nature of the protests.

20 June at 21:26 · Like



**Kelsang Jima** I don't know Carole; even Rabten has said there are things he doesn't always agree with in terms of the protests, but, on the whole, supports of course; there is room for disagreement but we support on the whole, you see? We are allowed to be individuals and think for ourselves.

20 June at 21:29 · Edited · Like · 4



**Kelsang Pagpa** I admire your sharp mind Rose

20 June at 21:29 · Edited · Like · 2



**Rose Bryan** I learn so much when people openly share their perspective! It helps me examine my own thoughts at great depth and notice any unexamined assumptions I was carrying around without realizing it.

20 June at 21:29 · Edited · Like · 8



**Sarah Dowling** The satire and ideas that are used by the ISC are definitely aimed at different audiences. I am not Tibetan but I could see how some ideas resonated with the Tibetans, some didn't, and some resonated with those brought up in western cultures. I don't like confrontation but have had to deal with some small difficulties in my middle-of-nowhere town about this issue. There is no getting away from it. When I went to the demos nearest to me, I felt relief, compassion, and a deeper understanding for the power and joy of these protests. I now feel far more empowered to discuss this issue when it comes up. Maybe go to one and see what you think. Then you can answer Pagpa's question - would you be wondering if you could or should have done something. If it is a step too far for you, consider donating to the ISC and [DorjeShugden.com](http://DorjeShugden.com) to help that way. Or at least follow them on Facebook



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20 June at 22:53 · Like · 7



**Kelsang Pagpa** Thanks for your contribution Sarah

20 June at 22:56 · Edited · Like · 2



**David Towner-Jones** I have faith that my spiritual guide is a buddha and knows more than me. I then apply that to this situation. And the little I do know about this situation would seem to support my faith.

20 June at 23:12 · Like · 3



**Samuel Forbes** Simon: I've also been contemplating your first question a lot recently, at great length. I'm reminded of Geshe-la's words, "Whether or not our Spiritual Guide is precious or not depends upon us..." Meaning that we impute "precious" or "pure" from our own side. It follows that for some practitioners, the Dalai Lama appears as a pure being to those who have imputed him as such. That said, I do feel that the ban has created a schism in the Sangha, which is a negative action, causing real harm, as we see in the Tibetan community. Pure beings do not cause harm, because their universal compassion makes it literally impossible. Without anger, the intention to harm cannot arise. Therein lies a great source of friction, I think.

I think it's important to remember what Venerable Geshe-la writes, saying there is no such thing as an inherently bad person. We engage in negative actions coming from our delusions, which are temporary and not us. He writes

that our real enemies are the delusions in our mind, and that universal compassion includes all sentient beings. It follows that the Dalai Lama himself, as a sentient being, is not our enemy; indeed, he is an object of our compassion, especially when creating negative karma. We still need to take constructive action to end the ban because it is creating suffering, but motivated by love and compassion. A pure, positive intention, a peaceful mind, a warm heart, all are essential.

I don't have any answers nor wisdom, but it's an important topic. These are just some thoughts.

In the end, I do feel that the persecution of Shugden practitioners is a human rights violation as well as a karmically negative, harmful action. We can't really know which delusion is functioning to cause this harm, but we can know that all harmful acts come from delusions in general. Therefore a delusion is present, is the inner troublemaker causing this harm.

I feel protesting with a peaceful mind, a pure and compassionate intention is a good example of dealing with an outer problem while not allowing an inner problem, such as anger, to arise.

21 June at 00:08 · [Like](#) · 12



**Will Smith** Actually, I feel like Kadampas had a much worse reputation among before 2008 when we were still being passive. Our reputation is already sullied from 1997 on. When people actually talk to Kadampas at demos etc and realize we mean business and we are logical and can articulate our position, it helps our position, I think.

21 June at 02:19 · [Like](#) · 3



**Will Smith** Anyway, peaceful protest and expression is a legitimate process in a free society. Obsessing over what others think about us when we are actually trying our best with a good motivation is a fault and a weakness. Reasonable people will not treat us like scientologists, for example because honestly we are just not that weird.

21 June at 02:25 · [Like](#) · 3



**Leila Katya** Dear Simon,

I had very similar questions, although not so well articulated! I believe I was like you; wanting to be involved in the protests (as I have faith in my guru) but also wanting to have complete understanding of what I was doing and why. I went... [See More](#)

21 June at 03:00 · [Like](#) · 3



**Kelsang Chogden** What a useful discussion. There was a long period between the mid nineties and 2008 where we did not respond to the lies and slander appearing about the NKT. We were very respectful and quiet. Many attempts were made to discuss this with the Dalai Lama to no avail. I received a lot of angry negative comments from people who were supporting him accusing me of belonging to a cult and being paid by the Chinese. We were bluntly thrown out of a major university had venues cancelled and so forth. Since we began to protest in 2008 and could talk openly about this and give accurate information about the religious persecution going on inside and outside the Tibetan community, fewer local people attack us and new students who come to the Center are forthright in saying things like, "I read about the issue on the Internet. It sounds like what politicians do. They then come to classes. Our participating in demonstrations with a mind of compassion to help others avoid negativity is purifying this negative karma of discrimination and lies and giving people freedom of choice. I am so happy to participate in these demonstrations and to talk about the religious discrimination in an open honest way. The press are finally sometimes reporting accurately now. We are protecting Je Tsongkhapa's tradition and creating causes for it to appear in our future life's so we can continue our path to enlightenment How wonderful!

21 June at 04:26 · [Like](#) · 21



**Peter Straub** Point 3) If we would never have protested things would be way worse now. Maybe we would not be having this discussion because the DL's wishes of destroying us would have happened. Because we are protesting in person and online every day the DL and CTA know they cannot get away with things so easily because they know they are being watched and reported on. If we said and did nothing they would have no restraint on their negativity.

2) How could our reputation be any worse than the DL lying to the world and saying that you are (he is talking about each of us individually e.g. lying about you) a demon worshipper, in a cult, that murders people. How could our reputation be worse?

There is nothing wrong with presenting the facts to the world about someone who is deceitful and destroying people's lives. The DL created the schism and we are trying to repair that. If people keep believing the sectarian DL they will always keep the division and their anger will keep increasing.

1) The DL is trying to destroy Buddhism how could it possibly help to let him do this? (see on youtube the DL saying: Buddha was wrong; nobody needs religion and mixing Dharma, science, western psychology and politics when he teaches etc.)

21 June at 07:20 · [Like](#) · 10



**Kelly Inman** It's interesting you are so worried about whether our protests will cause would-be bodhisattvas from the Dalai Lama's school to lose faith in THEIR teacher, while the Dalai Lama (big and important guy right?) is saying that our teacher, and all of us, are spirit worshippers. But that's fine if the Dalai Lama would cause people to lose faith? It's just questionable if we do it... since we aren't the uh root teacher of the FPMT... who did you say invited you to the protests?

21 June at 07:36 · [Like](#) · 2



**Kelly Inman** And I can't choose the form the Protector takes--- Manjushri gets to pick what form HE emanates in--- the dictator of Tibet doesn't like it? Oh well; you know, right, that the Dalai Lama isn't in charge of Buddhism?

21 June at 07:50 · [Like](#) · 2



**Mirja Renner** The exact workings of karma are a deeply hidden phenomenon, so all I can do to counter the 'let's just pray' idea as best as I can is based on the teachings that I have received: yes, prayer is immensely important, but if it

were the only thing anybody would ever have to do to help living beings, Buddha would not have needed to engage in the physical actions of teaching Dharma. He could just have prayed for another aeon. But it doesn't work like that. And I would argue that his appearance and actions in this world was a result of the actions of its inhabitants, their accumulated karma and prayer. If physical representations and actions weren't necessary, bodhisattvas wouldn't bother with being present but just pray, spiritual guides who set a good example would be pointless.

So, with that in mind, taking action physical actions remains important, provided it is grounded in the right motivation. If you check, and accidents aside, our physical actions really are expression of our intentions. We sentient beings simply live in a state in which we very much interact in the physical world, we connect to and influence one another very directly this way. So it only makes sense to also express our intentions, take action where necessary.

Same sex marriage, for example, required a lot of action both inside and outside of court, it required people to put their neck on the line to bring about change and in many places this means making yourself rather unpopular and even endangering your life; if the activists and lawyers had just prayed we'd still be living in a different world.

Who knows, the protesters may well be the result of Shugden practitioners' prayers and Je Tsongkhapa's dedications. It often seems like that to me when I speak with the Tibetans (both lay and ordained and even Geshes) and they express their gratitude for us standing with them, because it makes a real difference for them already now to know that they are not alone. That in itself is a wonderful result of the protests.

All this to say that prayer is very important, in many ways it is generating and stating intention. How the prayers manifest themselves in the world we cannot fully understand now, but we can still infer from Buddha's own actions that physical action is necessary to influence living beings, at no point did he say 'when you see suffering just pray, samsara will sort itself out without you ever having to engage in physical actions with other living beings'.

So, see you in the pen, y'all!

Yesterday at 13:54 · Edited · Like · 19



**Kelsang Pagpa** Seeya there Miri!

21 June at 11:14 · Edited · Like · 3



**Rebecca Gilpin** Well said, Miri. See you in the pen! Xoxoxo

21 June at 18:15 · Like · 3



**Sarah Neal** Beautifully said Mirja xxxx

21 June at 21:05 · Like · 1



**Will Smith** Have you been to a demo Simon? It might be scary at first but it is a really powerful spiritual practice for pure Dharma to remain in this world. Ask anyone who has been. It doesn't matter what other people think. Really.

21 June at 22:56 · Like



**Carole Britton** Will, it's not that people are scared that they don't demonstrate. I don't see risks anymore than any other peaceful demonstrations of which there are many. I have seen friends going on these NKT demonstrations and the emotion I detect is excitement. People chanting together in this way stirs emotions I would imagine. It must be difficult to make sure one's mind always maintains equanimity and focuses on the correct intention in the midst of the chanting.

21 June at 23:07 · Like · 3



**Mirja Renner** Carol, it actually is surprisingly easy to maintain the motivation and joyful effort while at a protest. Weird but true.

Yesterday at 00:28 · Like · 3



**Peter Straub** Carol everyone I have seen at every protest has been blissfully happy (inner peace) on the way to the protests, at the protests and on the way home from the protests. No excitement. It is easy to be peaceful when everyone around you is peaceful.

Yesterday at 05:45 · Edited · Like · 2



**Will Smith** It's not a difficult choice actually. If you don't want to go to the demos then don't. Geshe-la just asked us to go. He doesn't command things like the DL.

Yesterday at 05:47 · Like · 5



**Joseph Ultimo** Rob, loved your perspective. Bringing light to religious persecution is noble and Geshe-la wants us to help. How we accomplish his request is what every individual and we as a group should be focused on. Compassion is the Dharma Geshe-la teaches and we should aspire for ever appearing compassionate actions in protest. More compassion and less unskilled actions creates a more effective protest. The protest is like a living being that is made up of many living beings, and just like us it is mixed with impure intentions and actions and pure ones. Also like us, the protest can analyze its actions and generate ever purer ones. The mirror of Dharma should reflect protests that are becoming purer and more effective over time. If this growth is seen, then we can be assured an end to the oppression for others is near.

The path, not the goal, is where our life is lived and reflects who we are. We are each a part of the body of the protest united not in the goal, but the compassionate beings we aspire and put forth effort to be. Compassionate intentions can be stained by unskilled actions and all actions should be questioned and reevaluated continuously.

Yesterday at 06:16 · Like · 1



**Chris Recknell** 1) I think that they are forced to question their faith, this is never a bad thing in my opinion and will either strengthen them as practitioners or they will abandon someone who they now feel suspicious of. This is all none of our business. There is no negative karma from telling the truth about someone who is lying.

2) Absolutely, what other people think of us isn't much our business either, not if we are telling the truth. Showing a good example doesn't necessarily mean being popular or making others comfortable.



3) Things are definitely improving. I'm pretty certain you can find this out for yourself. The actions of the CTA are being scrutinized and they are having to be more and more careful.

4) There is no contradiction between taking a pain-killer and practicing patience. All centres are making the kind of prayers you are talking about everyday - "now is the time to protect Dharma practitioners as your children". Prayer doesn't preclude action. Try praying for a better job without actually applying for any, see what results you get.

5) I think the protests are about maintaining a doorway out of Samsara. If our lineage is considered impure because we are a bunch of devil worshippers, there is one less checkout at the supermarket of Samsara and for people who have the karma to connect to this tradition, it will be especially hard. What is more important than this? Buddhist protest does not preclude any kind of external compassionate activity, we should express ourselves as we see fit. Regards results, Geshela is asking us to stop the protests as our aims are being fulfilled.

6) This isn't how I want the world to be, as long as you aren't harming anyone, do what you want, how you want.

Yesterday at 12:14 · Like · 8



**Mirja Renner** The aldershot demos were organized before Nepal happened. And maybe the ISC goes for resounding silence at the event, we don't know what the exact plan is for that specific demo. Whatever it is will have been carefully weighed against pros and contras. In the case of the demos I can't say I know what's best, all I know are my own sensitivities. Personally I would prefer a big presence but resounding silence or mantra recitation, but that doesn't mean it's the right thing. Anyway, we won't know until the demo starts.

Yesterday at 13:51 · Edited · Like · 2



**Thomas Ythan Jones** [John Swainson](#), it's worth noting that the monasteries in Nepal, including those that practise Dorje Shugden such as Phelgyeling and Segyu, are doing a lot to help those affected by the earthquake. In contrast, the Dalai Lama/CTA have given a token donation and have drawn a lot of complaints from Tibetans living in Nepal, who feel they've been abandoned by their "government" (i.e. the CTA, although the Nepalese feel rather abandoned by the Nepalese government too). The talk in Aldershot and the demonstration were both organised before the earthquakes happened. What is actually happening here is the Dalai Lama is cashing in on other people's misery, as well as using an emotive subject to silence criticisms about something entirely unrelated. That alone is reason to demonstrate, never mind the ban on Dorje Shugden practice!

Yesterday at 13:24 · Like · 10



**Janice Njoo** Is it correct to say that protecting this lineage and spreading this lineage is two sides of the same coin? And since the protest is not political but spiritual, how come no teacher is teaching or clarifying this from the throne? This is what I don't get.... where I'm at, the only places where we discuss this Dorje shugden issue with the DL is either in a coffee shop or on Facebook. Never in class or during discussion classes. Why not? Is there a contradiction?

22 hrs · Edited · Like



**Guarionex D Marin** I don't know about everyone else, but I do not touch the subject unless it is brought up. The reason is that people come to our classes looking for tools to help them in their daily lives. Some of the students that come to our classes are "spiritual tourists", meaning, they have been in every Buddhist and Hinduist center in Puerto Rico. Since Puerto Ricans are predominantly Catholic, many see the Dalai Lama as a Pope, meaning, any disobedience to the Pope means a papal bull and excommunication. At least here, I have to be very skillful about it.

22 hrs · Edited · Like · 3



**Kelsang Pagpa** There's a reason Janice. Dorje Shugden is a Buddha and there is no Dorje Shugden problem apart from the political problem that the false Dalai Lama has created, so there's nothing to discuss. I found recently that when I did try to discuss it with members of FP because of Geshe-la's request for people from UK centres to attend the demos, some people seemed quite disturbed. Because some people have weaker wisdom, there's no point discussing it unless they have crushing doubts. Many people find the issue troubling, it stirs up strong feelings and they would rather not know about it.

Geshe-la has clarified many times that Dorje Shugden is an emanation of Guru Tsongkhapa so that's all we need to know.

22 hrs · Edited · Like · 8



**Evelyn Tang** [Janice Njoo](#) [Kelsang Pagpa](#) in hong Kong we did have two special classes arranged before the protest. One is by [Kelsang Rabten](#) and one is by [Kelsang Tonglam](#). I guess you may request if you think your centre need one like this to dispel confusion.

22 hrs · Like · 3



**Atishas Cook** Simon....

you asked a bunch of questions. here are my answers:

- 1) It will help them. Those poor people may lose faith in their false Guru &, I hope, find a valid Guru. If they lose faith in Buddhadharma that is regrettable - but whose fault is it? Not ours. If we stay silent out of concern for their faith in their false Guru, that is neither a wise nor a compassionate action on our part.
- 2) No. Our protests may bring some bad press initially to NKT, but once the False Dalai Lama's edifice crumbles, everyone will see that we were among the very few Buddhists with the integrity to stand up and speak out. Our protests are saving Buddhadharma - including the NKT, not harming it!
- 3) Yes, of course. Look at the press! Look at the Shugden monasteries in India etc.
- 4) No. You're completely misunderstanding how we practise Dharma. Please think clearly about externals/internals... Are you externalizing the issue when you take your illness to the hospital to have it cured? It's your karma, after all.

5) Because the ISC exists to protect Je Tsongkhapa's tradition. If you want to join other organisations campaigning on other issues, go for it.

6) No. You are completely misunderstanding mere name. We are devoted to our Gurus' Dharma Protector and we are motivated by compassion for all living beings. If we were criticised for following Buddhism, should we switch to Islam or Christianity? Buddhism is mere name, after all.

i suggest - sincerely - that you practise Heart Jewel prayers regularly, and make strong requests for Clear Wisdom, according to the commentary.

20 hrs · Edited · Like · 7



**Matthew Rochford** Atishas Cook's statement rings true to me, especially the part about our integrity. As he says, we are the only Buddhist organisation brave enough to stand up against the heartless bullying of the Dalai Lama and his government -their lies and misinformation. We are doing so peacefully, legally and compassionately. It seems to me that many of his supporters are in complete denial of the problem. They deny there is a ban, they deny that the DL could possibly be at fault and they are trying to undermine what is a legitimate human rights protest. We need to stand up joyfully and happily.

20 hrs · Like · 4



**Guarionex D Marin** Thank you to Simon for those questions, and thanks to all of you for comments: they have been very enlightening to me.

19 hrs · Like · 1



**Luca Sardone** Question one is also on my mind, I feel that if the shoe was on the other foot, and I had waited my whole life for geshla to arrive and there were people protesting against him how would I feel ... Not condoning what he is doing in any way shape or form, it is morally wrong and he is bringing heavy negative Karma on himself, it hurt me when I found out of this division within such a beautiful religion, which I thought at last I found something so pure in this land of samsara, but then my aunty an ordained lady explained to me it would not be samsara if it was.....

51 mins · Like



**Simon Drye** Regarding several posts here. Ask yourself what samsara are you talking about? Who's samsara? Samsara does not exist outside your own mind. It's a not a concrete solid, inherently exist thing we are all stuck in. Absolutely it appears to impure minds and we make effort to "leave" but it does not exist from its own side and never will. We throw this word samsara around so easily . With love.

44 mins · Like



**Simon Drye** As a final note - I have been moved by and greatly benefited by many posts in this forum. In the main part - it feels as though participants have been sensitive and respectful in the way they shared their wisdom and approach. That was such a beautiful take away from STTP - valuing others and trying to give suitable advice to others in ways that they will accept and not be antagonised by is so much more beneficial that simply "out-dharming" others and ridiculing their perspectives. If others feel inspired to attend the protests and have had their thoughts aired, or at least if they have aired a heavy heart and began to move their mind, I feel like my work here is done. Our ability to help each other here is in itself a majestic indication of the great wisdom and compassion of sincere Kadampa practitioners - may the lineage of

Losang Dragpa flourish for evermore. Feel free to continue meaningful discussion here but I am extremely pleased and blessed. Thanks all. **Janice Njoo** - hope you are well - feel free to message me as I'm happy to discuss this anytime and raise your questions on person with those who have more wisdom than I. With love.

35 mins · Like · 1