

- [Home](#)
- [About the New Kadampa Truth Blog](#)

## **Bodhisattva Refutations**

Recently at a [Bodhisattva Centre](#) (Brighton) Open Day, two people handed out leaflets to newcomers in order to dissuade them from attending the Centre's Buddhist meditation classes. Many of their complaints stem from their dislike of the open opposition of many New Kadampa Tradition students to the Dalai Lama over his ban of one of their spiritual practices. It is understandable that some people might wish to protest in support of the Dalai Lama and it is their freedom to do so. Moreover, the New Kadampa Tradition and Bodhisattva Centre have not claimed to be faultless organizations. However, the information these two people were handing out was largely incorrect and misleading, so we need to address it here. Please let us know if you have any more questions about any of the issues raised below.

This leaflet has also been copied and pasted onto a couple of other websites.

### **Replies to: [Information about Bodhisattva Centre](#)**

**(We thought you might like to know)**

**[The Buddhist Centre you are about to visit is one of the larger residential Centres of the New Kadampa Tradition. www.kadampa.org You may notice that the publicity for this Open Day does not mention the NKT or any Registered Charity information about the Centre.](#)**

This was not a deliberate omission. Bodhisattva Centre was not trying to hide the fact that it is a member of the New Kadampa Tradition or a registered British charity, and these facts are very clear from all the other Centre publicity.

**[If you commit to study with the NKT at Bodhisattva Centre you will only study the books of Geshe Kelsang Gyatso. The original texts they are based on are also available in many other Buddhist traditions.](#)**

Geshe Kelsang's books form the basis of the three NKT study programmes (the General Programme, Foundation Programme and Teacher Training Programme) but outside of their studies NKT students can and do read what they wish. Everyone has freedom to do as they choose. Please see [New Kadampa Truth](#) website for more information on this.

It is reasonable and consistent with other traditions of Buddhism to study only the books of that tradition — for example, you don't study Zen texts in a Theravadin monastery. Geshe Kelsang's books are based on Je Tsongkhapa's commentaries to Buddha Shakyamuni's teachings, which are mostly in Tibetan. Some translations are available but most are not. For example, Geshe Kelsang's Tantric books have no precedent; such detailed instructions are not generally or easily available, even in the Tibetan tradition. Geshe Kelsang has received requests for Guide to Dakini Land, for instance, to be translated into Tibetan so that Tibetan

practitioners can benefit from it.

Geshe Kelsang has never claimed that his books are his original work. In Buddhism there is no original work because the teachings should be able to be traced back in their entirety to the word of Buddha. In Joyful Path of Good Fortune for example, Geshe Kelsang says in the Preface:

I received these teachings from my Spiritual Guide, Trijang Dorjechang, who was an emanation of Atisha; thus the explanations given in this book, Joyful Path of Good Fortune, actually come from him and not from myself.

Geshe Kelsang's books are the most complete set of instructions on attaining enlightenment available in the West and have been highly regarded by people of varying traditions over many years. You can check the book reviews on Amazon to see for yourself some of the benefit people derive from these books.

**You will be taught to meditate on 'absorbing the Guru' ( who is manifest in this life as Geshe Kelsang Gyatso) into the depths of your mind and to reinforce this meditation with the protection of Dorje Shugden in the practice of Heart Jewel (daily) or Wishfulfilling Jewel (daily) and Kangso (monthly). This practice is the 'essence of Kadampa Buddhism' as taught by the New Kadampa Tradition.**

It is your choice who your spiritual teacher is and no one can dictate this to you. The practice mentioned here, Heart Jewel and so on, is a traditional practice of the Gelug (Virtuous) tradition of Je Tsongkhapa, which is the tradition Kadampa Buddhists follow. This tradition has been followed for nearly 400 years by both Tibetans and Westerners.

**The Dalai Lama has requested, in order to maintain peace and harmony in the communities of all Tibetan Buddhist traditions, that practitioners of Dorje Shugden should not attend his teachings or view him as their Spiritual Guide. He has not banned the practice. This recommendation does not affect anyone in the NKT. The NKT has always emphasised its complete independence from Tibetan society even though the lineage of the teachings is given as Tibetan.**

Without justification, the Dalai Lama has banned the centuries-old practice of Buddha Dorje Shugden that was practised by his own Teachers and, in doing so, has caused a schism in the Buddhist community that has destroyed peace and harmony rather than maintained it. Even though, when questioned by the Western media, the Dalai Lama has claimed not to have banned the practice, well over a thousand monks who refuse to give up their faith have been expelled from their monasteries and lay people are being ostracized and persecuted by their communities — which clearly indicates that it is much more than a “recommendation” or “request”. Please see this [video](#) for speeches he has made on the subject, or read what he has said in his own words on a [website](#) about this issue.

This “recommendation” or ban does in fact affect the NKT adversely because the Dalai Lama is using his fame and exposure in the West to spread the view that the practice of Dorje Shugden is cult-like and non-Buddhist — hence, practitioners of this traditional and popular Protector Buddha are being smeared with these associations both in the East and in the West, unjustifiably so.

The NKT recognizes that there is a difference between Tibetan society/politics and the Buddhism that came through Tibet, just as there is a difference between politics and religion in general. Buddhism started in India with the teachings of Buddha Shakyamuni and those teachings moved through Tibet and are now in the West. Consequently, although there are many lineage Teachers of Buddhism who are Tibetan, Buddhist teachings did not originate there and do not belong to Tibet or any other country. The NKT is a global

Buddhist tradition that follows the traditional teachings of Buddha Shakyamuni as transmitted by both Indian and Tibetan Masters through to our present-day Teachers in different countries. The NKT is not a Tibetan organization and is not bound by Tibetan feudal society or politics.

**However, members of the NKT, under the name of the Western Shugden Society (WSS) have organised and paid for frequent and persistent demonstrations all over the world against the Dalai Lama accusing him of not being a Buddhist, of lying and hypocrisy.**

The WSS and the NKT are not the same. You can find out more about the [WSS on Wikipedia](#). The [WSS is independently funded](#). The WSS is an ad hoc coalition of Dorje Shugden practitioners from many different countries, including many Tibetan practitioners of Dorje Shugden. Its aims are fourfold:

- To give freedom to practice Dorje Shugden to whoever wishes to rely upon this Deity.
- To stop completely the discrimination between Shugden people and non-Shugden practitioners.
- To allow all Shugden monks and nuns who have been expelled from their monasteries and nunneries to return to their monasteries and nunneries where they should receive the same material and spiritual rights as the non-Shugden practitioners.
- That the Dalai Lama tell in writing to the Tibetan community throughout the world that they should practically apply the above three points.

The Dalai Lama has been requested to discuss this issue but no reply has ever been received, which is why the WSS has had no choice but to organise demonstrations to raise public awareness of this problem.

Unfortunately, there is clear evidence that the Dalai Lama is lying and being hypocritical about this issue. For example he has said that there is no ban on Shugden practice (there is) and he talks constantly in public about religious freedom, love and tolerance while, under his orders, his people are being discriminated against and denied basic human rights if they refuse to give up the practice of this traditional Buddhist Deity.

**The NKT is not allowed, under British Charity Law, to engage in political activities such as public protest. Some of the prominent members of the WSS who have been protesting are Gen Kelsang Khyenrab, Deputy Spiritual Director of the NKT, Kelsang Rabten, National Spiritual Director of NKT Australia, Kelsang Pema (the main public spokesperson) personal assistant to Geshe Kelsang Gyatso for more than 8 years, and the current resident teachers of Bodhisattva Centre and centres of the NKT in Bexhill, Huddersfield, Wales, London, etc as well as many residents of this NKT centre in Brighton.**

The NKT has not engaged in any political activity. As mentioned, the WSS is an independent body that is not affiliated with the NKT. Even so, WSS demonstrations are not political but are spiritual actions to stop the pure spiritual tradition of Je Tsongkhapa from being destroyed by political interference by the Dalai Lama. The [demonstrations are loud but peaceful](#).

Since many dedicated NKT practitioners naturally practice Dorje Shugden in accordance with tradition, of course as individuals they are supporting the aims of the WSS, along with a large number of non-NKT Dorje Shugden practitioners, including Tibetans. However, the NKT charity is not organizing any demonstrations.

**In the last two years many high level teachers of the NKT have left under suspicion of sexual misconduct including Gen Samden Gyatso, the previous long term Deputy spiritual director of the**

## **[NKT as well as at least two Resident Teachers of Bodhisattva Centre.](#)**

It is true that Samden and two Resident Teachers of Bodhisattva Centre have left due to an inability to keep their vows of celibacy, and this is deeply regretted. Bodhisattva Centre has indeed been far more adversely affected by this behaviour than other NKT Centres. Geshe Kelsang is aware of this and has appointed a new teacher who has good moral discipline.

It is worth noting that, unlike many religious leaders, even within Tibetan Buddhism, Geshe Kelsang himself has never had any accusations of impropriety leveled against him in terms of his moral behavior. The overwhelming majority of the 700 monks and nuns in the NKT do keep good moral discipline, and “many high level teachers” is a large exaggeration. Please see the [New Kadampa Truth](#) website for more information.

## **[So why is the WSS protesting against the Dalai Lama’s advice at a time when Tibetans are being imprisoned, tortured and murdered for trying to preserve their own culture which includes these precious Buddhist teachings?](#)**

This is a different issue because Bodhisattva Center is not part of the WSS and the Tibetan problem has nothing to do with the WSS. While they have compassion for the plight of the Tibetan people, neither the NKT nor the WSS have any political affiliations. If the Dalai Lama is undermining his own and others’ attempts to preserve Tibetan culture by his illegal ban and persecution of his own people, that is not the fault of the WSS but of the Dalai Lama.

It is not the WSS who is at fault; they are merely defending themselves against the Dalai Lama’s actions. The survival of the precious Buddhist teachings does not depend upon the survival of Tibetan culture. The WSS are principally concerned that the Dalai Lama’s politically motivated actions are destroying these teachings, and are therefore acting to stop him. The Dalai Lama has brought the protests on himself by banning the practice of Dorje Shugden and refusing to engage in discussion about it. Since it is the Dalai Lama who refuses to engage in dialogue, the WSS has had no choice but to act by organizing demonstrations.

## **[Is the WSS creating difficulties for the Dalai Lama in the public arena in order to deflect public awareness of internal difficulties in the NKT under the pretence of protecting the practice of Dorje Shugden practitioners?](#)**

Not at all. As was said before, the WSS and NKT are different organizations. The WSS exists solely because of the actions of the Dalai Lama. There is no “pretence” because the practice of Dorje Shugden practitioners is being destroyed by the Dalai Lama and action has to be taken now. The Dalai Lama has brought these difficulties upon himself through his dictatorial and illegal actions. Once he has lifted the ban, all WSS activities will cease. For more information, please see [www.aboutwss.org](http://www.aboutwss.org) and [www.wisdombuddhadorjeshugden.org](http://www.wisdombuddhadorjeshugden.org)

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**M T W T F S S**

1 2 [3](#) 4 5 6 7

8 [9](#) 10 11 12 13 14  
15 16 17 18 19 20 21  
22 23 24 25 26 27 28  
29 30

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