

The official line on Shugden: translation

Date : April 7, 2015

Translated from the Tibetan

The document, entitled "Some opinions on dealing correctly with the 'Gyalchen Shugden' issue", was issued by the Communist Party Committee of the Tibet Autonomous Region on February 20, 2014. The document makes it clear that it is aimed at guiding understanding of the issue in order to convey this to the 'masses'. A copy was received by ICT and is translated into English below.

Also, see our related report ["China's new directive on controversial Shugden spirit in Tibet in bid to further discredit Dalai Lama" here »](#)

Some opinions on dealing correctly with the 'Gyalchen Shugden' issue Issued by Tibet Autonomous Region Party Committee Office, February 20, 2014

The 'Gyalchen Shugden' issue is an important front in our struggle with the Dalai Clique, and since it is presently an important issue affecting the normal regulation of Tibetan Buddhism and stability in our region, the nature of the 'Gyalchen Shugden' issue must be correctly recognized, the principles and methods for dealing with the 'Gyalchen Shugden' issue must be mastered, so that we take a firm stand, clearly display the banners, use skillful methods and are able to act unprompted, stand up to the fight without dithering, and find appropriate solutions, all of utmost importance for social harmony and stability^[1] in our region. With the publication and distribution of these opinions on our regional Party Committee's handling of the 'Gyalchen Shugden' issue, you should study and master them in your own work, as well as educate and guide the masses.

1. The 'Gyalchen Shugden' issue should be given a high degree of importance, and be clearly recognized as a deceitful ploy by the 14th Dalai's Clique to split the country.^[2] 'Gyalchen Shugden' is one of the important protector deities worshipped by the Geluk and Sakya schools of Tibetan Buddhism.^[3] Since the time of the 5th Dalai, successive Dalai and Panchen, ordinary monks of Geluk and Sakya monasteries, and even the 14th Dalai himself have all had faith in and propitiated "Gyalchen Shugden." However, since the 14th Dalai Clique fled the country, in opposition to the Motherland, to [their own] nationality and to religion, undertook various activities to split the Motherland. After these ended in defeat, and internal dissension increased, they banned^[4] the propitiation of 'Gyalchen Shugden' in order to blame others for what are their responsibilities and transforming the contradictions, in an evil scheme to destroy the unity of the Motherland and destroy the social stability in Tibet.

In particular, as the 14th Dalai's Clique's attempts to fabricate extreme incidents such as self-immolation in the aftermath of the "3/14 incident"^[5] repeatedly met with no success, and as there was no way to fulfill their evil deeds, in their anguish in not being able to bear the defeat, they immediately launched a new evil action by reviving the dispute over the propitiation or non-propitiation of 'Gyalchen Shugden' by relying on opposition to it, with the evil hope to promote discord among believers within our borders. On one hand, they blamed their defeat on the harm caused by 'Gyalchen Shugden,' using religion to continue misleading the masses, and on the other, they used the 'Gyalchen Shugden' issue as a pretext for stirring up discord among ordinary believers, creating disagreements and incidents, with intent to breed chaos in Tibet and other Tibetan areas, in order to realize their goal of splitting the Motherland and destroying the stability in Tibet.

We must clearly recognize and give high significance to the long-term nature and acute nature of our struggle with the 14th Dalai Clique, and clearly recognize the complex, pervasive and deceptive nature of the 'Gyalchen Shugden' issue, taking the correct handling of this issue as an important front in our struggle with the Dalai Clique, and with clear awareness, firm mindedness and full conviction, exercising surveillance and challenging them on one's own initiative, we must decisively grind into dust the Dalai Clique's deceitful plot to split the Motherland and destroy the stability of Tibet on the pretext of the 'Gyalchen Shugden' issue.

2. We must unflinchingly and thoroughly remain committed to the Party's religion policy in order to promote mutual adaptation between Tibetan Buddhism and the socialist society.

The basic principle of our Party's policy on religion is to respect and protect the public's freedom of religious belief.^[6] Freedom of religious belief is an important policy in Tibet Autonomous Region and other Tibetan areas, and it is not only an important policy for each individual member of the masses of ordinary believers, but is also

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an important policy for dealing with the 'Gyalchen Shugden' issue. With respect to the 'Gyalchen Shugden' issue, believing or not-believing is up to each individual member of the masses of believers. For instance, whether the believing community keeps a statue of Buddha Sakyamuni in their homes, or a statue of Avalokitesvara,^[7] is the public's freedom; the Party and government need not interfere, and neither should Party members or officials. Our only standard and position, which complements our basic issue, is that they uphold the leadership of the Communist Party, respect socialism with Chinese characteristics, preserve the unity of the Motherland, and respect laws and regulations. With those preconditions in place, the Party's religious freedom policy must be firmly implemented, respecting, as best as possible, the wishes of the believing masses.

We should not publicize the issue of belief in 'Gyalchen Shugden,' not interfere, not politicize, not see belief or nonbelief in black and white terms, and not make belief or nonbelief in 'Gyalchen Shugden' as the basis for drawing a clear line with the Dalai Clique. Rather, it is those who love the country and love religion, respect regulations and abide by laws, preserve the unity of the Motherland, maintain stability in Tibet, and contribute to Tibet's development and stability who are good citizens, good members of the public, and good monks/nuns.

No one may create contradictions or disputes among monastic communities or masses of believers over the issue of religious devotion. We should win over the hearts of the masses to our side, and not fall for the deceptions of the 14th Dalai Clique.

With regard to basic management of monasteries and other centers of religious activity, the approach should be that there should be regard for history, maintenance of the present situation, no new strategy, and no creation of complications.

3. Those who, following the 14th Dalai Clique, create disturbances or incidents, or form organizations using the pretext of the 'Gyalchen Shugden' issue, must be punished strictly according to law and with firm determination, and should not be tolerated at all cost. We must continue to maintain a clear attitude and be clear minded on this issue, not change the present situation, not get into disputes or allow incidents to occur. Thus, first, we must respect the public's religious freedom and allow the masses to choose for themselves. Secondly, those who, with the confidence of having truth, and wearing the armor of legality, and under the pretext of the 'Gyalchen Shugden' issue, instigate deception and cause public gatherings and disturbances, irrespective of whether they represent the believers or non-believers or what banners they carry, should be strictly punished according to law as and when the incidents occur. If there is involvement by Party members or officials, they must be strictly dealt with on the basis of disciplinary regulations, so that enemy forces do not get so much as a sesame seed's chance of an opportunity.

4. Reinforce the education of the monks, nuns, and the believing community by expressing, as best as possible, the strengths of representatives from the religious community who love the country and love religion. By deepening the conduct of service activities for religious persons at the lower levels, we should organize visits, by respected religious figures in favor of love the country, love religion, to monasteries and villages to strengthen the publicity on freedom of religious belief policy and the good traditions of Tibetan Buddhism, so as to expose and challenge the politically reactionary, religiously misleading, and methodologically deceptive nature of the 14th Dalai's Clique, and to expose and denounce the 14th Dalai's Clique's ban on 'Gyalchen Shugden' propitiation as an unwarranted grudge and a plot that is ruinous for Tibet and divisive for religion. Instead, monks, nuns and the believing community should be shown that all citizens of new Socialist Tibet have freedom of religious belief. Everyone has the freedom to believe in any religion and sect.

The believing masses are equal; they should not interfere in each other's matters; nobody should coerce anyone or show condescension. They should be made known that anything against this would be considered damaging to human rights and action that violates the rules and regulations.

To the broad mass of monks and nuns and believing community, differentiation should be made between Tibetan Buddhism and the 14th Dalai and between the 14th Dalai and the Dalai title; through self-awareness make a clear differentiation with the 14th Dalai and thus not fall under the deception, incitement, and enticement of the 14th Dalai clique. They should be given education and training so that they can contribute to the best of their ability to the development and stability of Tibet through self-awareness, loving the country and loving religion; respecting the regulations and obeying the laws; eschewing sins and accumulating positive merits; and honoring peace and harmony.

5. All levels of Party and government institutions; the work units based in the village; the Democratic Management committees in the monasteries; the departments of "Shuang Lian Hu" [unit consisting of the joining of a village with households] etc., should through in-depth consideration, perform the political tasks well and together preserve and maintain periods of peace, harmony and stability in Tibet by assuming their own

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responsibilities and wholly fulfilling their obligations.

With continuation of the religious freedom policy as the basis, begin controlling ahead, controlling when small; quick control and good control. Beginning with understanding the issue, removing contradictions and deciding on issues, all necessary precautionary steps should be taken. Through in-depth performance of tasks relating to the monks, nuns and the believing community and with clear display of banners, explain clearly the religious freedom policy of the Party and the government; by explaining clearly that it is the public's freedom whether to believe or not to believe, and not make a black and white differentiation between belief and non-belief. It should be clearly explained that among the believing community and among the sects, there should be mutual respect, mutual understanding, friendly co-existence and peaceful and harmonious togetherness.

Through calm and stable attitude, and through new methods of vanquishing the other side, on issues relating to 'Gyalchen Shugden,' "Gyalchen Shugden," when there are early indications of expulsion, condescension, assembly and disputes, close attention should be paid and these should be automatically confronted, quickly and appropriately decided so that the bad causes are removed from source.

Deciding clearly on the 'Gyalchen Shugden' issue is of great importance. Under the firm leadership of the Party Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping as the General Secretary, hold high the great banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics and Deng Xiaoping Theory, the important thought of "Three Represents"^[18] and the Scientific Outlook on Development as guide to action.

Bearing in mind the successive important speeches of General Secretary Xi Jinping, in particular his important strategic thought: "To govern the country well, the prerequisite is to govern the frontiers well; to govern the frontiers well, maintaining stability in Tibet is a prerequisite" as well as "To make efforts to realize Tibet's continued stability, long term stability and comprehensive stability; to guarantee lasting happiness in Tibet, to guarantee peace and stability in the frontier region" and to implement these important guidelines.

By resolutely implementing Chairman Yu Zhengsheng's^[9] advice: "Rule Tibet as per law, develop Tibet for the long term, win the hearts of the people, and strengthen the foundations." Thereby, in order to decide well on the issue of 'Gyalchen Shugden' there should be united thoughts, united pace, and united action. As per the guidelines issued by the [Tibet] Autonomous Region's Party Committee and government, implement all measures and perform all tasks well, thus giving new and unceasing victory to the struggle against separatism. Resolutely strengthen the good circumstances of progress, peace and harmony and spare no effort to promote Tibet's leap-frog development^[10] and long term peace and stability.

Footnotes

[1] In Chinese political language, 'stability' is a coded reference to the need to prevent any form of 'social disorder'. In Tibetan areas, 'stability maintenance' has been carried out on a war footing.

[2] The Dalai Lama is routinely described as a 'splittist' by the Beijing leadership, i.e. someone who attempts to 'split' Tibet from China, although his position of seeking a genuine autonomy for Tibet under the sovereignty of the PRC is well-known.

[3] The Geluk and Sakya schools are two of the four main schools of Tibetan Buddhism. The Dalai Lama, although recognized as the supreme leader of all Tibetan Buddhists, belongs to the Geluk, or 'Yellow Hat' school.

[4] Western Shugden supporters also allege a ban, which as mentioned in our report, is false.

[5] This is a reference to the protests in Lhasa on March 14, 2008. The Chinese authorities have sought to characterize the more than 300 overwhelmingly peaceful protests that swept across the plateau in 2008 as one violent riot.

[6] China's Constitution states that citizens of the PRC have freedom of religious belief, but the Chinese Communist Party defines what is 'acceptable' religious behavior, and religion is only tolerated as long as it does not interfere with or challenge the legitimacy of Party rule. The measures used to implement state religious policy have been particularly harsh in Tibet because of the close connection between Tibetan Buddhism and Tibetan identity. See ICT report, 'The Chinese Communist Party as Living Buddha', http://issuu.com/savetibet/docs/the_communist_party_as_living_buddha_ictreport

[7] Avalokitesvara (Tibetan: Chenrezig) is the Bodhisattva of Compassion. The Dalai Lama is believed to be a manifestation of Avalokitesvara.

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[8] A guiding socio-political theory ascribed to former President and Chinese Communist Party leader Jiang Zemin, meaning that “the Communist Party of China should be representative to advanced social productive forces, advanced culture, and the interests of the overwhelming majority.”

[9] A member of the Politburo Standing Committee, Yu Zhengsheng is also the chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.)

[10] A term frequently used to describe China's objectives of fast-track development in Tibet.