Protests Against the Dalai Lama—Is There Any Truth in Them?

Here are some facts:

1. The protesters claim that there is “overwhelming evidence” that Shugden worshippers are being persecuted by the Dalai Lama and his followers and that human rights violations abound. However:
2. In 1998, Amnesty International investigated their claims of religious persecution and found “insufficient evidence.” <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/ASA17/014/1998/en/6fce941e-da9e-11dd-80bc-797022e51902/asa170141998en.html>
3. In 2010, the Delhi High Court also dismissed the Shugden community’s claims of religious persecution: [http://info-buddhism.com/tibet.net Delhi\_High\_Court\_Dismisses\_Dorjee\_Shugden\_Devotees\_Charges.pdf](http://info-buddhism.com/tibet.net-Delhi_High_Court_Dismisses_Dorjee_Shugden_Devotees_Charges.pdf)
4. Further, on Shugden community websites, many deceptions and unsubstantiated claims are made. Investigation of those reveals that things have not changed since Amnesty International and the Indian High Courts made their determinations. There is NOT “overwhelming evidence” of religious persecution.
5. In fact, there is a compelling lack of credible, substantial evidence backing any of the protesters’ claims of serious persecution, no Indian media reports, police reports or impartial reports of any kind.
6. The International Shugden Community (ISC) produce videos on Youtube and their website to look like BBC news releases, with a red, circling globe, urgent music and *Breaking News* or *NEWS* inscribed across the screen. On these videos, various ploys are used to deceive and mislead viewers, as will be demonstrated below. <http://internationalshugdencommunity.com>
7. An investigation of the ISC website has so far revealed 32 deceptive statements and 16 unsubstantiated claims. There are definitely more because the investigation is not complete. Some of the deceptions are quite glaring. Some are simply little pieces that accumulate and add up to much bigger and more alarming accusations. In some cases the ISC will go out of their way to deceive.
8. Many of the claims of persecution are in reference to events that took place ten or twenty years ago and that allegedly occurred in hard to reach, restricted areas of India. These claims are extremely difficult to substantiate or verify. Despite that fact, clear deceptions can nonetheless be found, due to simple carelessness in their reporting.
9. When statements from the Dalai Lama appear in their video reports, these are short, misleading snippets taken totally out of context.
10. Many of the protesters’ claims are hearsay and personal interviews. Several of those have been shown to be deceitful. Others cannot be verified.
11. Here are just a few examples of the many deceptions from the ISC website:
12. In order to “show” that Shugden monks were made homeless and destitute in one “News” video, footage of young ***Theravada*** monks going on their traditional begging rounds was inserted—not Tibetan monks at all! This was an intentional deception. *Exiles in Exile: Tibetan Monks outcast by the Dalai Lama* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GZrCY9SQJx8> ),
13. In another video, a Tibetan woman from Switzerland wept as she told the story of her sister being unable to obtain food to eat in Dharamsala, India because Tibetans would not sell food to Shugden worshippers. However, even if it was true that Tibetans wouldn’t sell to her, Indians own most of the food stalls in Dharamsala and they don’t care about Tibetan controversies. Her sister could clearly find food! This video is clearly deceptive. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9WLOph9sIy8&list=UU6705OWUPotKJRgyg8C-cfg>
14. In several videos, they tell the story of many Shugden monks being made “homeless” because of being expelled from their monasteries. The claim is made that they had to live in “slums” and “safe houses.” However, the truth is that these monks were provided with land and buildings in order to resume their choice of religious practice. Pictures of these buildings show that they were given their fair share, if not more and they are currently thriving. Those claims are simply false, more lies. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c9AqYEcV>) and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c9AqYEcVEhA>

See here for further investigation of this false allegation: <http://buddhism-controversy-blog.com/2014/09/26/in-february-2008-900-buddhist-shugden-monks-were-made-homeless-by-the-dalai-lama/>

1. This false claim about homelessness has been a favorite of the Shugden community. It is also made in the ISC publication entitled *False Dalai Lama: Worst Dictator in Modern History,* where they state on page 24:

“As a direct result of this so-called referendum 900 innocent monks were then summarily expelled from their monasteries. Most of these 900 monks were very poor and had no other place to live; many were fearful of the future and actually wept as they were forced to leave.

1. In another video, they deceptively refer to a murder, which occurred 30 years ago, in the context of it being the outcome of a “wanted list” of Shugden worshippers made by the Tibetan exile government *ten years after it occurred!* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U9YJmhbaX70>
2. In another video, reference is made to Shugden worshippers being mistreated in various ways some twenty years ago, such as having their house firebombed or being ransacked—but again, none of these claims can be substantiated by a media report, hospital report or police report. The reports are substantiated only by internal documents from the Shugden Community itself. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U9YJmhbaX70> ),
3. In another video, they claim that Shugden worshippers are persecuted because they are not granted Indian citizenship when they arrive from Tibet. In fact, no Tibetan is granted Indian citizenship upon arrival from Tibet—in fact, all Tibetans arriving from Tibet generally find life difficult overall. This is an outright lie. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c9AqYEcV> ),
4. In other videos, they show obscure pictures of wounds on the faces and hands of monks, all to indicate some sort of attack, presumably by non-Shugden Buddhists, but there are no media or police reports to substantiate any of the claims. No stories are told providing details of these attacks. They cannot be verified. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Ppkwtvc_ms>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U9YJmhbaX70>

*Is the Dalai Lama False?*

1. Recently the Shugden community has published the second of its anonymously authored diatribes against the Dalai Lama, entitled *False Dalai Lama: Worst Dictator in Modern History*. In this, they claim that the Dalai Lama is secretly a Muslim, born to Muslim parents in a Muslim village—and he therefore is a “false Dalai Lama,” falsely recognized through a mysterious conspiracy by his Regent. They call him the “Saffron-Robed Muslim.” <http://internationalshugdencommunity.com>
2. What sources do these anonymous authors cite for these claims? Another anonymous author! (of an obscure text cited by no other writers but themselves and very hard—impossible?—to find!)
3. The truth from mainstream historical evidence is that the Dalai Lama was born into a village that had been taken over by a Chinese (Muslim) warlord. There were a few Muslim families in this village, but the majority was Buddhist. The Dalai Lama’s family was clearly Buddhist. In fact, his older brother had been recognized as a high incarnate Buddhist lama years before the Dalai Lama’s birth.
4. Of course, there is absolutely nothing wrong with being Muslim—unless one is claiming to be a Buddhist monk! The Shugden community claims that the Dalai Lama is deceiving the world by not revealing his secret Muslim identity. They hold up banners in their protests showing the Dalai Lama in a Muslim taqiyah (which he donned during one of his many interfaith events). This has caused some to wonder if they are trying to incite Islamaphobia?
5. This is also the reason protesters hold up placards calling the Dalai Lama false, why they chant over and over, “False Dalai Lama, stop lying…” This is entirely based on a wild report from a group of anonymous authors citing another anonymous author!

*Is the Dalai Lama Lying?*

1. The Shugden community changes its mind frequently about why they believe he is lying. There are four full videos purporting to explain why the Dalai Lama is lying on the ISC website. All of those videos contain deceptions themselves.
2. In one video, entitled *The Dalai Lama Lies About Advice From His Teacher,* they post a statement from the Dalai Lama’s website and then while the viewer is struggling to read that statement, the narrator reads it falsely, stating a key word “encourage” instead of “support”! The rest of the video is then a claim that the Dalai Lama was lying because he said “encourage”! In fact, they are lying about what the Dalai Lama actually stated, as quoted on his website! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZCdmbRrkZ4w>
3. In another Youtube video, entitled *A Question for the Dalai Lama at His Hamburg Talk, Aug. 24, 2014,* they show a brief clip from a teaching the Dalai Lama gave in Hamburg last summer. In this, a protester asked the Dalai Lama a question and as he was answering the question, the protester interrupted him by shouting “stop lying!”

The Dalai Lama then paused and proceeded to address the accusation of lying, whereupon the protester continued to shout “stop lying, stop lying Dalai Lama…” until he was led out by security.

First, it is surprising that the Shugden community should have been proud enough of this childish display of heckling to publish it on Youtube. However, their caption was even more surprising and yet another example of their habit of deception. They stated,

“The False Dalai Lama…*evades the question* by saying that Buddhist monks don't lie!  But we know that you ARE lying, False Dalai Lama: lying about your Gurus, lying about the nature of Dorje Shugden, lying about the ban you have imposed, and so much more.”

So this is the level of honesty and balance the protesters support.

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W1d2ImUbH1g> *)*

1. In other videos, the ISC claim that that Dalai Lama is lying because he says that he has never “banned” Shugden practice—because he claims that Shugden practice is harmful to the Tibetan cause and his own life…. Because he has disagreed with his teacher over his decision. Certainly the accusation of lying looks good on a placard and can rally the troops to protest, but in fact, the claims can be better described as disagreements over a complex issue, disagreements that are beyond the scope of this pamphlet, or any secular discussion, to address.
2. It is clear in the ISC publication entitled *False Dalai Lama: Worst Dictator in Modern History* that essentially most of the claims of the Shugden community protesters rely on their belief in a Dalai Lama that no one can see, a “shadow Dalai Lama” complete with evil agendas and purposes totally contrary to how he spends his already very full days. Here is an example from that ISC publication, anonymously authored, anonymously cited, which demonstrates the extremist views these protesters hold:

“…from a spiritual point of view there is no one who is more evil than this false Dalai Lama. We sincerely wish for the doctrine of Je Tsongkhapa to be free from being harmed by this enemy.” (p. 3)

And:

“Although Lhamo Dondrub [the Dalai Lama] is a Muslim, throughout his life he has maintained the pretence of being a Buddhist holy being, giving Buddhist teachings that he stole from his root Guru Trijang Rinpoche. In this way he has cheated people throughout the world.” (p. 13) <http://internationalshugdencommunity.com>

Statements such as these, which abound in ISC publications and video releases, make one wonder about the purpose and validity of the protests. They wish to portray a sane, reasonable face to the world, a calm complaint of religious persecution and human rights violations—but in fact, carry out an agenda themselves that is dishonest, inflammatory and extremist.

For further information, see

<http://www.dalailama.com/messages/dolgyal-shugden>

<http://buddhism-controversy-blog.com>

Joanne Clark, October 1, 2014