

**THIS SET OF ADVICE** was compiled quickly for people who left NKT or who are thinking about to leave NKT. It mainly aims to give a quick overview on matters of concern NKT people might have with respect to the Guru. It is aimed to support those who are thinking to leave NKT or who have have left NKT already and who now might have doubts if leaving Geshe Kelsang Gyatso is a negative, positive or neutral action.

Due to the way of teaching and the special setting within NKT many NKT students might be paralyzed by feelings of guilt and fear to go to leave NKT—no matter how much contradictions they have seen or what their intuition tells them.

This compilation is not perfect and includes repetitions. It is a start. I compiled it from different online forums where I left these links and quotes, and later I uploaded it to the [New Kadampa Survivors Forum](#).

I think despite all imperfections it offers some good material and links which are worthwhile to consider. I updated some links but not all. If links are not working please try to find the information via google or [send me an email](#).

If there is anybody willing to help to improve this collection and the presentation of it, please feel encouraged to do so!

14. Jan. 2010

*last update: 05. Nov. 2010*

**New**

### **From The Kalachakra Tantra**

Source: *Ornament of Stainless Light – An Exposition of the Kalachakra Tantra* by Khedrup Norsang Gyatso, pp. 214–216, translated by Gavin Kilty

Note: Khedrup Norsang Gyatso was a student of the First Dalai Lama and a teacher of the Second Dalai Lama. He is a lineage master of many practice lineages, is a Gelugpa but practiced teachings also from other schools, e.g. Kagyue Mahamudra teachings.

### ***Characteristics of those unsuitable to be gurus***

The third verse of the Initiations chapter says:

Proud, ruled by anger, and lacking vows,  
greedy, without knowledge, working to deceive disciples,  
a mind that has fallen from great bliss,  
without initiation, totally attached to wealth,  
unaware, of harsh and coarse words, filled with carnal desire,  
the wise disciples should abandon taking such people  
as causes of complete enlightenment  
as they would abandon hell.

People with such faults are not fit to be relied upon as gurus in the Vajra Vehicle. Even if one takes such a person as a guru and requests initiations and so forth, there can be no meaningful receiving of the initiation. Moreover one will become infected by a measure of his faults and fall from all elevated status in this and future lives. Most of the above verse is easy to Understand. "Without knowledge"

means to be without the essential teachings on the six-branched yoga, for example. "Working to deceive his disciple" means to delude disciples by telling lies. "A mind that has fallen from the great bliss, without initiation" means that without having received the initiation he is bestowing, he nevertheless teaches it to others. "Filled with carnal desire" means working only for the pleasure gained from the sexual union of the two organs.

Therefore the way to rely upon a guru is firstly to know the characteristics worthy and unworthy of devotion and then to examine thoroughly who is and who is not fit to be a guru. The *Great Commentary* says on the second verse of the Initiations chapter:

Disciples who wish to gain worldly and nonworldly powers by way of mantra should first devote themselves to a guru. Furthermore one should examine the vajra master thoroughly. One should thoroughly examine his words. Otherwise, relying upon a guru unexamined, the disciples' dharma will be perverse, and perverse dharma will send them to hell.

Also the *Paramarthaseva* says:

He, omniscient in the complete Vajra Vehicle,  
has said that very wished-for siddhi follows the master.  
If perfect disciples examine the master, therefore, as they would gold,  
they will not accrue even the tiniest of faults.

However what should one do if one already regards as a guru someone endowed with those unworthy characteristics? The *Great Commentary* says:

In mantra, even though one has taken as a guru a person with the faults of pride and so forth, wise disciples, meaning those of intelligence, will abandon him as a cause of complete enlightenment as they would abandon hell.

Also:

Because of these words, even though he has been taken as a guru, if he does these wrong deeds, disciples who strive for freedom should leave him.

A passage quoted in the *Great Commentary* says:

Without compassion, angry and malicious,  
arrogant, grasping, uncontrolled, and boastful,  
the intelligent disciple will not take such a one as guru.

Therefore, if one has taken someone with these faults as a guru, then this disciple who is seeking freedom should part company with him and not associate with him again. These quotes from the *Great Commentary* teach just this point and this point only. They do not teach that one should lose one's faith due to seeing faults because, as it is so rightly said:

Once that is used as a reason and one casts off the undertaking of holding him as a guru and as a field of reverence, one opens up the opportunity for a root downfall to occur. One must learn, therefore, to distinguish what is to be developed from what is to be discarded.

Some explain the two instances of the phrase "taken as a guru" in the two *Great Commentary* passages above as applying to gurus taken by others.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Set of Advice:**

There is no real problem. It is advised in the Kalachakra Tantra, that one can leave a teacher - one goes to a neutral distance - if one sees too many obvious faults. (For details see newly added section above.) The way of disconnecting to such teachers is taught in:

- "The Teacher-Student Relationship" by Jamgon Kongtrul Lodu Thaye and in his book "Buddhist Ethics"

- there is also an online commentary "Unhealthy Relationships with Spiritual Teachers" available by Alex Berzin, a close disciple of Tsenshab Serkong Rinpoche a high Gelug master, a master debater and son of Serkong Dorje Chang

In the latter text please read the following sections carefully:

Chapter 15 Fear of "A Breach of Guru-Devotion"

[http://www.berzinarchives.com/e-books/spir...teacher\\_15.html](http://www.berzinarchives.com/e-books/spir...teacher_15.html)

Maybe it is also a good idea to start with rectifying Buddhist terms ...

Please read also

Rectification of the term 'Spiritual Guide', 'Guru'...

[http://www.berzinarchives.com/e-books/spir...\\_teacher\\_2.html](http://www.berzinarchives.com/e-books/spir..._teacher_2.html)

and Rectifying the Term Devotion

[http://www.berzinarchives.com/e-books/spir...\\_teacher\\_9.html](http://www.berzinarchives.com/e-books/spir..._teacher_9.html)

Then you can read the text of Tsongkhapa Fruit Clusters of Siddhis in "Tantric Ethics: An Explanation of the Precepts for Buddhist Vajrayana Practice" and you will see it will be very hard to go to hell by leaving a Guru, because to go to hell you need a lot of negative attitudes and must be in a way in long-time-hate-delusions. Which will surely not be the case for the most human beings. Just leaving a Guru and go to neutral distance is no negative action, this is rather advised in special cases.

Next it is advised to separate from wrong Gurus, because they lead the disciples to wrong paths. By following wrong teachers one corrupts and destroys the own spiritual life and especially all the future lives. You'll find good advice in Dza Patrul Rinpoche's text: "The words of my perfect teachers" where he explains the dangers of following wrong Gurus. It covers most of the subjects and is very inspiring.

Now I will add some maybe helpful verses for you:

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A prayer from Je Tsongkhapa:

May I be cared for by true spiritual friends,  
filled with knowledge and insight,  
sense stilled, minds controlled, loving, compassionate,  
and with courage untiring in working for others.

May I never fall under sway  
of false teachers and misleading friends

their flawed views of existence and nonexistence  
well outside the Buddhas intention.

I pray that I listen insatiably  
to countless teachings at the feet of a master,  
single-handedly with logic unflawed,  
prizing open scriptures' meanings.

from The Splendor of an Autumn Moon : The Devotional Verse of Tsongkhapa, Wisdom  
Publications, ISBN 0861711920

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Je Tsongkhapa citing the Ornament for the Essence said:

Distance yourself from Vajra Masters who are not keeping the three vows, who keep on with  
a root downfall, who are miserly with the Dharma, and who engage in actions that should be  
forsaken. Those who worship them go to hell and so on as a result.

(see Tantric Ethics: An Explanation of the Precepts for Buddhist Vajrayana Practice by  
Tsongkhapa, ISBN 0861712900) - page page 46

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Dza Patrul Rinpoche in "Words of my perfect teacher":

The Great Master of Oddiyana warns:

No to examine the teacher  
Is like drinking poison;  
Not to examine the disciple  
Is like leaping from a precipice.

You place your trust in your spiritual teacher for all your future lives. It is he who will teach  
you what to do and what not to do. If you encounter a false spiritual friend without examining  
him properly, you will be throwing away the possibility a person with faith has to accumulate  
merits for a whole lifetime, and the freedoms and advantages of the human existence, you  
have now obtained will be wasted. It is like being killed by a venomous serpent coiled  
beneath a tree that you approached, thinking what you saw was just the tree's cool shadow.

By not examining a teacher with great care  
The faithful waste their gathered merit.  
Like taking for the shadow of a tree a vicious snake,  
Beg, uiled, they lose the freedom they at last had found.

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Prayers of Je Tsongkhapa (The Splendor of an Autumn Moon : The Devotional Verse of  
Tsongkhapa):

I pray that in no way I be misled  
by unwholesome friends and deceiving Mara  
but in care of true spiritual friends,  
complete the enlightened way.

May I never fall under the sway  
of false teachers and misleading friends,  
their flawed views of existence and nonexistence  
well outside the Buddha's intention.

May I bring to the path praised by the Buddha  
those lost and fallen onto wrong paths,  
swayed by deluded teachers and misleading friends.

The head turned by dark forces  
hinders experience of the joyful festival  
that is the community of the Dharma life.  
May I never encounter misleading friends,  
in reality the cohorts of Mara.

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I found also the following lines of Patrul Rinpoche (from Words of my Perfect Teacher) quite helpful when checking my experience with the New Kadampa Tradition and the NKT teachers:

Teachers like the frog that lived in a well.

Teachers of this kind lack any special qualities that might distinguish them from ordinary people. But other people put them up on a pedestal in blind faith, without examining them at all. Puffed up with pride by the profits and honours they receive, they are themselves quite unaware of the true qualities of great teachers. They are like the frog that lived in a well.

One day an old frog that had always lived in a well was visited by another frog who lived on the shores of the great ocean.

"Where are you from?" asked the frog that lived in the well.

"I come from the great ocean," the visitor replied.

"How big is this ocean of yours?" asked the frog from the well.

"It is enormous," replied the other.

"About a quarter the size of my well?" he asked.

"Oh! Bigger than that!" exclaimed the frog from the ocean.

"Half the size, then?"

"No, bigger than that!"

"So—the same size as the well?"

"No, no! Much, much bigger!"

"That's impossible!" said the frog who lived in the well. "This I have to see for myself."

So the two frogs set off together, and the story goes that when the frog who lived in the well saw the ocean, he fainted, his head split apart, and he died.

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(quote from chapter 10, Relating to a Spiritual Teacher: Building a Healthy Relationship by Alexander Berzin)

"Some Westerners face similar situations with several of their spiritual teachers. For example, some famous masters disagree strongly about the status of a controversial Dharma-protector and the consequences of propitiating it. They abuse their positions as spiritual mentors and, with threats of hell, forbid their disciples to have anything to do with teachers on the opposite side of the dispute. Other famous masters disagree violently over the identification of the incarnation of the highest lamas of their lineage. A few have even taken police action against each other's claims over inherited property. Sutra-level guru-meditation, as His Holiness the Dalai Lama has experienced, may help traumatized Western Dharma students to deal with these difficult, perplexing circumstances. It may also help those who have been sexually abused by their spiritual teachers or exploited by them for power or money. It may apply as well to disciples of abusive teachers, who have not been personally maligned, but have been devastated by learning of the actions of their teachers.

Many disciples find such situations too difficult to handle, especially if they have already built disciple-mentor relationships with both parties in a dispute. The Abbreviated Kalachakra Tantra advised that if disciples find too many objective faults in their spiritual mentors and they can no longer support close relationships with them, they need not continue studying with these teachers. They may keep a respectful distance, even if they have received highest tantra empowerments from them."

For more see the text:

Berzin, Alexander. Relating to a Spiritual Teacher: Building a Healthy Relationship. Ithaca, Snow Lion, 2000

also online at

[http://www.berzinarchives.com/e-books/spir...1\\_teacher\\_c.htm](http://www.berzinarchives.com/e-books/spir...1_teacher_c.htm)

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quote from:

The Teacher-Student-Relationship,  
Jamgon Kongtrul the Great, Snow Lion Publications,

or use:

Buddhist Ethics (Treasury of Knowledge)  
Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Taye, Snow Lion Publications

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## Avoiding Contrary, Harmful Companions

### 8.1 Obstructions of a harmful friend

"The harmful teacher is one of bad temperament, of little pure vision, great in dogmatism; he holds [his own view] as highest, praises himself, and denigrates others."

In general, the nonspiritual teacher (mi-dge-ba'i bshes-gnyen) is a lama, teacher (mkhan-slob), dharma brother [or sister] (grogs-mched), and so forth—all those who are attached to the phenomena (snang) of this life, and who get involved in unvirtuous activity. Therefore, one must abandon the nonspiritual friend. In particular, although they have the manner of goodness in appearance, they cause you to be obstructed in your liberation.

The nonspiritual teacher has a bad temperament, little pure vision (dag-s nang), is very dogmatic (phyogs-ris), holds as highest his view (lta-ba) as the only dharma, praises himself, slanders others, implicitly denigrates and rejects others' systems (lugs) of dharma, and slanders the lama—the true wisdom teacher—who bears the burden of benefiting others. If you associate with those who are of this type, then, because one follows and gets accustomed to the nonspiritual teacher and his approach, his faults stain you by extension, and your mindstream (rgyud) gradually becomes negative. Illustrating this point, it has been said in the Vinaya Scripture:

"A fish in front of a person is rotting and is tightly wrapped with kusha grass. If that [package] is not moved for a long time, the kusha itself also becomes like that. Like that [kusha grass], by following the sinful teacher, you will always become like him."

Therefore, as it has been said in The Sutra of the True Dharma of Clear Recollection (mDo dran-pa nyer-bzhag; Saddharmanusmriti-upasthana):

"As the chief among the obstructors (bar-du gcod-pa) of all virtuous qualities is the sinful teacher, one should abandon being associated with him, speaking with him, or even being touched by his shadow."

In every aspect one should be diligent in rejecting the sinful teacher.

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The Buddha said:

The devotee acquires the same faults  
As the person not worthy of devotion,  
Like an untainted arrow smeared  
With the poison of a tainted sheath.

Steadfast ones who fear the taint of faults,  
Do not befriend bad people.  
By close reliance and devotion  
To one's companion,  
Soon one becomes just like

The object of one's devotion.

...

The wise devote themselves to holy,  
Not to unholy people,

...

Wise persons are those who know  
Infantile ones for what they are:  
'Infantile ones' are those  
Who take infants to be the wise.

The censure of the wise  
Is far preferable  
To the eulogy or praise  
Of the infant.

Devotion to infants brings misery.  
Since they are like one's foe,  
It is best to never see or hear  
Or have devotion for such people.

Like meeting friends, devotion to  
The steadfast causes happiness.

Therefore, like the revolving stars and moon,  
Devote yourself to the steadfast, moral ones  
Who have heard much, who draw on what is best -  
The kind, the pure, the best superior ones.

(from the Tibetan Dhammapada)

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Than it is worthwhile to read the Kalama Sutra:

"It is proper for you, Kalamas, to doubt, to be uncertain; uncertainty has arisen in you about what is doubtful. Come, Kalamas. Do not go upon what has been acquired by repeated hearing; nor upon tradition; nor upon rumor; nor upon what is in a scripture; nor upon surmise; nor upon an axiom; nor upon specious reasoning; nor upon a bias towards a notion that has been pondered over; nor upon another's seeming ability; nor upon the consideration, 'The monk is our teacher.' Kalamas, when you yourselves know: 'These things are bad; these things are blamable; these things are censured by the wise; undertaken and observed, these things lead to harm and ill,' abandon them.

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These are some teachings on that subject.

See: [Advice please, Confused about reliance](#)

What to do, if you wish to find a distance to NKT/ Geshe Kelsang - advices, quotes, links and

excerpts from scriptures

<http://www.lioncity.net/buddhism/index.php?showtopic=44679&st=0>

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Set of Advice:**

### Fear of "A Breach of Guru-Devotion"

By leaving Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, no one will go to hell...

[http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/e-books/published\\_books/spiritual\\_teacher/pt3/spiritual\\_teacher\\_15.html](http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/e-books/published_books/spiritual_teacher/pt3/spiritual_teacher_15.html)

### Rectifying the Term Devotion

Getting a better Understanding of the term devotion...

[http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/e-books/published\\_books/spiritual\\_teacher/pt2/spiritual\\_teacher\\_09.html#n8](http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/e-books/published_books/spiritual_teacher/pt2/spiritual_teacher_09.html#n8)

### Rectifying the term faith / believing

getting a better understanding what faith really means in Buddhism....

[http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/e-books/published\\_books/spiritual\\_teacher/pt2/spiritual\\_teacher\\_08.html#n4](http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/e-books/published_books/spiritual_teacher/pt2/spiritual_teacher_08.html#n4)

### Seeing a Mentor as a Buddha

The Guru is not a Buddha in the literal sense

[http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/e-books/published\\_books/spiritual\\_teacher/pt2/spiritual\\_teacher\\_11.html](http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/e-books/published_books/spiritual_teacher/pt2/spiritual_teacher_11.html)

### Building a healthy relationship to a genuine Guru

Alexander Berzin discusses the topic based on authentic sources...

[http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/e-books/published\\_books/spiritual\\_teacher/spiritual\\_teacher\\_preface.html](http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/e-books/published_books/spiritual_teacher/spiritual_teacher_preface.html)

### Common Issues in Post-Cult Recovery

[http://www.csj.org/infoserv\\_articles/ryan\\_patrick\\_affnews12.html](http://www.csj.org/infoserv_articles/ryan_patrick_affnews12.html)

### Post-Cult After Effects

Margaret Thaler Singer, Ph.D.

[http://www.csj.org/infoserv\\_articles/singer\\_margaret\\_postcult.htm](http://www.csj.org/infoserv_articles/singer_margaret_postcult.htm)

### New Beginnings - New Teachers, Constructive discussion on starting over

How to go on after leaving NKT

<http://www.lioncity.net/buddhism/index.php?showtopic=45610&st=0>

### New Kadampa Tradition & Shugden discussed at E-Sangha

Practitioners of different Buddhist background and NKT discussing NKT/Shugden

<http://www.lioncity.net/buddhism/index.php?showtopic=34974>

### Tibetan Buddhism in the West

by Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche

<http://web.archive.org/web/20061231034340/http://www.siddharthasintent.org/Pubs/West.htm>

The Tulkus and the Shugden Contrversy

[http://info-buddhism.com/dorje\\_shugden\\_controversy\\_von\\_Brueck.html](http://info-buddhism.com/dorje_shugden_controversy_von_Brueck.html)

Neutral but also critical Articles on NKT/GKG based on academical or reliable sources:

[http://info-buddhism.com/new\\_kadampa\\_tradition.html](http://info-buddhism.com/new_kadampa_tradition.html)

[The Emperor's New Suit by Hans Christian Andersen](#)

A tale about deception / self deception

<http://hca.gilead.org.il/emperor.html>

[Articles regarding cult recovery, post cult recovery, how to spot a cult and so on](#)

[http://www.csj.org/infoserv\\_indexes/index\\_articles.htm](http://www.csj.org/infoserv_indexes/index_articles.htm)

[Ask a Lama: Celebrating all the traditions](#)

about sectarianism; Interview with Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche

[http://www.mandalamagazine.org/2006/oct/celebrate\\_tradition.asp](http://www.mandalamagazine.org/2006/oct/celebrate_tradition.asp)

[BUDDHISM WITHOUT SECTARIANISM](#)

The Venerable Deshung Rinpoche

<http://quietmountain.org/links/teachings/nonsect.htm>

Questioning the Advice of the Guru

HH the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama

<http://info-buddhism.com/index.html#qag>

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Set of Advice**

Je Tsongkhapa. Lamrim Chen Mo, "The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment", the page 75-77, Snow Lion Publ.

"The defining characteristics of the student who relies upon the teacher"

Aryadeva states in his Four Hundred Stanzas (Catuh-sataka):

"It is said that one who is nonpartisan, intelligent, and diligent

Is a vessel for listening to the teachings.

The good qualities of the instructor do not appear otherwise

Nor do those of fellow listeners."

Aryadeva says that one who is endowed with the three qualities is suitable to listen to the teachings. He also says that if you have all these qualities, the good qualities of one who instructs you in the teachings will appear as good qualities, not as faults. In addition, he says that to such a fully qualified person the good qualities of fellow listeners will also appear as good qualities and not as faults.

It is stated in Candrakirti's commentary that if you, the listener, do not have all these defining characteristics of a suitable recipient of the teachings, then the influence of your own faults will cause even an extremely pure teacher who instructs you in the teachings to appear

to have faults. Furthermore, you will consider the faults of the one who explains the teachings to be good qualities. Therefore, although you might find a teacher who has all the defining characteristics, it may be difficult to recognize their presence.

Thus, it is necessary for the disciple to have these three characteristics in their entirety in order to recognize that the teacher has all the defining characteristics and in order then to rely on that teacher.

With respect to these three characteristics, "nonpartisan" means not to take sides. If you are partisan, you will be obstructed by your bias and will not recognize good qualities. Because of this, you will not discover the meaning of good teachings. As Bhavaviveka states in his Heart of the Middle Way (Madhyamaka-hrdaya):

"Through taking sides the mind is distressed, Whereby you will never know peace."

"Taking sides" is to have attachment for your own religious system and hostility toward others'. Look for it in your own mind and then discard it, for it says in the Bodhisattva Vows of Liberation (Bodhi-sattva-pratimoksa):

"After giving up your own assertions, respect and abide in the texts of the abbot and master."

Question: Is just that one characteristic enough?

Reply: Though nonpartisan, if you do not have the mental force to distinguish between correct paths of good explanation and counterfeit paths of false explanation, you are not fit to listen to the teachings. Therefore, you must have the intelligence that understands both of these. By this account you will give up what is unproductive, and then adopt what is productive.

Question: Are just these two enough?

Reply: Though having both of these, if, like a drawing of a person who is listening to the teachings, you are inactive, you are not fit to listen to the teachings. Therefore, you must have great diligence. Candrakirti's commentary says "After adding the three qualities of the student to the two qualities of being focused and having respect for the teaching and its instructor, there are a total of five qualities."

Then, these five qualities can be reduced to four:

- (1) striving very diligently at the teaching,
- (2) focusing the mind well when listening to the teaching,
- (3) having great respect for the teaching and its instructor, and
- (4) discarding bad explanations and retaining good explanations.

Having intelligence is the favourable condition that gives rise to these. Being nonpartisan gets rid of the unfavourable condition of

taking sides.

Investigate whether these attributes that make you suitable to be led by a guru are complete; if they are complete, cultivate delight. If they are incomplete, you must make an effort to obtain the causes that will complete them before your next life. Therefore, know these qualities of a listener. If you do not know their defining characteristics, you will not engage in an investigation to see whether they are complete, and will thereby ruin your great purpose."

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*When I read this passage again and again I understood what was my main fault when following NKT: being partisan, taking sides. It is very funny because before following NKT I tried always to see both sides, but the NKT system was so powerful, that I gave up this good attitude completely and followed a very narrow minded approach.*

*After reading this passage again and again I understood also, why I couldn't see the qualities of HHDL and why I saw the qualities of HHDL as faults; and on the other side I understood why I saw the faults of GKG as qualities: All these wrong discriminations were based on "taking sides", being partisan. (I can not remember that GKG or NKT ever taught about the dangers of being partisan or taking sides.)*

*I conclude from the passage of Je Tsongkhapa that the first thing to do (before checking a teacher and following him) is: one must check the own mind if there are these three characteristics, otherwise the investigation will be polluted or obscured and this fortunate rebirth is wasted by putting the faith into the wrong hands.*

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Je Tsongkhapa citing the Ornament for the Essence said:

Distance yourself from Vajra Masters who are not keeping the three vows, who keep on with a root downfall, who are miserly with the Dharma, and who engage in actions that should be forsaken. Those who worship them go to hell and so on as a result.

(see Tantric Ethics: An Explanation of the Precepts for Buddhist Vajrayana Practice by Tsongkhapa, ISBN 0861712900) - page page 46

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Prayers of Je Tsongkhapa (The Splendor of an Autumn Moon : The Devotional Verse of Tsongkhapa):

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their flawed views of existence and nonexistence  
well outside the Buddhas intention.

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May I bring to the path praised by the Buddha  
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The head turned by dark forces

hinders experience of the joyful festival  
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May I never encounter misleading friends,  
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Patrul Rinpoche (from Words of my Perfect Teacher)

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Teachers of this kind lack any special qualities that might distinguish them from ordinary people. But other people put them up on a pedestal in blind faith, without examining them at all. Puffed up with pride by the profits and honours they receive, they are themselves quite unaware of the true qualities of great teachers. They are like the frog that lived in a well.

One day an old frog that had always lived in a well was visited by another frog who lived on the shores of the great ocean.

"Where are you from?" asked the frog that lived in the well.

"I come from the great ocean," the visitor replied.

"How big is this ocean of yours?" asked the frog from the well.

"It is enormous," replied the other.

"About a quarter the size of my well?" he asked.

"Oh! Bigger than that!" exclaimed the frog from the ocean.

"Half the size, then?"

"No, bigger than that!"

"So—the same size as the well?"

"No, no! Much, much bigger!"

"That's impossible!" said the frog who lived in the well. "This I have to see for myself."

So the two frogs set off together, and the story goes that when the frog who lived in the well saw the ocean, he fainted, his head split apart, and he died.

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(quote from chapter 10, Relating to a Spiritual Teacher: Building a

## Healthy Relationship by Alexander Berzin)

"Some Westerners face similar situations with several of their spiritual teachers. For example, some famous masters disagree strongly about the status of a controversial Dharma-protector and the consequences of propitiating it. They abuse their positions as spiritual mentors and, with threats of hell, forbid their disciples to have anything to do with teachers on the opposite side of the dispute. Other famous masters disagree violently over the identification of the incarnation of the highest lamas of their lineage. A few have even taken police action against each other's claims over inherited property. Sutra-level guru-meditation, as His Holiness the Dalai Lama has experienced, may help traumatized Western Dharma students to deal with these difficult, perplexing circumstances. It may also help those who have been sexually abused by their spiritual teachers or exploited by them for power or money. It may apply as well to disciples of abusive teachers, who have not been personally maligned, but have been devastated by learning of the actions of their teachers.

Many disciples find such situations too difficult to handle, especially if they have already built disciple-mentor relationships with both parties in a dispute. The Abbreviated Kalachakra Tantra advised that if disciples find too many objective faults in their spiritual mentors and they can no longer support close relationships with them, they need not continue studying with these teachers. They may keep a respectful distance, even if they have received highest tantra empowerments from them."

For more see the text:

Berzin, Alexander. *Relating to a Spiritual Teacher: Building a Healthy Relationship*.

Ithaca, Snow Lion, 2000

also online at

[http://www.berzinarchives.com/e-books/spir...l\\_teacher\\_c.htm](http://www.berzinarchives.com/e-books/spir...l_teacher_c.htm)

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quote from:

*The Teacher-Student-Relationship*,  
Jamgon Kongtrul the Great, Snow Lion Publications,

or use:

*Buddhist Ethics (Treasury of Knowledge)*  
Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Taye, Snow Lion Publications

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Avoiding Contrary, Harmful Companions

8.1 Obstructions of a harmful friend

"The harmful teacher is one of bad temperament, of little pure vision, great in dogmatism; he holds [his own view] as highest, praises himself, and denigrates others."

In general, the nonspiritual teacher (mi-dge-ba'i bshes-gnyen) is a lama, teacher (mkhan-slob), dharma brother [or sister] (grogs-mched), and so forth—all those who are attached to the phenomena (snang) of this life, and who get involved in unvirtuous activity. Therefore, one must abandon the nonspiritual friend. In particular, although they have the manner of goodness in appearance, they cause you to be obstructed in your liberation.

The nonspiritual teacher has a bad temperament, little pure vision (dag-snang), is very dogmatic (phyogs-ris), holds as highest his view (lta-ba) as the only dharma, praises himself, slanders others, implicitly denigrates and rejects others' systems (lugs) of dharma, and slanders the lama—the true wisdom teacher—who bears the burden of benefiting others. If you associate with those who are of this type, then, because one follows and gets accustomed to the nonspiritual teacher and his approach, his faults stain you by extension, and your mindstream (rgyud) gradually becomes negative. Illustrating this point, it has been said in the Vinaya Scripture:

"A fish in front of a person is rotting and is tightly wrapped with kusha grass. If that [package] is not moved for a long time, the kusha itself also becomes like that. Like that [kusha grass], by following the sinful teacher, you will always become like him."

Therefore, as it has been said in The Sutra of the True Dharma of Clear Recollection (mDo dran-pa nyer-bzhag; Saddharmanusmriti-upasthana):

"As the chief among the obstructors (bar-du gcod-pa) of all virtuous qualities is the sinful teacher, one should abandon being associated with him, speaking with him, or even being touched by his shadow."

In every aspect one should be diligent in rejecting the sinful teacher.

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The Buddha said:

The devotee acquires the same faults  
As the person not worthy of devotion,  
Like an untainted arrow smeared  
With the poison of a tainted sheath.

Steadfast ones who fear the taint of faults,  
Do not befriend bad people.  
By close reliance and devotion  
To one's companion,  
Soon one becomes just like

The object of one's devotion.

...

The wise devote themselves to holy,  
Not to unholy people,

...

Wise persons are those who know  
Infantile ones for what they are:  
'Infantile ones' are those  
Who take infants to be the wise.

The censure of the wise  
Is far preferable  
To the eulogy or praise  
Of the infant.

Devotion to infants brings misery.  
Since they are like one's foe,  
It is best to never see or hear  
Or have devotion for such people.

Like meeting friends, devotion to  
The steadfast causes happiness.

Therefore, like the revolving stars and moon,  
Devote yourself to the steadfast, moral ones  
Who have heard much, who draw on what is best -  
The kind, the pure, the best superior ones.

(from the Tibetan Dhammapada)

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Than it is worthwhile to read the Kalama Sutra:

"It is proper for you, Kalamas, to doubt, to be uncertain; uncertainty has arisen in you about what is doubtful. Come, Kalamas. Do not go upon what has been acquired by repeated hearing; nor upon tradition; nor upon rumor; nor upon what is in a scripture; nor upon surmise; nor upon an axiom; nor upon specious reasoning; nor upon a bias towards a notion that has been pondered over; nor upon another's seeming ability; nor upon the consideration, 'The monk is our teacher.'  
Kalamas, when you yourselves know: 'These things are bad; these things are blamable; these things are censured by the wise; undertaken and observed, these things lead to harm and ill,' abandon them.

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Intimate Friends

1

Wise ones, do not befriend  
The faithless, who are mean  
And slanderous and cause schism.  
Don't take bad people as your companions.

2

Wise ones, be intimate  
With the faithful who speak gently,  
Are ethical and do much listening.  
Take the best as companions.

3

Do not devote yourself  
To bad companions and wicked beings.  
Devote yourself to holy people,  
And to spiritual friends.

4

By devotion to people like that  
You will do goodness, not wrong.

5

By devotion to faithful and wise people  
Who have heard much and pondered many things,  
By heeding their fine words, even from afar,  
Their special qualities are attained here.

6

Since those devoted to inferiors degenerate,  
Those to equals mark time,  
And those to great ones attain sanctity,  
Be devoted to those great ones.

7

By devotion to ethical,  
Calm, and most knowledgeable great beings,  
One attains to a greatness  
Greater even than the great.

8

Just as the clean kusha grass  
That wraps a rotten fish  
Will also start to rot,  
So too will those devoted to an evil person.

9

Just as a leaf folded  
To contain an incense offering  
Also becomes sweet,  
So too will those devoted to the virtuous.

10

When one does no wrong yet  
Is devoted to evil people,  
One will still be abused,  
For others suppose that this one too is bad.

11

The devotee acquires the same faults  
As the person not worthy of devotion,  
Like an untainted arrow smeared  
With the poison of a tainted sheath.

12

Steadfast ones who fear the taint of faults,  
Do not befriend bad people.  
By close reliance and devotion  
To one's companion,  
Soon one becomes just like  
The object of one's devotion.

13

Therefore, knowing that one's devotion  
Is like the casing of the fruit,  
The wise devote themselves to holy,  
Not to unholy people,  
And drawn along the monk's path  
They find the end of misery.

14

Just as a spoon cannot taste the sauce,  
Infantile ones do not understand  
The doctrine, even after  
A lifetime of devotion to the wise.

15

Just as the tongue can taste the sauce.  
Those with wisdom can understand  
The entire doctrine, after just  
A brief attendance on the wise.

16

Because infantile ones lack eyes to see,  
Though they devote their lifetimes  
To the wise, they never  
Understand the entire doctrine.  
Those with wisdom fully understand  
The entire doctrine after just  
A brief attendance on the wise.  
They have eyes to see.

17

Though they devote their lifetimes  
To wise beings, infantile ones  
Do not understand the doctrine  
Of the Buddha in its entirety.  
Those with wisdom understand  
The doctrine of the Buddha  
In its entirety after just  
A brief attendance on the wise.

18

Even just one meaningful line  
Sets the wise ones to their task,  
But all the teaching that the Buddhas gave  
Won't set infantile ones to work.

19

The intelligent will understand  
A hundred lines from one,  
But for the infantile beings  
A thousand lines do not suffice for one.

20

[If one must chose between them],  
Better the wise even if unfriendly.  
No infant is suited to be a friend.  
Sentient beings intimate with  
The infant-like are led to hell.

21

Wise persons are those who know  
Infantile ones for what they are:  
'Infantile ones' are those  
Who take infants to be the wise.

22

The censure of the wise  
Is far preferable  
To the eulogy or praise  
Of the infant.

23

Devotion to infants brings misery.  
Since they are like one's foe,  
It is best to never see or hear  
Or have devotion for such people.

24

Like meeting friends, devotion to  
The steadfast causes happiness.

25

Therefore, like the revolving stars and moon,  
Devote yourself to the steadfast, moral ones  
Who have heard much, who draw on what is best -  
The kind, the pure, the best superior ones.

(taken from Gareth Sparham's translation Wisdom Publications)

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Chapter 15 Fear of "A Breach of Guru-Devotion"

[http://www.berzinarchives.com/e-books/spir...teacher\\_15.html](http://www.berzinarchives.com/e-books/spir...teacher_15.html)

Maybe it is also a good idea to start with rectifying Buddhist terms ...

Please read also

Recification of the term 'Spiritual Guide', 'Guru'...

[http://www.berzinarchives.com/e-books/spir...\\_teacher\\_2.html](http://www.berzinarchives.com/e-books/spir..._teacher_2.html)

and Rectifying the Term Devotion

[http://www.berzinarchives.com/e-books/spir...\\_teacher\\_9.html](http://www.berzinarchives.com/e-books/spir..._teacher_9.html)

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This article appeared in the Fall, 1993 issue of "Tricycle: The Buddhist Review":

#### AN OPEN LETTER

The following is an open letter circulated by The Network for Western Buddhist Teachers, based in Tucson, Arizona,

On March 16-19, 1993, a meeting was held in Dharamsala, India, between His Holiness the fourteenth Dalai Lama and a group of twenty- two Western dharma teachers from the major Buddhist traditions in Europe and America. Also present were the Tibetan lamas Drikung Chetsang Rinpoche, Pachen Otrul Rinpoche, and Amchok Rinpoche. The aim of the meeting was to discuss openly a wide range of issues concerning the transmission of Budhadharma to Western lands.

After four days of presentations and discussions we agreed on the following points:

1. Our first responsibility as Buddhists is to work towards creating a better world for all forms of life. The promotion of Buddhism as a religion is a secondary concern. Kindness and compassion, the furthering of peace and harmony, as well as tolerance and respect for other religions, should be the three guiding principles of our actions.
2. In the West, where so many different Buddhist traditions exist side

by side, one needs to be constantly on one's guard against the danger of sectarianism. Such a divisive attitude is often the result of failing to understand or appreciate anything outside one's own tradition. Teachers from all schools would therefore benefit greatly from studying and gaining some practical experience of the teachings of other traditions.

3. Teachers should also be open to beneficial influences from secular and other religious traditions. For example, the insights and techniques of contemporary psychotherapy can often be of great value in reducing suffering experienced by students. At the same time, efforts to develop psychologically oriented practices from within the existing Buddhist tradition should be encouraged.

4. An individual's position as a teacher arises in dependence on the request of his or her students, not simply on being appointed as such by a higher authority. Great care must therefore be exercised by the student in selecting an appropriate teacher. Sufficient time must be given to making this choice, which should be based on personal investigation, reason, and experience. Students should be warned against the dangers of falling prey to charisma, charlatans, or exoticism.

5. Particular concern was expressed about unethical conduct among teachers, both Asian and Western teachers have been involved in scandals concerning sexual misconduct with their students, abuse of alcohol and drugs, misappropriation of funds, and misuse of power. This has resulted in widespread damage both to the Buddhist community and the individuals involved. Each student must be encouraged to take responsible measures to confront teachers with unethical aspects of their conduct. If the teacher shows no sign of reform, students should not hesitate to publicize any unethical behavior of which there is irrefutable evidence. This should be done irrespective of other beneficial aspects of his or her work and of one's spiritual commitment to that teacher. It should also be made clear in any publicity that such conduct is not in conformity with Buddhist teachings. No matter what level of spiritual attainment a teacher has, or claims to have, reached, no person can stand above the norms of ethical conduct. In order for the Buddha dharma not to be brought into disrepute and to avoid harm to students and teachers, it is necessary that all teachers at least live by the five lay precepts. In cases where ethical standards have been infringed, compassion and care should be shown towards both teacher and student.

6. Just as the Dharma has adapted itself to many different cultures throughout its history in Asia, so is it bound to be transformed according to conditions in the West. Although the principles of the Dharma are timeless, we need to exercise careful discrimination in distinguishing between essential teachings and cultural trappings. However, confusion may arise due to various reasons. There may be a

conflict in loyalty between commitment to one's Asian teachers and responsibility to one's Western students. Likewise, one may encounter disagreement about the respective value of monastic and lay practice. Furthermore, we affirm the need for equality between the sexes in all aspects of Buddhist theory and practice.

The Western teachers were encouraged by His Holiness to take greater responsibility in creatively resolving the issues that were raised. For many, His Holiness' advice served as a profound confirmation of their own feelings, concerns, and actions.

In addition to being able to discuss issues frankly with His Holiness, the conference served as a valuable forum for teachers from different traditions to exchange views. We are already planning future meetings with His Holiness and will invite other colleagues who were not present in Dharamsala to participate in the ongoing process. His Holiness intends to invite more heads of different Asian Buddhist traditions to attend future meetings.

Signed: Fred von Allmen, Brendan Lee Kennedy, Ven. Ajahn Amaro, Bodhin Kjolhede Sensei, Jack Kornfield, Martine Batchelor, Dharmachari Kulananda, Stephen Batchelor, Jakusho Bill Kwong Roshi, Alex Berzin, Lama Namgyal (Daniel Boschero), Ven. Thubten Chodron (Cherry Greene), Ven. Tenzin Palmo, Lama Drupgyu Crony Chapman), Ven. Thubten Pende (James Dougherty), Lopon Claude aEsnee, Lama Surya Das aeffrey Miller), Edie Irwin, Robert Thurman, Junpo Sensei (Denis Kelly), Sylvia Wetzel.

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Here is an abstract from Ven Ringu Tulku's book on the Rime Philosophy:

-----Abstract-----

### Jamgon Kongtrul on Sectarianism

Jamgon Kongtrul disagreed so thoroughly with a partisan approach that he asserted that those with sectarian views cannot uphold even their own tradition. Kongtrul says:

"Just as a king overpowered by self-interest  
Is not worthy of being the protector of the kingdom,  
A sectarian person is not worthy of being a holder of the dharma.  
Not only that, he is unworthy of upholding even his own tradition."

And again:

"The noble ones share a single ultimate view,  
But arrogant ones bend that to their own interests.  
Those who show all the teachings of the Buddha as without  
contradiction can be considered learned people. But who would be  
foolish enough to think that those who cause  
discord are holders of the dharma?"

Ri-me is not a way of uniting different schools and lineages by emphasizing their similarities. It is basically an appreciation of their differences and an acknowledgment of the importance of variety to benefit practitioners with different needs. Therefore, the Ri-me teachers always take great care that the teachings and practices of the different schools and lineages, and their unique styles, do not become confused with one another. Retaining the original style and methods of each teaching lineage preserves the power of that lineage experience. Kongtrul and Khyentse made great efforts to retain the original flavor of each teaching, while making them available to many. Kongtrul writes about Khyentse in his biography of the latter:

"Some people are very fussy about the refutations and affirmations of the various tenets, becoming particularly attached to their own versions, such as Rangtong or Shentong Madhyamaka. There are many who try to pull others over to their own side, to the point of practically breaking their necks. When Jamyang Khyentse teaches the different tenet systems, he does not mix up their terminology or ideas, yet he makes them easy to understand and suitable for the students. In general, the main point to be established by all the tenets is the ultimate nature of phenomena. As the Prajnaparamita Sutra states:

'The dharmata is not an object of knowledge; It cannot be understood by the conceptual mind.'

In addition, Ngok Lotsawa, who is considered the crown jewel of Tibetan intellectuals, agrees with this understanding when he says:

'The ultimate truth is not only beyond the dimension of language and expression, it is beyond intellectual understanding.'

So, the ultimate nature cannot be established by the samsaric mind, no matter how deep that mind may be.

The scholars and siddhas of the various schools make their own individual presentations of the dharma. Each one is full of strong points and supported by valid reasoning. If you are well grounded in the presentations of your own tradition, then it is unnecessary to be sectarian. But if you get mixed up about the various tenets and the terminology, then you lack even a foothold in your own tradition. You try to use someone else's system to support your understanding, and then get all tangled up, like a bad weaver, concerning the view, meditation, conduct, and result. Unless you have certainty in your own system, you cannot use reasoning to support your scriptures, and you

cannot challenge the assertions of others. You become a laughing stock in the eyes of the learned ones. It would be much better to possess a clear understand-ing of your own tradition.

In summary, one must see all the teachings as without con-tradiction, and consider all the scriptures as instructions. This will cause the root of sectarianism and prejudice to dry up, and give you a firm foundation in the Buddhas teachings. At that point, hundreds of doors to the eighty-four thousand teachings of the dharma will simultaneously be open to you."

The Ri-me concept was not original to Kongtrul and Khyentse, nor was it new to Buddhism. Shakyamuni Buddha forbade his students to criticize others, even the teachings and teachers of other religions and Cultures. This directive was so strong and unambiguous that in the Untnincv to the Middle Way, Chandrakirti felt compelled to defend Nttgarjunas Madhyamaka treatises by saying:

"If, in trying to understand the truth, one dispels misunder-standings, and therefore some philosophies cannot remain intact, that should not be considered as criticizing others' views."

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Some advise is mentioned before or double (redundant, this is due to the fact that I quickly compiled these three sets from different sources where I original placed them (e.g. E-Sangha, New Kadampa Survivors)