Questions

1. Please provide a brief overview of the current treatment of Tibetan clergy in China.
2. What is the situation of Tibetan nuns in Dharamsala and how are they treated by the authorities?
3. Are there any reported or known incidents of violence targeting the Tibetan community in Dharamsala?
4. Would a Buddhist nun be likely to receive effective state / police protection in Dharamsala if she were mistreated either because of being a single woman or a nun or a Tibetan or for her political or religious views?
5. What is Dorje Shugden worship and why was it banned by the Dalai Lama?
6. Is there any evidence of tension and/or violence between the Dorje Shugden supporters and other Buddhist worshippers in Dharamsala. How would the authorities respond to such violence?
7. What are the residence/re-entry rights for the holder of an Indian Identity Certificate?

RESPONSE

1. Please provide a brief overview of the current treatment of Tibetan clergy in China.

Tibetan monks and nuns continue to be severely mistreated by Chinese authorities with a high level of repression of religious freedom. Several sources report an increase in human rights violations in Tibet. The main targets of arrest and subsequent torture appear to be “political dissidents” which include a large number of Tibetan monks and nuns. According to the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) “[a]s of December 2005, estimated 2524 Tibetan refugees have fled Tibet across the Himalaya and into India, reporting repression and seeking freedom in exile”. The UK Home Office’s 2006 assessment on China provides a comprehensive overview of the current situation for Tibetans in China by utilising various credible sources. The pertinent extracts follow in detail.
27.09 As reported by the USSD Report 2005:

“The government’s human rights record in Tibetan areas of China remained poor, and the level of repression of religious freedom remained high. The government continued to view the Dalai Lama with suspicion and tended to associate Tibetan Buddhist religious activity with separatist sympathies. Authorities continued to commit serious human rights abuses, including torture, arbitrary arrest and detention, house arrest and other nonjudicial surveillance of dissidents, detention without public trial, repression of religious freedom, and arbitrary restrictions on free movement. Positive developments in Tibetan areas included a fourth round of dialogue between the government and envoys of the Dalai Lama. In August the government permitted an international delegation to meet with released political prisoner Phuntsog Nyidrol in the TAR for the first time. In November the UN special rapporteur on torture visited Lhasa, the capital of the TAR, for the first time.”

27.10 The TCHRD Report 2005 stated, “… the information inflow and outflow from Tibet have been severely restricted.”

27.11 This report also stated:

“… the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) is alarmed by the increasing reports of human rights violation in Tibet in 2005. Tibetans in Tibet witnessed increased restrictive measures on religion, security and ideological control, limits on freedom of expression, opinion and conscience, and lack of rule of law. A ‘culture of fear’ and a ‘palpable sense of fear and self censorship’ is pervasive in Tibet. There is a deep seated and widespread zero-tolerance level on any activity or viewpoint that is suspected as challenging the Communist Party’s control over aspects of society it deems crucial. As of December 2005, estimated 2524 Tibetan refugees have fled Tibet across the Himalaya and into India, reporting repression and seeking freedom in exile.”

27.12 As reported by *The Times* on 14 August 2006, “China’s new top official in Tibet [Zhang Qingli, TAR CCP Party Secretary] has embarked on a fierce campaign to crush loyalty to the exiled Dalai Lama and to extinguish religious beliefs among government officials… Ethnic Tibetan civil servants of all ranks, from the lowliest of government employees to senior officials, have been banned from attending any religious ceremony or from entering a temple or monastery. Previously only party members were required to be atheist, but many of them quietly retained their Buddhist beliefs. Patriotic education campaigns in the monasteries that have been in the vanguard of anti-Chinese protests have been expanded. Ethnic Tibetan officials in Lhasa as well as in surrounding rural counties have been required to write criticisms of the Dalai Lama. Senior civil servants must produce 10,000-word essays while those in junior posts need only write 5,000-character condemnations. Even retired officials are not exempt.”

27.13 On 3 August 2006, *The Times* reported on the case of Dolma Gyba, a Tibetan author secretly sentenced to ten years imprisonment after police raided his house and discovered unpublished manuscripts which covered sensitive topics such as freedom, democracy and the situation in Tibet. The harshness of the sentence may have been related to the fact that he also wrote about the location of Chinese military bases in Tibet. On 18 August 2006, Radio Free Asia (RFA) reported that police had detained a 16 year old girl in Karze (Ganzi), Sichuan province in connection with a leafleting campaign calling for Tibetan independence. On 14 February 2006, 17 monks at Gamden monastery destroyed a statue of the deity Shugden in a show of loyalty to the Dalai Lama, who had banned its worship in 1996. A fight ensued and the army was deployed to restore order.
As reported by the Australia Tibet Council on 23 September 2004, “Authorities in China have sentenced two monks and a layman to three-year jail terms, apparently they were involved in putting up posters advocating Tibetan independence, Radio Free Asia (RFA) reports.” In June 2006, five Tibetans were detained for handing out leaflets promoting Tibetan independence.

As reported by WRITENET (writing on behalf of the UNHCR) in their paper on the situation of the Tibetan population in China, published in February 2005:

“We can summarize Chinese policy towards Tibet in the following points:

China has exercised zero tolerance for separatist movements.

It has striven to bring about rapid economic growth, including raising the living standards of the people, believing that prosperity will make the Tibetan people more willing to stay within the PRC.

It has maintained a limited autonomy, including a degree of religious and cultural freedom, but tried actively to increase Chinese control and cracked down on any signs that Tibetan culture poses a threat to the Chinese state.

These policies are actually quite similar to those towards other ethnic minorities in China, but separatism and threats to the Chinese state are not major problems other than in Tibet and Xinjiang.”

This report also stated, “The main group at risk in the Tibetan areas is active political dissidents, especially those seeking Tibetan independence. Activities attracting prison terms are those classified as endangering state security or promoting separatism, but they range from espionage and even bomb blasts through distributing leaflets advocating independence to possessing the Dalai Lama’s picture or reading the Dalai Lama’s works. Among the dissidents the majority belong to the clerical order.”

The Dalai Lama in an interview with TIME Asia on 25 October 2004 stated:

“Despite some economic improvement and development, the threats to our cultural heritage, religious freedom and environment are very serious. Then also in the countryside, facilities in education and health are very, very poor. It’s like the big gap in China proper between rich and poor. So the whole picture, it almost looks hopeless. When the 13th Dalai Lama visited China in the early 20th century, there was a large Manchurian community – even the Emperor was Manchurian. Almost exactly 50 years later when I visited, the Manchurian community was no longer there. It was completely assimilated. That danger is very alive [in Tibet, too]. So that’s why the Tibetan picture is almost hopeless. That’s why we are trying to gain meaningful autonomy.”

On the question of his reincarnation the Dalai Lama said, “The purpose of reincarnation is to fulfil the previous life task. My life is outside Tibet, therefore my reincarnation will logically be found outside. But then, the next question: Will the Chinese accept this or not? China will not accept. The Chinese government most probably will appoint another Dalai Lama, like it did with the Panchen Lama. Then there will be two Dalai Lamas: one, the Dalai Lama of the Tibetan heart, and one that is officially appointed.” (UK Home Office 2006, China Assessment, 29 September, Sections 27.09-27.44 – Attachment 1).
Amnesty International’s 2006 country report on China illustrates a bleak picture for Buddhist nuns and monks describing the continued lack of religious freedom and arbitrary arrests. The pertinent extracts follow in detail.

### Tibet Autonomous Region and other ethnic Tibetan areas

Freedom of religion, expression and association continued to be severely restricted and arbitrary arrests and unfair trials continued. Some prisoners of conscience were released at the end of their sentences, but dozens of others, including Buddhist monks and nuns, remained behind bars where they were at risk of torture or ill-treatment.

Tashi Gyaltse and four other monks were assigned to between two and three years’ Re-education through Labour in Xiling, Qinghai province, in February for publishing a newsletter which contained poems and articles deemed to be politically sensitive (Amnesty International 2006, Report 2006: People’s Republic of China, May – Attachment 2).

2. What is the situation of Tibetan nuns in Dharamsala and how are they treated by the authorities?
3. Are there any reported or known incidents of violence targeting the Tibetan community in Dharamsala?
4. Would a Buddhist nun be likely to receive effective state / police protection in Dharamsala if she were mistreated either because of being a single woman or a nun or a Tibetan or for her political or religious views?

Sporadic instances of harassment and/or violence have occurred involving Tibetans in Dharamsala in recent years. However, generally the sources suggest the situation in Dharamsala is relatively calm, with no reports of consistent harassment or violence involving the Tibetan community. Little information was found on the level of police protection offered to women in Dharamsala. Of relevance is the case of a Tibetan nun who was allegedly raped by an Indian man in April 2005. The Indo-Asian News Service article states that the Tibetan nun lodged the complaint with the Dharamsala police who were reportedly questioning the alleged offender’s servant, an alleged accomplice to the crime (‘Tibetan nun raped in Dharamsala’ 2005, Canada Tibet Committee website (source: Indo-Asian News Service), 23 April [http://www.tibet.ca/en/wtnarchive/2005/4/23_7.html](http://www.tibet.ca/en/wtnarchive/2005/4/23_7.html) – Accessed 20 December 2006 – Attachment 3).

The following articles, displayed in reverse chronological order, describe instances of Tibetans facing violence and arrest in Dharamsala in recent years:


- On 22 July 2006, The Tribune reported that Dharamsala police had arrested a 63 year-old woman who claimed to be a Tibetan nun. The report states that she was charged with not having the required travel documents, and police were not ruling out the possibility that the woman was a “Chinese spy keeping an eye on the activities of the

- On 11 February 2004, the Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC) organised a ‘Freedom March’ from Dharamsala to Delhi. The intended peaceful march became violent when local Dharamsala police allegedly deemed the march illegal. While marchers reportedly sat on the road in protest, police officers then began beating and dragging marchers into police trucks. The report claims that after a 7 hour stalemate “the authorities consented for the continuation of the Freedom March”. According to the The Government of Tibet in Exile website, the incident was reportedly the “first time in the history of Dharamsala when Tibetans were beaten up and jailed for a peaceful and noble cause in Dharamsala by the local authorities themselves” (‘Freedom March Flagged Off’ 2004, The Government of Tibet in Exile website, 11 February [http://www.tibet.com/NewsRoom/freedommarch1.htm – Accessed 21 December 2006 – Attachment 6).


5. What is Dorje Shugden worship and why was it banned by the Dalai Lama?

6. Is there any evidence of tension and/or violence between the Dorje Shugden supporters and other Buddhist worshippers in Dharamsala. How would the authorities respond to such violence?

Dorje Shugden is a controversial deity within Himalayan Buddhism. He is primarily associated with two influential lamas of the Gelugpa school of Tibet, Pabongka Rinpoche and Trijang Rinpoche. The Dalai Lama is the current head of the Gelugpa sect. Dorje Shugden is viewed by some as a protector and by others, including the Dalai Lama, as an ‘evil and malevolent force’. In 1996, the Dalai Lama disassociated himself from worshippers of Dorje Shugden. This action provoked a London-based group called the Shugden Supporters Community (SSC) to stage demonstrations in London claiming ‘religious persecution by the Dalai Lama’. In February 1997, three Tibetan Buddhist monks opposed to Shugden-worship were brutally murdered in Dharamsala. It was widely held that the perpetrators were monks loyal to Shugden (‘Dorje Shugden’ 2006, Wikipedia website, 24 November [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shugden – Accessed 20 December 2006 – Attachment 8; ‘The da vinci Codes’ 2006, *Hindustan Times*, 20 May – Attachment 9).

On 16 October 2002, the *South China Morning Post* reported the display of posters ‘threatening to kill the Dalai Lama’ near Dharamsala. The police responded by allegedly ‘stepping up security around the exiled leader’, and suspected the posters were created by followers of Dorje Shugden (Dhillon, A. 2002, ‘Dalai Lama death threats laid at door of dissident cult’, *South China Morning Post*, 16 October – Attachment 10).
No other information was found on violence between Dorje Shugden supporters and other Tibetan Buddhists in Dharamsala, or the response of authorities to such violence.

7. What are the residence/re-entry rights for the holder of an Indian Identity Certificate?

Advice received from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) in April 2003 describes the process of obtaining identity certificates and its period of validity (Please Note: Country Research is currently waiting for an update to the information below from DFAT. At this time the information set out below is current):

A.3 An identity certificate is issued to Tibetans by the Indian government for travel outside India. In order to obtain an identity certificate Indian authorities would need to see the applicant’s registration certificate. As such, the holder of an identity certificate would in most cases hold a valid registration certificate. If the registration certificate had expired, it would be possible to have the situation regularised.

A.4 An identity certificate is normally valid for a period of ten years. Much like a passport, a new identity certificate can be issued after that time. There is no maximum period for which Tibetans resident in India can hold a registration certificate.

…A.6 No. It is not Indian policy to return Tibetans (regardless of whether they are monks) to China. Tibetans who commit a crime while living in India will be treated in accordance with Indian law.

A.7 An identity certificate allows the holder to travel outside India. A registration certificate allows the holder to live, work (in occupations that are not restricted to Indian citizens) and buy property in India. If Indian authorities discovered that either an identity certificate or a registration certificate was obtained fraudulently, the matter would be dealt with according to Indian law, however this would not include the prospect of returning the Tibetan to China (DIMIA Country Information Service, 2003, Asylum and Travel for Tibetan Monks, CIR No. 75/03, 14 May (sourced from DFAT report of 28 April 2003) – Attachment 11).

Of interest is a December 2006 article by the newKerala.com website. It states that as of 31 December 2006, “the Indian government will stop issuing exit permits to [Tibetan immigrants]”. The pertinent extracts follow in detail.

A large number of Tibetans have been entering India through Nepal on the basis of special entry permits (SEPs) and then seeking exit permits from the Indian government to move to western countries for better prospects.

Since Tibet is not recognised as a country, Tibetans coming into India are issued SEPs at the Kathmandu-based Indian embassy to travel to India.

The SEPs are issued for pilgrimage (one month), education (one year) and other categories. Many Tibetans take the longer SEP and then apply for a registration certificate (RC) once they reach Dharamsala or any other Tibetan settlement in India.

The RC later entitles them to apply for an identity certificate (IC), which is similar to a passport. They then seek an exit permit to go to other countries (Sarin, J. 2006, “India halts
List of Sources Consulted

Internet Sources:
**Government Information & Reports**
Danish Immigration Service [http://www.udlst.dk](http://www.udlst.dk)
UK Home Office [http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/)
US Department of State [http://www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov)

**United Nations (UN)**
UNHCR [http://www.unhchr.ch/](http://www.unhchr.ch/)

**Non-Government Organisations**
Relief Web [http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf](http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf)

**International News & Politics**
BBC News [http://news.bbc.co.uk](http://news.bbc.co.uk)
Institute of War & Peace Reporting [http://www.iwpr.net/home_index_new.html](http://www.iwpr.net/home_index_new.html)

**Search Engines**

**Databases:**
FACTIVA (news database)
BACIS (DIMA Country Information database)
REFINFO (IRBDC (Canada) Country Information database)
ISYS (RRT Country Research database, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, US Department of State Reports)

**RRT Library Catalogue**

**List of Attachments**

1. UK Home Office 2006, *China Assessment*, 29 September, Sections 27.09-27.44.


