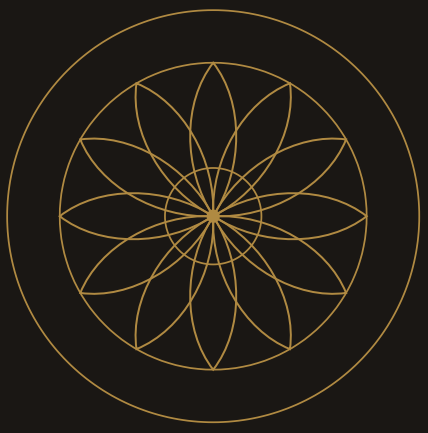


THE SACRED DIVIDE

THE FULL RECORD

Tibetan Buddhism

Buddhism family

HONOR THE FAITH · NAME THE MACHINERY

TEXT CHECKED 2026-10-03

Before you begin

This is the record of Tibetan Buddhism in *The Sacred Divide*. It has 27 sections, the same 27 used for every tradition, so that any section can be set beside the same section for another. Every fact is sourced.

Before each section, a short note says what the section is built to show, so you know what you are looking at before you read the detail.

After each section, a note headed *Why this matters to you* points at the part of the section most likely to touch an ordinary reader: a member, a donor, a parent, a voter, someone thinking about leaving, or someone outside forming an opinion. It usually ends with a question. The questions are not traps. They are the ones a careful reader would ask anyway.

The hard questions in section 23 are set out one at a time: the question, why it is asked, and an example already documented in this record.

Where a note states a fact, the fact comes from this record's own tables and cited sources or, in a few places, from a well-known research finding named in the text. Corrections are logged, with their dates, in the last section, *What changed on this page*.

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How to read this

Every religion in The Sacred Divide is laid out the same way, in the same 27 sections, so that any section can be compared across religions. This file examines institutions, offices, money and power. It does not judge anyone's faith or the truth of any belief.

EVIDENCE GRADES

Each of the 30 techniques carries a grade for how it is established in this tradition.

- **CODIFIED** Written policy, published rule, contractual requirement, or a procedure the institution has confirmed in its own documents. The strongest grade and the hardest to deny.
- **DOCUMENTED** Established by court judgment, government inquiry, regulatory action, or financial filing. Not the institution's own words, but a body with subpoena power.
- **TAUGHT** Repeated leadership instruction from platform, publication, or curriculum, without a formal rule. Deniable as emphasis rather than policy.
- **CULTURAL** Community enforcement the institution neither mandates nor prevents. Real in effect, unattributable by design — the highest-deniability grade. A volume graded mostly Cultural has not been cleared of anything: it means the page names no document that makes the institution responsible. Cultural does not mean minor, and it is not a finding of absence.

- CONTESTED Occurs in some parts of the tradition and is actively opposed in others. Generalizing this grade across a whole tradition is a misuse of it.
- REFORMED Documented historically and materially changed since — policy withdrawn, practice ended, or independent oversight accepted. Recorded because omitting it would be dishonest.
- UNGRADED Present in the source material without a grade assigned yet. Read as an unverified pattern claim, not as a finding.

RECEIPTS

Bracketed labels such as [OFFICIAL POLICY] name the kind of source a claim rests on.

- **Official policy.** The institution's own written rule: handbook, canon, policy letter, catechism, trust deed, temple recommend question. The strongest evidence available, because it cannot be attributed to a rogue individual.
- **Court record.** Judgments, convictions, filings, and testimony given under oath. Adversarially tested, which is more than most religious claims about themselves have been.
- **Government inquiry.** Royal commissions, grand juries, parliamentary and state investigations with subpoena power. Where these exist they are usually the best record of what an institution did rather than said.
- **Regulatory action.** Findings and penalties from bodies like the SEC or consumer-protection regulators. Narrow in scope, unusually precise in what they establish.
- **Financial record.** Filings, audited statements, tax returns, disclosed compensation, property transactions. Frequently the only place an institution tells the truth about its priorities.

- **Leadership statement.** Recorded sermons, conference addresses, published letters. The institution in its own voice, to its own people, on the record.
- **Independent investigation.** Reports commissioned by the institution but conducted externally. Weaker than a court and far stronger than a press release — and notable when the institution publishes them in full.
- **Academic source.** Peer-reviewed history, sociology, and demography. Best for context, structure, and scale; weaker for specific institutional conduct.
- **Former member testimony.** Firsthand accounts from people who were inside. Indispensable and interested at once — graded as testimony, never presented as documentary proof.
- **Pattern observed.** A recurring configuration with no single document behind it. Labeled as an observation rather than a finding, and the weakest claim type in this codex.

METHOD

- Separation of targets. This codex analyzes institutional control patterns, never the worth of believers or the truth of beliefs. Theology is out of scope; behavior, money, and power are in scope.
- Pattern over anecdote. A tactic is attributed to a tradition's high-control expressions only where the mechanism recurs — one bad congregation proves nothing; the same architecture in a hundred proves the architecture.
- Evidence weighting. Every factual claim carries a bracketed source-type label and should carry a grade (A–D). Claims marked SOURCE NEEDED or PATTERN OBSERVED are analysis, not established fact, and must not be published as fact.
- Steelman rule. Every tactic section presents the institution's strongest defense before countering it. If the defense cannot be stated in a form its adherents would recognize, the counter is not yet earned.

- Asymmetry honesty. Similar tactic does not mean identical severity. A shunning policy that costs your entire family is not the same as a community that cools toward doubters, and the codex must never flatten that difference.
- The mirror rule. Any framework this powerful can itself be misused — to smear traditions, flatter one's own, or manufacture grievance. The self-audit and language guardrails apply to this project as much as to any institution it examines.

CITATIONS

A small raised number in the text links to the matching item in this religion's Sources, near the end. Every source was checked, and the date of the last check is shown at the top.

01 At a glance

BEFORE YOU READ

The whole page on one screen: how big Tibetan Buddhism is, who sits at the top, how that person is chosen and whether anyone can remove them, where the money comes from, and what leaving costs. The disclosure scorecard underneath asks six yes-or-no questions any charity or public company would be expected to answer. Every later section expands one of these rows.

SIZE	Tibetan Buddhism has an estimated ~10–20 million adherents within the Tibetan cultural sphere, plus several hundred thousand to low millions of convert practitioners globally (estimates vary widely). ACADEMIC SOURCE
WHO'S IN CHARGE	The Dalai Lama, the most senior lama (teacher) of Tibetan Buddhism, is Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th, born 1935. In July 2025, days before his 90th birthday, he declared that the institution will continue and that his Gaden Phodrang Trust (the foundation he created) alone holds authority to recognize the 15th.
CHOSEN BY	The Dalai Lama is chosen by a recognition ritual controlled by the predecessor's own trust.
REMOVABLE BY	Nobody can remove him. The office is located in the man.

MONEY IN ONE LINE	The money comes from empowerment (ritual initiation) and teaching fees, retreat economies, center dues and estate endowments. Western sanghas (communities of practitioners) are major funding sources for exile institutions.
LEAVING IN ONE LINE	Leaving after tantric commitment (the vows of the advanced practices) carries taught cosmic consequences ('vajra hell', the hell realm taught as the penalty for breaking the vows). In documented cases, whistleblowers faced community exile and accusations of breaking samaya (the vow binding student to teacher). FORMER MEMBER TESTIMONY / INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
THE UNANSWERED QUESTION	Samaya forbids criticizing the lama. Who wrote the exemption for the lama's own conduct — and where is it published?
EVIDENCE	One of the 30 techniques is sourced to a named document. The grades are Taught 17, Cultural 12 and Documented 1; none is graded Codified.
FAMILY	Buddhism — buddhism, tibetan-buddhism, soka-gakkai
LAST CHECKED	2026-10-03

Disclosure scorecard

ACCOUNTS	PAY	SAFEGUARDING	EXTERNAL FIRST	REMOVAL	REPLY
PARTIAL	NO	PARTIAL	PARTIAL	NO	PARTIAL

Y Yes — established from a public source · **P** Partial — true of some parts of the tradition, or true in some jurisdictions · **N** No — not established from any public source · **?** Not assessable

— no institutional apex exists to assess

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

The glance table's answer to who chooses the top office is "The Dalai Lama is chosen by a recognition ritual controlled by the predecessor's own trust", and to who can remove its holder, "Nobody can remove him. The office is located in the man". Read that as though it described the board of a pension fund holding your savings. Would you accept the arrangement there? The scorecard finds no public evidence of leaders' pay or a written removal procedure. Each "No" is something the institution could publish tomorrow. Ask yourself why it hasn't.

02 A day inside

BEFORE YOU READ

One ordinary day, told from inside. The person is a composite built from documented patterns, not a real individual. The point is to make the structure visible at human scale: phrases like "removal mechanism" or "giving record" are easy to read past, but a Tuesday organized around them is not.

Martin · A Tuesday in the winter retreat · A dharma centre in the French Alps

Ngöndro (the preliminary practices of Tibetan tantric training) at six. He has completed 400,000 prostrations in his life and he can tell you what that did to his knees and also what it did to something else that he has no vocabulary for outside this room.

He is fifty-four. He sold a flat in Lyon in 2009 to move here. His pension is what it is. He is not resentful about this — he wants that understood — he made a choice and he would defend it at a dinner party.

At ten the centre director asks him to take on the accounts for the new retreat building, because he was an accountant. He says yes. He is given a folder. In the folder are transfers he does not understand to an entity he has not heard of, and he sits with the folder for a long time, and then he closes it and takes it back and says he doesn't think he has the time after all.

At lunch a woman named Ilse, who has been here longer than he has, mentions a student who left in 2016. She uses the phrase *broke samaya* and then changes the subject, and Martin, who has taken the same vows, feels the temperature drop about two degrees.

He took empowerment from the lama in 2011. He remembers the joy of it. He also remembers, and has never told anyone he remembers, that the explanation of what the vow forbade came after the vow, not before.

At night he lies in a small cold room and thinks about a report that was published a few years ago about a different centre and a different teacher, and about the fact that the organization commissioned it itself, and about the sentence in it that used the word samaya. And then he does what he always does with that thought, which is to recognize it as an obscuration (a mental veil, in the tradition's term) and to bring the mind back to the breath. It works. That is the part he cannot get past: it works.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Did any moment in that day feel familiar: a cost nobody questions, a door nobody can see how to open? The section of this page that explains that moment is the one to read first. If nothing felt familiar, ask whether that's because it isn't your life, or because the patterns have become normal to you.

03 The forefront

BEFORE YOU READ

The page's thesis in one place. First, the single question the documented record could not answer. Then the widest gap between what the institution says and what the record shows, one cost of leaving set beside how it is officially denied, and the strongest objection to this whole page, answered rather than dismissed.

> This tradition survived an attempted annihilation, and that is not a small thing to hold while reading criticism of it. But it also contains a silencing mechanism that works on your own conscience, requires no enforcer, and was taught to you as devotion.

THE UNANSWERED QUESTION

Samaya forbids criticizing the lama. Who wrote the exemption for the lama's own conduct — and where is it published?

The widest gap between word and record

THEY SAY	THE RECORD SHOWS	RECEIPT
Criticizing the guru (the student's root teacher) breaks samaya and endangers you.	The Dalai Lama has publicly told students to expose abusive teachers: after a 1993 meeting with him, Western teachers agreed that a student should confront an abusive teacher and, if he does not reform, make the conduct public, and in a later talk the Dalai Lama said such teachers' names should be published [5] [18].	LEADERSHIP STATEMENT

One cost of leaving, beside its denial

COST	DOCUMENTED?	DETAIL	THE OFFICIAL DENIAL
Spiritual threat (samaya breach)	Yes, it is doctrinally explicit.	The taught consequences include vajra hell for criticizing or leaving the guru.	“It's a description of karma, not a threat.”

The strongest objection, answered

The objection. You are attacking a tradition that survived attempted annihilation, and doing China's work.

What is true in it. The persecution was and is severe, monasteries were destroyed, and Beijing's assertion of authority over reincarnation is a live act of religious capture. This profile leads with that.

The answer. And the two central abuse findings came from investigations the organizations commissioned themselves. The Dalai Lama has publicly told students to expose abusive teachers and, in a later talk, said their names should be published [5]. Following that advice is not doing Beijing's work; it is following the summit of the tradition.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Try answering the unanswered question yourself: *Samaya forbids criticizing the lama. Who wrote the exemption for the lama's own conduct — and where is it published?* If you can't, who could, and would asking them be welcome? How an institution reacts to a fair question often tells you more than the answer does.

04 What healthy looks like here

BEFORE YOU READ

What genuinely works in Tibetan Buddhism, stated first and separately from any critique. That is a standing rule of this book: no tradition is reduced to its worst documented moments. Anything criticized later is measured against the best of what is described here.

> Tibetan Buddhism is Vajrayana (tantric) Buddhism of the Tibetan cultural world and its global diaspora. It is built on guru-centered tantric practice and reincarnate-lama (tulku) institutions, and it has a globally beloved figurehead in the Dalai Lama.

Healthy practice here looks like the Dalai Lama's own public statements that students should expose abusive teachers, sanghas that commissioned and published independent investigations, and reform teachers who make ethics a prerequisite to tantra [5].

Some of that standard is already on the record. In December 2016 the Dalai Lama awarded the geshema (the highest Gelug monastic degree) to 20 nuns, the first awarded to Tibetan nuns [6]. The UK charity of Rigpa files public accounts [10]. The Rigpa and Shambhala investigations were commissioned by the organizations themselves [12]. Each is recorded here as credit.

Sources for this section: [1] [2] [5] [6] [10]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

A bias check before the critique. People tend to read criticism of their own group as an attack and criticism of other groups as simply true. Social psychologists call this in-group bias; it shows up even when the groups are assigned at random (Tajfel's "minimal group" experiments, 1971). If you belong here, did this section feel fair? If you don't, did anything in it surprise you? The surprise is a rough measure of what you had assumed.

05 History

BEFORE YOU READ

A dated timeline and a few moments where the direction changed. Dates matter because they show that most rules had a beginning. A rule that began in a particular year, for a particular reason, is a rule that can be examined, and sometimes retired.

Buddhism entered Tibet from the 7th century. Monastic mass-institutionalization made lamas Tibet's governing class. The tulku system, in which a recognized child is identified as the reincarnation of a dead lama, created reincarnation-based succession of institutional property. The 1959 exile globalized the tradition.

Timeline

HISTORY AT A GLANCE



Numbered markers match the timeline below; spacing is proportional to the years.

1 7TH–9TH C. CE

Buddhism enters Tibet under royal sponsorship; Padmasambhava tradition

Imported religion allied to monarchy from the outset.

2 11TH–15TH C.

Second diffusion; Sakya, Kagyu, Nyingma, and later Gelug schools form

Competing monastic institutions with land, tenants, and armies.

3 13TH C.

Tulku (reincarnate lama) system begins with the Karmapa line

Property and authority now pass through recognized rebirth — an institution unique in world religion.

4 1642–1950

Fifth Dalai Lama establishes Gaden Phodrang (the Dalai Lamas' governing institution); monastic government of Tibet

Clergy govern a state; monasteries hold estates and serf-like labor obligations. ACADEMIC SOURCE

5 1950–1959

Chinese annexation; 1959 uprising; Dalai Lama flees to India

The institution is severed from its territory and its economy.

6 1960S–1980S

Exile reconstruction; first Western transmission (Trungpa, Sogyal, and others)

Tantric guru relationships transplanted into cultures with no communal checks.

7 1966–1976

Cultural Revolution devastates Tibetan monasteries

Catastrophic external persecution — the context every internal critique must hold alongside.

8 1995

Beijing detains the Dalai Lama's recognized Panchen Lama (the second-ranking lama of the Gelug school); installs its own

The state seizes the recognition machinery itself. GOVERNMENT REPORT

9 2007

PRC State Administration for Religious Affairs Order No. 5 requires government approval for reincarnations

A government legislates who may be reborn. OFFICIAL POLICY

10 2011–PRESENT

Dalai Lama's succession statements; Beijing insists on its own approval

The next succession is a live geopolitical contest over sacred authority.

11 2017–2019

Independent investigations find abuse by Sogyal Rinpoche (founder of Rigpa, 2018) and sexual misconduct by Sakyong Mipham (head of Shambhala, 2019)

The Rigpa report records samaya as a pressure to stay silent; the Shambhala report records a power imbalance. INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

Moments in the room

MAY 1995 — A SIX-YEAR-OLD DISAPPEARS

Three days after the Dalai Lama recognised Gedhun Choekyi Nyima as the eleventh Panchen Lama, the child and his family were taken into Chinese custody. He has not been seen publicly since. The state installed its own candidate.

Why it matters. A child was removed from the world because of a recognition ritual he was too young to consent to. Whatever else is disputed on this page, this is not.

2007 — THE STATE LEGISLATES ON REINCARNATION

China's State Administration for Religious Affairs Order No. 5 required government approval for the recognition of reincarnate lamas — an officially atheist state claiming jurisdiction over rebirth.

Why it matters. The most literal example in this codex of an institution asserting authority over something it does not believe exists, because the authority is the point and the belief is not.

JULY 2025 — THE SUCCESSION STATEMENT

The Dalai Lama declared that the institution will continue and that his own Gaden Phodrang Trust holds sole authority to recognise the fifteenth. Beijing immediately restated its own claim.

Why it matters. The Dalai Lama's Trust and the Chinese state now hold competing procedures for appointing a child to an office he cannot resign. Whoever wins, the child's position is

the same.

Sources for this section: 1 2 3 7 8

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Pick one rule that shapes your week and look for it on the timeline. If it has a start date, it was decided by people at a particular moment, for reasons of that moment. Were you taught it as timeless? What would it mean for you if it turned out to be younger than your grandparents' grandparents?

06 Branches & variants

BEFORE YOU READ

Tibetan Buddhism is not one bloc. This section maps the main branches and variants, so that nothing documented about one community is read as true of all of them.

Tibetan Buddhism has four main schools, the Nyingma, Kagyu, Sakya and Gelug. Bön is a related Tibetan tradition, and there are numerous Western organizations under individual teachers.

SCHOOL	WHERE AUTHORITY SITS	ON THIS PAGE'S QUESTIONS
Gelug	Authority sits with the Dalai Lama, whose school this is and whose Gaden Phodrang institution dates from 1642 [8]	The Dalai Lama says the Gaden Phodrang Trust alone will recognize his successor (2025) [4]
Kagyu	Authority sits with the Karmapa, whose line is the first reincarnation (tulku) line, from the 13th century [8]	Two rival Karmapas were recognized, in 1992 and 1994 [8 21]
Nyingma	Authority sits with lamas and lineages, and this is the school of Rigpa's founder [1 10]	An independent investigation into Rigpa took place in 2018 [1]
Sakya	Authority sits with the Sakya throne-holder [8]	—
Western organizations	Authority sits with a founding teacher and a board, as in Rigpa, Shambhala and others [1 2]	Independent investigations found misconduct in both [1 2]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

If you know one community of Tibetan Buddhism, you know one community. Most bad generalizations about a religion, and most unfair defenses of it, come from treating one branch as the whole. Which branch is the one you picture when you hear the name? Is that picture yours, or one you were given by news coverage or by the community itself?

07 Structure

BEFORE YOU READ

The organizational chart: how many people and institutions there are, where authority sits, who holds the top office, and who holds what beneath it. The question to keep in mind is simple: if the person at the top got something badly wrong, what written procedure exists to correct or remove them?

Size and shape

Adherents	Tibetan Buddhism has an estimated ~10–20 million adherents within the Tibetan cultural sphere, plus several hundred thousand to low millions of convert practitioners globally (estimates vary widely). **ACADEMIC SOURCE**
Regions	The tradition is found in the Tibet Autonomous Region and Tibetan areas of China, Nepal, Bhutan, Mongolia, Ladakh and Sikkim (India), Russian Buryatia/Kalmykia/Tuva, plus Western convert centers.
Trend	The tradition is under heavy state restriction inside China, the exile institutions face funding and succession uncertainty, and Western convert numbers plateaued after the scandals of 2017–2019. **PATTERN OBSERVED**

Participation	The abuse cases documented on this page, Rigpa and Shambhala, involve Western students who took tantric commitments as adults; whether convert practitioners are over-represented among abuse cases is not established here.

Authority

- Authority rests on the root guru (the student's principal teacher), sealed by samaya vows; on tulku estates (labrang) that hold property across incarnations; and on lineage heads with transnational followings.
- The samaya structure — cosmic penalties for criticizing the guru after initiation — is the tradition's highest-risk mechanism. The Sogyal Rinpoche/Rigpa independent investigation of 2018 records it INVESTIGATIVE REPORT; the Shambhala/Sakyong investigation of 2019 found a power imbalance between the leader and his students, and no source cited on this page shows it naming samaya INVESTIGATIVE REPORT.

The top of the chain

> The next decade will stage the clearest apex fight in world religion: two competing procedures for one throne, one set by the Dalai Lama's Trust and one claimed by the Chinese state.

OFFICE	WHO SITS IN IT NOW	CHOSEN BY	REMOVABLE BY
The Dalai Lama	Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th, born 1935, sits in it. In July 2025, days before his 90th birthday, he declared that the institution will continue and that his Gaden Phodrang Trust alone holds authority to recognize the 15th.	The recognition ritual is controlled by the predecessor's own trust.	Nobody can remove him. The office is located in the man.
The counter-claim	The People's Republic of China asserts state approval over reincarnation under its 2007 Order No. 5, and maintains its own Panchen Lama — installed after the recognized child, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, was taken into custody at age six in 1995 and has not been seen since	The state chooses the office-holder.	The state can remove the office-holder.
The Karmapa	There have been two recognized claimants since 1994, the first recognized in 1992, a live demonstration that recognition follows the recognizers.	Each was chosen by rival regents (senior lamas acting for the lineage): Situ and Gyaltsab Rinpoches for the 1992 claimant, Shamar Rinpoche for the 1994 claimant [21].	Nobody can remove either.

THE TELL

Whoever wins the coming succession, the outcome is the same: a child appointed to a throne he cannot resign.

Who holds what

ENTITY	TYPE	HOLDER	HOLDS	WHY IT MATTERS TO YOU	RECEIPT
PRC State Administration for Religious Affairs	State organ	Chinese government officials	It holds legal authority to approve recognitions of reincarnate lamas.	A government decides who your religion's next leader is.	OFFICIAL POLICY · Order No. 5, 2007
Tulku estates (labrang)	Inherited institutional property	Estate administrators across incarnations	It holds property and authority transmitted by recognition rather than by will.	A child's entire life is assigned before he can speak on it.	ACADEMIC SOURCE

Rigpa and its founder	Organization, investigated	Independent investigation commissioned by the organization confirmed abuse by its founder	A global network built on donated labor and fees	The report confirmed abuse by the founder and found senior figures who knew and did not act; it records students taught that breaking samaya meant vajra hell and feeling pressure to keep it [19].	**INVESTIGATIVE REPORT** · Lewis Silkin report, 2018
Shambhala and its leadership	Organization, investigated	Investigation commissioned by the organization found misconduct by its leader more likely than not in two cases	Centres, land, and a decades-long membership	The Interim Board that released the report said Shambhala's Care and Conduct structures and reporting processes had not been adequate [20].	**INVESTIGATIVE REPORT** · Wickwire Holm report, 2019
The detained Panchen Lama recognition	State capture of succession	The child recognized in 1995 has not been seen publicly since	It holds the recognition machinery itself.	A six-year-old was disappeared over religious authority.	**GOVERNMENT REPORT** · UN human rights reporting

Western sangha funding streams	Revenue	Centre boards and exile institutions	It holds donation flows from Western students to centers and exile institutions.	Whether your giving is accounted for depends on whether the center publishes accounts; this page cites public accounts only for Rigpa UK [10].	PATTERN OBSERVED

Succession watch

OFFICE	NOW	MECHANISM	PREDICTION	WHAT WOULD FALSIFY IT
The Dalai Lama	Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th, born 1935, is in office, and his 2025 statement affirms continuation via his own trust.	The recognition ritual is controlled by the predecessor's trust, and a rival state procedure is asserted under PRC Order No. 5 (2007).	Two recognitions, two children, and two competing authorities. The codex predicts both proceed, and that neither child is consulted about either.	A single agreed recognition, or a decision that the institution ends, would falsify it.

Sources for this section: [3] [4] [7] [8] [9] [10] [19] [20] [21]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

The Dalai Lama's office, the page notes, is "located in the man." In July 2025 he declared that the institution will continue, and that his own Gaden Phodrang Trust alone holds the authority to recognize the 15th. Beijing claims that authority too. For a Western student, the more immediate structure is simpler: your lama, your center's board, and the samaya vow that binds you. If your lama did harm, the page asks, what does your vow allow you to do?

08 Law & state here

BEFORE YOU READ

What states actually do. That includes how they fund, protect, regulate or enforce the tradition, and which outside body, if any, can compel an answer from it. For most readers, this is where the institution meets their own passport.

COUNTRY	WHAT THE LAW DOES	THE ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTION
China	Order No. 5 (2007) requires state approval for the recognition of reincarnated lamas [3]	The Panchen Lama recognized by the Dalai Lama was taken with his family in 1995, aged six, and has not been seen since [7]

United States	The Tibetan Policy and Support Act (2020) makes it US policy that succession is for Tibetan Buddhists alone, and authorizes sanctions on Chinese officials who interfere [12] [13]	—
United Kingdom	Charity law applies to registered dharma organizations [11]	The Charity Commission permanently removed a Rigpa trustee in 2019 for failing to act on allegations of abuse [11]
Canada / US	Civil law applies, and Shambhala commissioned its own investigation [2]	The investigator found sexual misconduct by its leader "more likely than not" in two cases (2019) [2]

Who can compel an answer

Charity regulators can compel an answer from Western dharma organizations, because registration is what gave the Charity Commission a statutory inquiry into Rigpa, and so can civil courts. Lineage authority itself has no external address, which is why the corporate wrapper is the handle.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Three governments have put this tradition into law. China's Order No. 5 (2007) requires state approval to recognize a reincarnated lama. The U.S. Tibetan Policy and Support Act (2020) says succession is for Tibetan Buddhists alone. In the UK, the Charity Commission permanently removed a Rigpa trustee in 2019 for failing to act on abuse allegations. If you practice at a registered center, the regulator is your protection too. Do you know which body regulates yours?

09 Money

BEFORE YOU READ

Where the money comes from, how each flow is justified, how it can be used to control, and who benefits. Read it the way you would read any organization you give to: what is disclosed, what is not, and who decides.

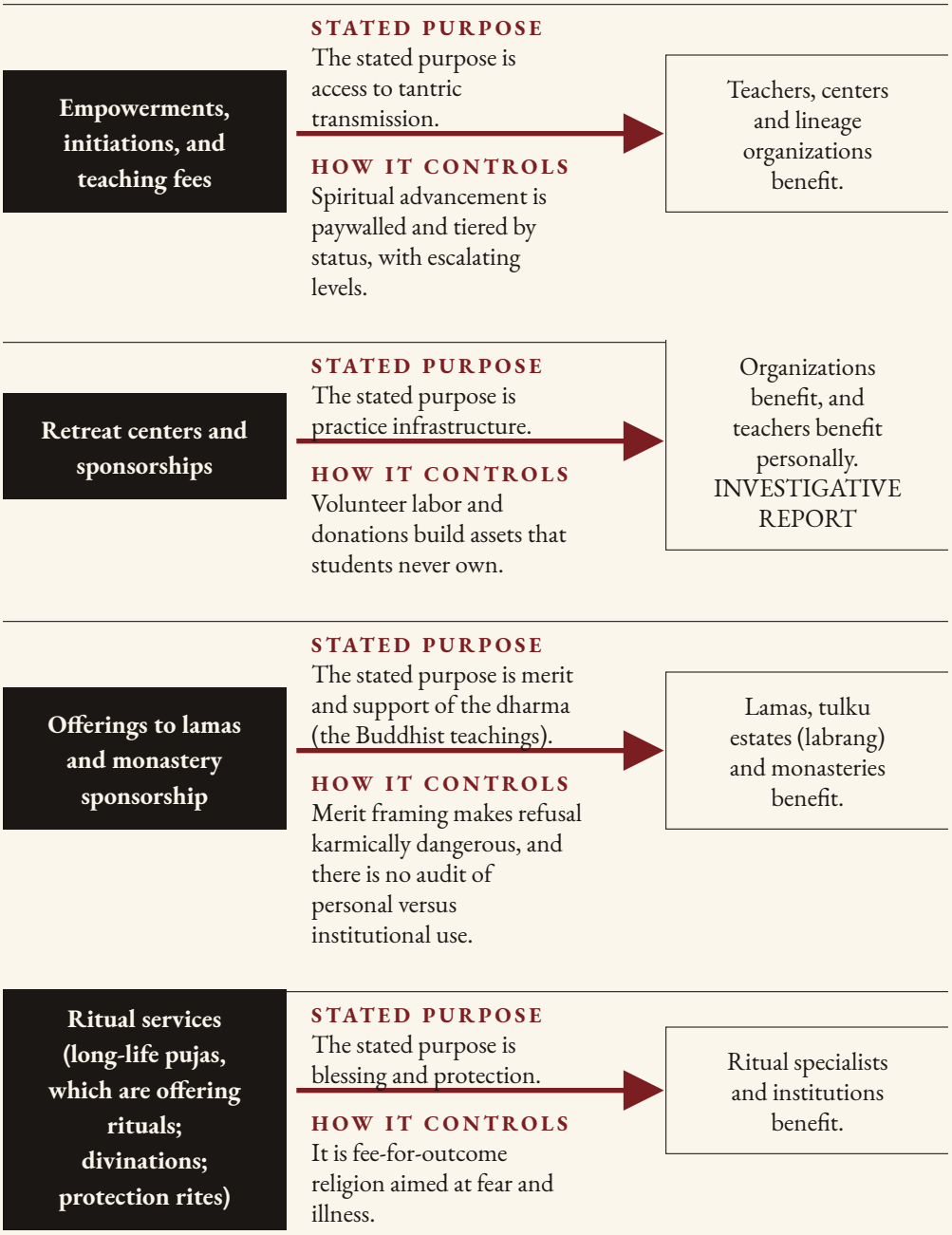
Where it comes from

- The money comes from empowerment and teaching fees, retreat economies, center dues and estate endowments. Western sanghas are major funding sources for exile institutions.
- China's interest is the largest money-and-power fact: Beijing asserts state control over reincarnation itself (including the next Dalai Lama) to capture the institution's authority. **OFFICIAL POLICY** · PRC Order No. 5, 2007

Follow the money

FLOW	STATED PURPOSE	HOW IT CONTROLS	WHO BENEFITS
Empowerments, initiations, and teaching fees	The stated purpose is access to tantric transmission.	Spiritual advancement is paywalled and tiered by status, with escalating levels.	Teachers, centers and lineage organizations benefit.
Retreat centers and sponsorships	The stated purpose is practice infrastructure.	Volunteer labor and donations build assets that students never own.	Organizations benefit, and teachers benefit personally. INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
Offerings to lamas and monastery sponsorship	The stated purpose is merit and support of the dharma (the Buddhist teachings).	Merit framing makes refusal karmically dangerous, and there is no audit of personal versus institutional use.	Lamas, tulku estates (labrang) and monasteries benefit.
Ritual services (long-life pujas, which are offering rituals; divinations; protection rites)	The stated purpose is blessing and protection.	It is fee-for-outcome religion aimed at fear and illness.	Ritual specialists and institutions benefit.

WHERE THE MONEY GOES, AND WHAT IT HOLDS



Not to scale. The table gives one figure, the German church tax of €6.75bn in 2025; the other flows are shown without amounts.

Pipelines this tradition shares

GRADED SPIRITUAL SERVICES

Source. The money comes from members paying per level of advancement.

Path. Student → Teacher, center or lineage organization (this page records no central organization)

Disclosed. Price lists are disclosed.

Hidden. Everything downstream of the price lists stays hidden.

MERIT ECONOMY

Source. The money comes from donors giving offerings for merit.

Path. Donor → Lama, monastery or tulku estate (labrang)

Disclosed. This page records no accounts for offerings to lamas or monasteries.

Hidden. Receipts and personal versus institutional use stay hidden.

RETREAT CENTERS AND STUDENT LABOR

Source. The money comes from volunteer labor and donations given to build retreat centers.

Path. Students → Retreat center → Assets held by the organization or teacher

Disclosed. The stated purpose, practice infrastructure.

Hidden. Who holds title to the centers and what they earn is not recorded on this page.

REINCARNATION AND SUCCESSION CONTROL

Source. The authority comes from the state's control over religious recognition.

Path. Government religious affairs body → Approved recognition → Institutional legitimacy and property

Disclosed. The regulation itself is disclosed.

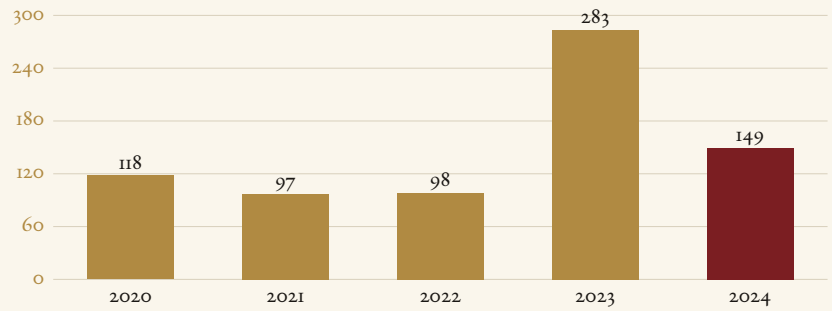
Hidden. Nothing: the regulation is published.

Sources for this section: [3]

The money comes from empowerment and teaching fees, retreat economies, center dues and estate endowments.

Money in numbers

RIGPA FELLOWSHIP (UK): INCOME



£ thousand, years to 31 December — The UK charity of the organization whose founder the 2018 investigation examined. Public because it is a registered charity. [10]

- **Rigpa UK, 2024:** income £149,190; spending £199,431 [10].

- **Empowerment fees, retreats and Western donations** fund both Western centres and exile institutions (see Money above).
- **China:** state control of reincarnation is the largest power-and-money fact on this page [3].

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Empowerments, teachings, retreats, center dues and endowments: Western sanghas are a major source of funding for exile institutions. That money supports real cultural survival. It also gives the teachers who receive it a lot of power. If you pay for an empowerment, do you know where the fee goes, and whether the center publishes accounts?

10 Genealogy

BEFORE YOU READ

Rules with a history. Each card asks the same three questions: what was this rule originally for, has that reason expired, and who benefits from the rule continuing anyway?

SAMAYA — VOWS BINDING THE STUDENT TO THE GURU

Origin. Samaya originates in Indian and Tibetan tantric literature, where transmission of dangerous practices required trust and secrecy. OFFICIAL POLICY · tantric commentaries

What it was for. In a monastic setting with a community of practitioners, senior monks, and a village that knew everyone, the vow bound a relationship that others could observe and correct.

Why that reason expired. Transplanted to Western students with no monastery, no village, and no senior monk within a continent, samaya became an isolation device. Students were taught that criticizing the guru risks vajra hell. The Rigpa investigation of 2018 recorded that witnesses were taught that breaking samaya meant vajra hell and that many felt pressure to keep it [19]; the Shambhala investigation of 2019 found a power imbalance, and this page does not show that it names samaya. INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

Who benefits now. Abusive teachers benefit, absolutely and uniquely. This mechanism does not require a single enforcer: the student polices themselves, in terror, for free.

THE TULKU SYSTEM

Origin. The system began with the Karmapa line in the 13th century as a method of transmitting authority and property across generations. ACADEMIC SOURCE

What it was for. A solution to a real institutional problem: celibate leaders cannot produce heirs, so estates and authority needed a succession mechanism. Reincarnation supplied one.

Why that reason expired. It is a property-transfer system dressed as metaphysics, and its cost is paid by children. A recognized child is removed from his family and his entire life is assigned before he can speak on it. Beijing then seized the recognition machinery itself, which demonstrates precisely what kind of asset it is. OFFICIAL POLICY · PRC Order No. 5, 2007

Who benefits now. Labrang estates and lineage institutions benefit, and now the Chinese state does too, having legislated its own approval over who may be reborn.

'CRAZY WISDOM' AND SKILLFUL MEANS

Origin. It originates in hagiographic accounts (devotional biographies) of unconventional Indian and Tibetan masters, which 20th-century Western transmission generalized into a category. ACADEMIC SOURCE

What it was for. It expressed the recognition that a teacher might act unexpectedly (skillful means, the idea that a teacher may use unconventional methods suited to the student) to disrupt a student's fixed views.

Why that reason expired. It became a retroactive justification with no limiting principle. Any conduct — sexual, financial, violent — can be reclassified after the fact as teaching. A doctrine that can excuse anything explains nothing.

Who benefits now. The teacher benefits, exclusively. Note that crazy wisdom has never once been used to explain a teacher giving away his own money.

CONSORT PRACTICE AS ACCESS TO STUDENTS' BODIES

Origin. Tantric literature includes consort practice (ritual practice with a sexual partner); its modern deployment by specific teachers is documented in independent investigations.

INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

What it was for. Whatever the textual context, it presupposed advanced practitioners in a supervised environment, not new students in a foreign country.

Why that reason expired. Students were taught that refusing a guru's advance endangered their own attainment. That is coercion with a doctrinal enforcement mechanism, and calling it practice does not change what it is.

Who benefits now. Named individuals benefit, as documented by investigations their own organizations commissioned.

Sources for this section: 1 2 19

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

The expired-reason test works on any rule. Take one you follow or enforce, name what it was originally for, and ask whether that reason still exists. If it doesn't, and the rule survives anyway, the section's last question is the one that matters to you: who benefits from it continuing?

11 Reach

BEFORE YOU READ

How far the institution's authority extends into three private areas: what members may read and hear, how children are raised and schooled, and decisions about their own bodies.

Information

- Samaya vows attach spiritual catastrophe to criticizing the guru after initiation — an information-control mechanism that operates on the student's own conscience. **OFFICIAL POLICY** · tantric commentaries / INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
- Tantric secrecy legitimately restricts teaching content, and also conveniently shields conduct from outside evaluation.
- In China, monastic education, images of the Dalai Lama, and communication with exile institutions are restricted by law. **GOVERNMENT REPORT**

Children

- Recognized tulku children are removed from families for monastic training, with life course determined before consent — the practice at the heart of the system. ACADEMIC SOURCE
- Monastic boarding schools in exile communities have documented abuse and inadequate safeguarding in some institutions. INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
- The Panchen Lama recognized in 1995 was detained as a six-year-old and has not been seen publicly since — a child disappeared over religious authority. GOVERNMENT REPORT

Bodies

- The hierarchy is male-dominated and nuns' institutions have historically been underfunded, though geshema degrees were first awarded to Tibetan nuns in 2016, which is real reform worth naming. OFFICIAL POLICY
- 'Consort' practices have been used by teachers to obtain sex from students under religious framing; the Rigpa and Shambhala investigations documented this pattern. INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
- Students were taught that resisting a guru's sexual advance risked their own spiritual attainment — coercion built directly into doctrine as taught by those teachers. FORMER MEMBER TESTIMONY

Sources for this section: [6] [7]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

If you are a parent, this is the section about your children: what they may read, what they are taught about their bodies, and who else has a say in their schooling. Ask what your child would need to do at sixteen to hear the strongest case against what they were taught. Would they be allowed? Would they know it existed?

Tantric secrecy legitimately restricts teaching content, and also conveniently shields conduct from outside evaluation.



12

The 30 techniques

How the thirty techniques are established here

1	17	12
DOCUMENTED	TAUGHT	CULTURAL

STAGE 1 Idealize	1 Love Bombing CULTURAL	2 Weaponized Generosity CULTURAL		
STAGE 2 Hook	3 Future Faking TAUGHT	4 Hoovering TAUGHT		
STAGE 3 Devalue	5 Devaluation TAUGHT	6 Gaslighting TAUGHT	7 Double Bind TAUGHT	
STAGE 4 Confuse	8 Intermittent Reinforcement TAUGHT	9 Moving the Goalposts TAUGHT	10 Strategic Ambiguity TAUGHT	11 Projection TAUGHT
	12 DARVO DOCUMENTED	13 Normalization / Desensitization TAUGHT		
STAGE 5 Isolate	14 Isolation CULTURAL	15 Triangulation CULTURAL		

STAGE 6 Extract	16 Flying Monkeys **CULTURAL**	17 Smear Campaign **CULTURAL**	18 Silent Treatment / Stonewalling **CULTURAL**	19 Manufactured Consent **TAUGHT**
	20 Trauma Bonding **TAUGHT**	21 Learned Helplessness **TAUGHT**	22 Benevolent Control **TAUGHT**	23 Infantilization **TAUGHT**
	24 Identity Erosion **CULTURAL**	25 Spiritual Bypassing **TAUGHT**	26 Financial Control **TAUGHT**	
STAGE 7 Discard	27 Manufactured Crisis **CULTURAL**	28 Discard **CULTURAL**		
STAGE 8 Replace	29 Replacement **CULTURAL**	30 Plausible Deniability **CULTURAL**		

Thirty named techniques from domestic-abuse and social-psychology research, applied to institutions, in the eight stages of the cycle.

BEFORE YOU READ

A fixed checklist of thirty influence and control patterns from research on coercive control and social psychology, applied here to institutions rather than to individual people. Every entry carries an evidence grade. The grade matters more than the name of the technique: Codified or Documented means there is a paper trail; Contested means the claim is disputed.

Thirty named techniques from domestic-abuse and social-psychology research, applied to institutions, in the eight stages of the cycle. Each carries an evidence grade for this tradition.

Stage 1 · Idealize

You arrive with a need and are met with more warmth than you have had in years.

Robes, mantras, initiations, ancient lineage, secret teachings — and personal attention from a lama who says you have a karmic connection and a rare opportunity.

What it asks of you: Being told your meeting was destined is very effective. Ask whether you were also told the cost.

1 · Love Bombing

Overwhelming affection on arrival to create emotional dependency before terms are revealed.

How it shows here

- A seeker may be captivated by colorful ritual, mantras, initiations, robes, lineage, reincarnated masters, and the idea of receiving secret teachings.
- The guru-disciple relationship can create instant spiritual intimacy: the teacher sees your mind, your karma, your past-life connection, your potential enlightenment.
- The deeper demand often comes later: devotion to the lama, secrecy around teachings, tantric commitments, donations, retreats, and reframing discomfort as purification.

The strongest defense. Guru devotion is a traditional path requiring trust, not manipulation.

The counter. Trust without equal accountability is not spiritual depth. It is a power imbalance. If the teacher can define your resistance as ego, your confusion as karma, and your obedience as progress, then the relationship is structured to make the student lose every argument before speaking.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Personal attention from a lama and karmic-connection framing are relational and undocumented.

2 · Weaponized Generosity

Giving help that installs unspoken obligation.

How it shows here

- Tibetan Buddhist communities may offer blessings, empowerments, mantras, ceremonies, retreats, teacher access, lineage identity, and the feeling of entering an ancient esoteric path.
- Students may receive personal attention from a lama or senior students: "You have a karmic connection," "You are fortunate to meet the teachings," "This opportunity is rare."
- Generosity can turn into obligation through guru devotion, donations to the lama, retreat costs, sponsorships, ritual offerings, unpaid service, and pressure not to criticize the teacher.
- The student may be told that supporting the teacher or monastery creates merit, while questioning the structure creates negative karma.

The strongest defense. Supporting teachers and monasteries is traditional and creates merit.

The counter. Merit language becomes coercive when it shields power. If the student gives money, labor, secrecy, and obedience because refusal is framed as spiritual failure or karmic danger, then the offering is not free. It is tribute dressed as devotion.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Blessings, empowerments and teacher access are offered openly, and the obligation that follows from them is unwritten; it arises from guru devotion and merit framing as practiced.

Stage 2 · Hook

You are given a future that cannot be verified, and a rope for whenever you drift toward the door.

Liberation in one lifetime, a rare karmic connection with this teacher, a precious opportunity that may not come again. And retrieval offered as repair of samaya — a route back into the mandala (the circle of the teacher's community), conditional on recanting.

What it asks of you: Being told your meeting was destined and rare is a strong hook, because it makes leaving into cosmic waste.

3 · Future Faking

Promising a future that keeps you invested but never has to arrive.

How it shows here

- Tibetan Buddhism offers an enormous future architecture: enlightenment, bodhisattva vows, tantric realization, pure lands, reincarnation, bardo (the state between death and rebirth) navigation, merit accumulation, karmic purification, and guru connection across lifetimes.

- The student may be told that meeting the lama is unbelievably rare, the result of past-life merit, and possibly the most important opportunity of countless lifetimes.
- Empowerments and secret teachings create staged future access. You are not ready yet. You need preliminaries, vows, retreats, transmissions, offerings, purification, and guru devotion.
- If the teacher harms or humiliates students, the future frame absorbs it: this is wrathful compassion (harsh conduct understood as compassion), purification, ego-cutting, karmic ripening, or a test of devotion.
- The payout is cosmic and delayed. If realization does not occur in this life, the connection may bear fruit in future lives. That makes the promise impossible to disprove.

The strongest defense. Tantric paths require preparation, secrecy, and devotion because the practices are advanced.

The counter. Advanced teaching becomes future faking when secrecy and delay protect authority from scrutiny. If the lama controls the map, the milestones, the interpretation of harm, and the meaning of failure, then the student is not on a path. The student is inside a closed loop with incense.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> TAUGHT Liberation in one lifetime and the rarity of the opportunity are taught as the standard motivational frame.

4 · Hoovering

Pulling someone back after they've started to leave, through guilt, love, or fear.

How it shows here

- A student leaving a Tibetan Buddhist teacher may be told they are breaking samaya, damaging their karma, severing connection with the lama, or jeopardizing future lifetimes.
- The community may urge them to return to the guru, confess, purify, repair vows, receive advice, or stop listening to "confused" critics.
- If misconduct occurred, the harm may be reframed as wrathful compassion, purification, ego-cutting, or the student misunderstanding the teacher's enlightened activity.
- Senior students may become the hoovering agents: "You had such a rare karmic connection," "Don't waste this precious opportunity," "You may not meet the Dharma again for lifetimes."
- The fear is not merely social. It is cosmic: bad karma, broken vows, spiritual regression, future suffering.

The strongest defense. Tantric commitments are serious; students should not break vows carelessly.

The counter. A vow made inside unequal power is not sacred armor for the powerful. If fear of karmic catastrophe is used to pull someone back to an unsafe teacher, then samaya has become a spiritual hostage system.

EVIDENCE GRADE

TAUGHT Warnings that leaving breaks samaya and damages future lifetimes are taught as doctrine; the pressure on a leaver to return is applied by the community in practice.

Stage 3 · Devalue

You are taught that you are broken, that your perception is unreliable, and that both exits from the trap lead back inside.

Your doubt is obscuration, your discomfort is purification, your resistance is ego. Progress is measured by how much you accept.

What it asks of you: Notice that your discomfort has been redefined as evidence the treatment is working.

5 · Devaluation

Reducing your sense of worth so you become dependent on the institution for identity.

How it shows here

- Tibetan Buddhism can devalue through guru devotion, karmic hierarchy, tantric secrecy, and the idea that the student's ordinary perception is fundamentally deluded.
- The student may be told they cannot understand the guru's actions because their mind is obscured.
- Harmful behavior by a teacher can be reframed as wrathful compassion, skillful means, purification, or ego-cutting.
- The student's fear, anger, or disgust may be treated as proof of their spiritual immaturity.
- The guru becomes vast; the student becomes small. The teacher sees reality; the student sees projections.

The strongest defense. Guru devotion is part of a profound path that requires humility and trust.

The counter. Humility becomes devaluation when it flows only one direction. If the student must reinterpret their own pain as delusion while the guru is protected by mystical status, then devotion has become a system for making victims doubt the evidence of their own bodies.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> TAUGHT Obscuration, purification, and the student's insufficiency are taught as the mechanics of the path.

6 · Gaslighting

Making you doubt your own experience so you trust the institution's interpretation instead.

How it shows here

- A student says a lama exploited them, and senior students say, "You are misperceiving enlightened activity."
- Fear or disgust may be reframed as purification, karmic ripening, ego-clinging, or broken samaya.
- A teacher's cruelty can be called wrathful compassion.
- Students may be told their ordinary perception is too deluded to judge tantric methods.
- The guru's interpretation outranks the student's lived experience.

The strongest defense. Tantric Buddhism uses advanced methods that can look unconventional to ordinary perception.

The counter. That defense is exactly why the danger is so severe. If "ordinary perception" is automatically disqualified, then no abuse can be recognized from inside the system. The teacher becomes untouchable because the victim's reality is defined as delusion.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> TAUGHT The teaching that a student's ordinary perception is too deluded to judge the guru comes from samaya obligations that are explicit in tantric literature and is taught as part of guru devotion; the senior students' reply that the student is misperceiving is community practice, not text.

7 · Double Bind

A trap where both options lead to compliance. No exit serves you.

How it shows here

- Tantric students take samaya vows binding them to the guru — often before knowing what the guru will later ask. Break the vow: vajra hell. Keep it: obedience without limit. Ask to see the terms first: insufficient devotion.
- Seeing faults in the lama is taught as the student's impure perception. The worse the conduct, the greater the test of pure view. The evidence against him is reframed as evidence about you.
- Secrecy protects the teachings' power — and, structurally, protects the teacher's conduct from scrutiny. Speak: samaya breaker. Stay silent: accomplice.

The strongest defense. Guru yoga (the practice of devotion to the guru) is a sophisticated, consensual practice within a mature tradition; Westerners misread it.

The counter. Consent requires disclosure before the vow, a real exit after it, and the standing to name harm without cosmic threat. Remove those three and the sophistication is indistinguishable from entrapment — as multiple lineages' own reckonings since the 1990s have conceded.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> TAUGHT The samaya vow, its penalty of vajra hell, and the teaching that faults seen in the lama are the student's impure perception are taught as the terms of the path.

Stage 4 · Confuse

The rewards become unpredictable, the standard keeps moving, the answers stop meaning anything, and the accusation gets turned around.

Speak and you are a samaya-breaker under demonic influence, endangering yourself and the lineage. In documented cases, whistleblowers were shunned while the accused kept teaching.

What it asks of you: When the punishment for reporting exceeds the punishment for the act, you have found the institution's actual priority.

8 · Intermittent Reinforcement

Unpredictable reward that creates addictive emotional dependency.

How it shows here

- Empowerments, transmissions, and 'higher' teachings arrive on the lama's timetable — sometimes bestowed, sometimes withheld as 'not yet ripe' — and the withholding raises their price in devotion and donation.

- The lama alternates radiant warmth with wrathful severity, doctrinally pre-authorized as crazy wisdom; students learn that both fire and honey come from the same unpredictable hand, and attach harder to the hand.
- Signs of blessing — dreams, synchronicities, a glance at the throne — are harvested as confirmations; their absence means obscurations, purified by more practice, service, and offering.

The strongest defense. The teacher ripens each student individually; timing is compassion, not rationing.

The counter. Individualized timing administered with total discretion, zero transparency, and cosmic penalties for doubt is indistinguishable from rationing — and 'compassion' is what every unaccountable schedule calls itself.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> TAUGHT The timing of empowerments, including withholding them as 'not yet ripe', is set by each lama's discretion and not by any written rule; the crazy-wisdom framing that authorizes wrathful severity is taught, and the samaya teaching discourages students from objecting.

9 · Moving the Goalposts

The standard of success keeps shifting so you can never arrive.

How it shows here

- Students begin with meditation or teachings, then move into refuge, vows, empowerments, guru devotion, samaya, preliminary practices, retreats, offerings, secrecy, and unquestioned loyalty.
- If the student obeys the lama and suffers, the goalpost moves: they misunderstood devotion, lacked pure perception, resisted purification, or broke samaya internally.
- A person completes one level but is told the real teaching is later, deeper, secret, advanced, restricted, or available after more preparation.

The strongest defense. Tantric paths require gradual preparation and serious commitments.

The counter. Preparation becomes goalpost-moving when the promised clarity is always behind another vow, payment, retreat, or act of surrender. If the teacher controls both the test and the grading, the student never arrives.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> TAUGHT The sequence of vows, retreats and deeper teachings is set by each teacher; the rule that there is always a further level is taught in practice, and the samaya teaching discourages the student from objecting.

10 · Strategic Ambiguity

Language that sounds profound but means nothing specific — functioning as a shutdown to real questions.

How it shows here

- "Skillful means" can describe compassionate teaching or excuse cruelty, secrecy, sexual misconduct, humiliation, and financial pressure.
- Guru devotion is described as voluntary until the student resists; then samaya and karmic consequences appear.
- "Pure perception" is mystical when inspiring devotion and disciplinary when silencing victims.

The strongest defense. Tantric practice uses advanced methods that ordinary outsiders may misunderstand.

The counter. Advanced method becomes strategic ambiguity when no one can distinguish abuse from wisdom except the person accused of abuse. That is not esoteric depth. That is unreviewable power.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> TAUGHT Terms such as 'skillful means' and 'pure perception' are taught doctrine whose application is left to each teacher; the ambiguity rests on that teaching, and the samaya teaching discourages the student from objecting.

11 · Projection

Accusing the outside world of the exact thing the institution practices.

How it shows here

- A lama or senior student may accuse critics of broken samaya, ego, impure perception, or karmic obscuration while the teacher's misconduct is shielded by tantric status.
- Students are told their perception is deluded while the system refuses to examine how guru devotion can delude the community itself.
- A person naming abuse may be accused of harming the Dharma while the actual harm was done by the abuser and those who protected him.
- Secrecy is defended as sacred while functioning as concealment.

The strongest defense. Tantric relationships require pure perception and respect for samaya.

The counter. Pure perception becomes projection when it means seeing the teacher as pure and the victim as contaminated. If the student's pain is called impurity while the guru's harm is called wisdom, reality has been reversed completely.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> TAUGHT Accusing critics of broken samaya or impure perception applies a taught framework to the person who reports the conduct; the samaya obligation is explicit in tantric literature, but no written rule directs the accusation, which is community practice.

12 · DARVO

Deny the wrongdoing. Attack the person who raised it. Reverse victim and offender.

How it shows here

- A student reports sexual, financial, psychological, or spiritual abuse by a lama. The response may deny wrongdoing by calling it tantric method, wrathful compassion, purification, or the student's impure perception.
- Then the student is attacked for broken samaya, lack of devotion, ego, karmic obscuration, or harming the Dharma.
- The lama becomes the endangered spiritual master; the harmed student becomes the karmic danger to the lineage.
- Senior students may pressure the survivor to apologize, purify, or stop speaking publicly.
- The abuse is reframed as the student's failure to perceive enlightened activity correctly.

The strongest defense. Tantric practice is advanced and can be misunderstood by ordinary perception.

The counter. That defense is the perfect DARVO machine. If harm can always be called wisdom and pain can always be called impure perception, then the teacher can never be guilty and the student can never be trusted.

EVIDENCE GRADE

DOCUMENTED The Rigpa independent investigation of 2018, commissioned by the organization itself, found that proactive steps had been taken to discredit those raising concerns and judged a letter to a complainant to be an attempt at silencing him [19]. The Shambhala report is not shown on this page to document this response. *(sourced)*

13 · Normalization / Desensitization

Practices that would seem extreme to an outsider feel normal to insiders because they were installed before critical evaluation developed.

How it shows here

- Students are gradually normalized into guru devotion: first respect, then reverence, then vows, then samaya, then pure perception, then fear of karmic damage if they question.
- Secrecy becomes normal because teachings are "advanced," "tantric," "restricted," or "not for ordinary understanding."
- Humiliation, boundary violations, or exploitation may be reframed as wrathful compassion, ego-cutting, purification, or karmic ripening often enough that students stop trusting shock.
- Senior students model obedience, making newcomers assume discomfort is part of the path.

The strongest defense. Tantric practice requires preparation, secrecy, and trust in the guru.

The counter. Trust becomes desensitization when each new violation is introduced as a deeper teaching. If the student must become less alarmed to become more advanced, the path is training them out of self-protection.

EVIDENCE GRADE

TAUGHT Students are brought step by step into devotion and samaya by teaching and by the example of senior students; the samaya obligation is explicit in tantric literature, but the gradual order is taught in practice, not set by a written rule.

Stage 5 · Isolate

Your world narrows until every voice you hear is inside the system, and everything you came for now runs through a middleman.

Samaya binds you before you understand it. The inner circle mediates all access. Your practice, community, identity, and often relocation are all inside one organization.

What it asks of you: You took a vow whose penalty was described to you before its terms were.

14 · Isolation

Shrinking your world until the only voices you hear are inside the system.

How it shows here

- Tibetan Buddhism can isolate through guru devotion, samaya, secrecy, lineage loyalty, retreat commitments, senior-student hierarchies, and fear of karmic consequences.
- Students may be told that outsiders cannot understand tantric practice and that speaking publicly about concerns breaks trust or damages the Dharma.
- Criticism of the lama may be framed as broken samaya, impure perception, or karmic danger, making outside support feel spiritually unsafe.
- Retreat environments can intensify dependency: the teacher, lineage, rituals, vows, and senior students become the person's entire interpretive world.
- The secrecy of tantric teachings can be used to keep abuse hidden: outsiders cannot judge, insiders cannot speak, and victims are told their perception is deluded.

The strongest defense. Tantric teachings require secrecy, preparation, and trust because they are advanced.

The counter. Secrecy becomes isolation when it protects power instead of practice. If students cannot consult outsiders, name harm, or evaluate the teacher without fear of karmic disaster, then the lineage has become a closed room.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL Inner-circle mediation of access to the teacher is organizational practice with no written rule.

15 · Triangulation

Inserting intermediaries between you and the thing you came for, so the institution is always in the middle.

How it shows here

- Tibetan Buddhism triangulates through lama, lineage, samaya, senior students, protectors, tantric vows, reincarnation narratives, and karmic consequences.
- If a student questions the lama, senior disciples may say, "You are breaking samaya," "You do not understand tantric method," "You are damaging your future lives."
- The lama is protected by lineage: criticism of one teacher becomes criticism of the Dharma, the lineage masters, the transmission, and the student's own rare karmic connection.
- Students are compared to devoted disciples who surrender completely and see the guru as Buddha.
- Harm is triangulated through karma: discomfort, fear, or humiliation may be called purification rather than violation.
- The person is pressured not only by the living community but by imagined future births, vows, unseen beings, and cosmic consequences.

The strongest defense. Tantric Buddhism requires deep trust in guru, lineage, vows, and transmission.

The counter. Trust becomes triangulation when it surrounds the student with invisible threats. If the lama, lineage, vows, senior students, karma, and future lives are all used to prevent one honest no, then devotion has become spiritual encirclement.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL Inner-circle mediation of access to the teacher is organizational practice with no written rule.

Stage 6 · Extract

Now the harvest: your labor, your money, your identity, your silence, your children's schooling, your capacity to trust yourself.

Empowerment and initiation fees in escalating tiers. Retreat centers built with donated labor and money students never own. Offerings to lamas framed as merit, refusal framed as karmic danger. And samaya, which makes criticism of the teacher a matter of your own damnation.

What it asks of you: You were taught the penalty for speaking before you were taught what you were agreeing to. That order is the whole mechanism.

16 · Flying Monkeys

The community enforces the institution's norms without being asked — mobilized by culture, not memos.

How it shows here

- A student questioning a lama may be approached by senior disciples warning about samaya, karmic consequences, impure perception, and harm to the Dharma.
- The lama does not need to silence the critic directly; devoted students do it for him.
- Abuse may be reframed by others as wrathful compassion, purification, ego-cutting, or advanced method.
- Students may be pressured not to speak publicly because it could damage the lineage, the teacher, or their future lifetimes.

The strongest defense. Tantric commitments are serious, and senior students may help protect the integrity of the path.

The counter. Protection becomes FLYING MONKEY behavior when senior students protect the lama from accountability. If the community uses vows, karma, and lineage to make the harmed person afraid to speak, devotion has become a containment squad.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Senior students' enforcement of samaya warnings is community practice, set by no written rule; the merit framing it draws on is taught.

17 · Smear Campaign

Rewriting your character after departure to protect the institution from the implications of your leaving.

How it shows here

- Critics of a lama may be smeared as samaya-breakers, impure, ego-driven, karmically obscured, faithless, or harmful to the lineage.
- Abuse reports may be reframed as misunderstanding tantric method.
- Senior students may warn others not to listen to the critic because they are spiritually dangerous.
- The victim's perception is attacked so the guru's status remains untouched.

The strongest defense. Tantric commitments and lineage integrity are serious.

The counter. Lineage integrity becomes smear when it protects the teacher by contaminating the victim. If the person harmed by the lama becomes the danger to the Dharma, reality has been reversed.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The smearing of critics as samaya-breakers is carried out by communities in practice, set by no written rule; the samaya framing it draws on is taught.

18 · Silent Treatment / Stonewalling

Refusing to engage with legitimate questions in order to maintain control.

How it shows here

- A student questions a lama's misconduct and is told not to break samaya, not to damage the Dharma, and not to misunderstand tantric methods.
- Senior students may say the matter is too advanced, too karmic, too secret, or too subtle for public discussion.
- Complaints disappear into lineage loyalty, private councils, secrecy, and spiritual reinterpretation.
- The victim waits while the teacher remains enthroned.

The strongest defense. Tantric matters require discretion, secrecy, and careful understanding.

The counter. Secrecy becomes stonewalling when it shields the powerful from being examined. If only insiders may judge, and insiders are trained to protect the lama, the process is not sacred. It is sealed.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Senior students' deflection of complaints as too advanced or too secret is community practice, set by no written rule; the tantric secrecy it invokes is taught.

19 · Manufactured Consent

Creating the appearance of choice when the conditions of choice were shaped before you could evaluate them.

How it shows here

- Students consent to vows, empowerments, secrecy, and guru devotion before fully understanding samaya, power imbalance, or future fear of karmic consequences.
- A student "chooses" not to report harm because doing so may be framed as breaking samaya or damaging the Dharma.
- Devotion to the lama is framed as spiritually advanced, making resistance appear immature.
- The teacher controls the meaning of consent by defining obedience as pure perception.

The strongest defense. Tantric commitments require explicit vows and preparation.

The counter. A vow is not fully informed if the student does not understand the exit cost until after taking it. If leaving later threatens karma, community, lineage, and future lives, the original yes has been retroactively weaponized.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> TAUGHT The vow is explicit in tantric literature, but that its penalty is explained after it is taken comes from former-member testimony and is a matter of teaching practice, not of any rule.

20 · Trauma Bonding

The wound and the bandage come from the same hand.

How it shows here

- The lama is idealized as a rare karmic connection, then may frighten students with samaya, karma, rebirth, or loss of the path.
- A student is destabilized by humiliation, secrecy, sexual boundary violations, or financial pressure, then soothed through blessings, empowerments, rituals, and senior-student reassurance.
- Harm is reframed as purification or ego-cutting, so relief comes by trusting the source of harm more deeply.
- The bond intensifies because the teacher is both danger and salvation.

The strongest defense. Tantric practice uses powerful methods that require trust and devotion.

The counter. Devotion becomes TRAUMA BONDING when the student must interpret injury as blessing to remain spiritually safe. If the person who wounds you also defines your karma, vows, and liberation, the attachment is not freedom. It is spiritual hostage-taking.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> TAUGHT The alternation of severity and blessing is taught through crazy wisdom and samaya, and the soothing after harm is community practice; no written rule directs it.

21 · Learned Helplessness

Teaching you that your own judgment is unreliable until you stop trusting it entirely.

How it shows here

- A student cannot challenge the lama without being warned about samaya, karma, impure perception, or future-life consequences.
- Harmful behavior is explained as tantric method, purification, or ego-cutting.
- The student's perception is repeatedly invalidated until they stop trusting it.
- The exit cost is cosmic, so the student freezes.

The strongest defense. Tantric practice requires deep commitment and careful interpretation.

The counter. Commitment becomes LEARNED HELPLESSNESS when leaving feels spiritually catastrophic. If the student believes every escape may damage lifetimes of karma, the cage has been extended beyond death.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> TAUGHT The warning that every escape damages karma is taught as doctrine; the repeated invalidation of the student's perception is practiced by senior students and recorded in no rule.

22 · Benevolent Control

Control wrapped in the language of care, so that resisting the control feels like rejecting the love.

How it shows here

- Guru devotion is framed as the highest form of spiritual care: the lama sees what the student cannot.
- Samaya, secrecy, vows, and pure perception are presented as protective structures for advanced practice.
- Students may be told that questioning the lama damages karma or spiritual progress.
- Senior students may urge silence for the sake of the lineage, the Dharma, and the student's own future lives.

The strongest defense. Tantric practice requires trust, secrecy, and devotion because it is powerful.

The counter. Trust becomes BENEVOLENT CONTROL when it removes accountability from the teacher. If the lama can harm and the student is told silence protects their karma, then care has become spiritual blackmail.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> TAUGHT Guru devotion is taught as the highest form of spiritual care, and samaya and secrecy are presented as protective; the control itself is exercised in practice.

23 · Infantilization

Positioning the adult believer as permanently childlike and dependent on institutional authority.

How it shows here

- The lama may be treated as spiritually superior in a way that makes adult students childlike before him.
- Students may be told they cannot understand the teacher's actions because their perception is impure.
- Samaya and guru devotion can make leaving feel like a child betraying a parent.
- Senior students may manage newer students' doubts as developmental failures.

The strongest defense. Guru devotion requires humility before advanced realization.

The counter. Humility becomes INFANTILIZATION when the student's adult perception is permanently disqualified. If the guru is always the knowing parent and the student always the confused child, devotion has become dependency training.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> TAUGHT The teaching that the student's perception is impure and that leaving is like a child betraying a parent is taught as part of guru devotion; no written rule assigns it.

24 · Identity Erosion

Gradually replacing your identity with a role the institution provides, until you can't separate who you are from where you belong.

How it shows here

- Student identity can be absorbed into guru devotion, lineage, samaya, vows, empowerment, pure perception, and karmic connection.
- The lama becomes the axis of self-understanding: what the student feels, fears, resists, or wants is interpreted through the guru relationship.
- Personal perception is repeatedly downgraded as impure, karmically obscured, or egoic.
- The student's old identity is replaced by tantric identity: devoted disciple, vow-holder, lineage servant, karmic beneficiary.
- Leaving feels not like changing communities but severing lifetimes of meaning.

The strongest defense. Tantric practice transforms ordinary identity into awakened identity.

The counter. Transformation becomes IDENTITY EROSION when ordinary perception is destroyed before accountability exists. If the guru becomes the interpreter of your self, karma, fear, sexuality, devotion, and future lives, you have not transcended identity. You have handed it over.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Identity built around guru relationship and lineage position, with no written requirement.

25 · Spiritual Bypassing

Using spiritual language to avoid engaging with real pain, real questions, and real accountability.

How it shows here

- Abuse by a lama may be bypassed as wrathful compassion, purification, skillful means, or ego-cutting.
- Fear and disgust may be bypassed as impure perception.
- Reporting harm may be bypassed as broken samaya or damage to the Dharma.
- Secrecy becomes spiritualized avoidance.
- The student's trauma is interpreted as karma rather than violation.

The strongest defense. Tantric methods can appear unconventional and require pure perception.

The counter. Pure perception becomes SPIRITUAL BYPASSING when it makes abuse invisible. If the only spiritually acceptable interpretation protects the lama, then tantra has been used to bypass reality.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> TAUGHT Reinterpreting abuse as wrathful compassion or impure perception is taught as a framework of the path; how it is applied in a given case is each community's practice.

26 · Financial Control

Extracting money through spiritual obligation while offering no transparency about where it goes.

How it shows here

- Tibetan Buddhist students may pay for empowerments, retreats, teachings, translations, ritual objects, teacher support, monastery sponsorships, and offerings.
- Devotion to the lama can create intense pressure to give money, labor, housing, travel support, or professional skills.
- "Creating merit" can be used to spiritualize donations.
- Students may remain financially invested because leaving would mean admitting that years of offerings, retreats, and vows were attached to a harmful structure.

The strongest defense. Offerings support teachers, monasteries, translations, and the preservation of rare teachings.

The counter. Merit becomes FINANCIAL CONTROL when giving is tied to spiritual safety or loyalty. If the student fears that withholding money harms karma, lineage, or devotion, the offering is not free. It is tribute under sacred pressure.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> TAUGHT Merit framing on offerings to lamas and monasteries, taught rather than fixed by rule.

Stage 7 · Discard

You become expensive — too many questions, too much independence — and the urgency ramps up until you are removed.

Community exile, spiritual condemnation, and years of donations and unpaid labor left behind with no equity.

What it asks of you: You gave money, work, and possibly a decade. They kept all three.

27 · Manufactured Crisis

Creating urgency to suppress critical thinking and generate loyalty.

How it shows here

- Tibetan Buddhist groups may manufacture crisis through samaya fear, karmic consequences, damage to the lineage, harm to the Dharma, and future-life danger.
- A student questioning a lama may be told the stakes are spiritually enormous.
- Abuse allegations become crises of faith rather than crises of safety.

- The community may panic around protecting the teacher's reputation.

The strongest defense. Tantric vows and lineage integrity are spiritually serious.

The counter. Seriousness becomes MANUFACTURED CRISIS when it blocks accountability. If the student is made to fear cosmic consequences for naming harm, the emergency is being staged around loyalty, not truth.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The crisis framing around samaya, the lineage and future lives is raised by communities and senior students in practice; no written rule directs it.

28 · Discard

Removing members who become too costly — too many questions, too much independence, too visible a contradiction.

How it shows here

- A student who questions the lama may be treated as a samaya-breaker, spiritually dangerous, impure, or karmically damaged.
- Senior students may warn others not to associate with them.
- The person loses access to community, teachings, rituals, teacher approval, and identity.
- The lama's status remains intact while the critic is spiritually discarded.

- Exit is framed as cosmic failure.

The strongest defense. Tantric commitments are serious and breaking them has consequences.

The counter. Consequence becomes DISCARD when vows are used to exile the harmed. If the student who names abuse becomes the danger to the lineage, the lineage is protecting power, not awakening.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL Shunning of whistleblowers as samaya-breakers was carried out by communities, not by any instruction on paper.

Stage 8 · Replace

Your seat is filled before the door shuts, and nobody is responsible for any of it because the authority was attributed to the lineage.

The community closes over the gap and the whistleblower's decade is reframed as broken samaya. And the authority is the lineage, the deity, the guru as buddha — an authority that has never once been available for questioning.

What it asks of you: Two independent investigations, commissioned by the organizations themselves, confirmed the abuse. Ask what happened to the men, and then ask what happened to the people who reported it.

29 · Replacement

Your seat is filled before the door closes behind you.

How it shows here

- A student who breaks silence about a lama is replaced by newer students who still idealize him.
- Senior students redirect attention to fresh devotion, empowerments, retreats, and lineage activity.
- The critic becomes a samaya warning; the newcomer becomes proof the lama's blessing continues.
- The institution preserves the guru by replacing damaged witnesses with uninitiated hope.

The strongest defense. Lineages continue beyond individual students.

The counter. Lineage continuity becomes REPLACEMENT when new students are brought into the same power imbalance without truth. If fresh devotion is used to bury old harm, the lineage is feeding on turnover.

> EVIDENCE GRADE
>
> CULTURAL The replacement of witnesses who spoke by newer devoted students is community practice, set by no rule; no source on this page documents it directly, and the cases on this page record whistleblowers shunned while the accused continued teaching.

30 · Plausible Deniability

The institution is never responsible, because the authority is attributed to the lineage, the deity or the guru as buddha, none of whom is available for cross-examination.

How it shows here

- A lama's authority may be absolute in practice but deniable in theory: "Students choose devotion freely."
- Abuse can be described as tantric method, wrathful compassion, purification, or misunderstood skillful means.
- Secrecy is justified as protection of advanced teachings, then used to prevent students from comparing notes.
- Samaya fear makes criticism dangerous, while leaders deny threatening anyone.
- Senior students enforce loyalty, allowing the lama to remain above direct responsibility.

The strongest defense. Tantric practice requires secrecy and commitment. Students should examine a teacher before committing. Misconduct is not the lineage.

The counter. Secrecy becomes PLAUSIBLE DENIABILITY when it hides power. "Examine first" is hollow if, after commitment, leaving is framed as karmic catastrophe. The lineage cannot claim the lama's authority when recruiting and disown the lama's harm when exposed.

EVIDENCE GRADE

CULTURAL The deniability rests on the lama's authority being absolute in practice and disowned in theory, which is organizational practice set by no rule; the 2018 and 2019 investigations record organizations that failed to act on reports, but the leaders' denial of any threat appears on this page only as the official denials in section 15.

Sources for this section: 1 2 3

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Count grades, not names. A long list of Contested entries says something very different from a short list of Codified ones. A bias to watch for in yourself: people rate the same pressure as "normal" when their own group applies it and as "manipulation" when another group does. Before you judge an entry, try imagining it applied by a group you distrust. Does it look different?

13

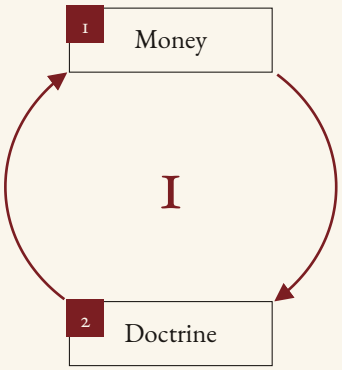
The loops

BEFORE YOU READ

How the techniques connect into cycles. A single practice can look harmless on its own. The loops show how one step feeds the next, so that, for example, a newcomer's welcome turns into an obligation.

> The seven loops below show how the practices connect, so that each step makes the next one easier and the last step feeds the first. The loops are analysis built from findings recorded elsewhere on this page PATTERN OBSERVED; each step names the section where its fact is recorded.

1 · Money to Doctrine to Money



Empowerments and teachings are priced in tiers, and merit framing makes refusal karmically dangerous.

How it runs.

1. Spiritual advancement is paywalled and tiered by status, with escalating levels of empowerment and teaching (section 9).
2. Offerings to lamas are taught as merit, and refusal is framed as karmic danger (sections 9 and 12, technique 26).
3. Students give fees, donations and unpaid labor, and the retreat centers they help build are held by organizations, not by the students (section 9).

4. The income sustains teachers, centers and lineage organizations, and there is no audit of personal versus institutional use of offerings (section 9).

5. The same teachers and organizations set the next tier and its price, and the giving continues (section 9).

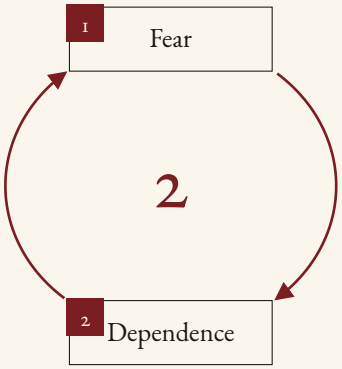
Techniques that feed it. 2 · Weaponized Generosity, 9 · Moving the Goalposts, 26 · Financial Control.

Why it closes. The body that decides who advances also receives the fees for advancing, and the merit framing makes refusing to pay a spiritual risk. A giver cannot see where the money goes or decline without cost.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens wherever the money becomes visible. Western dharma organizations that are registered charities can be made to answer to a regulator (section 8), and publishing accounts is in each organization's hands. A donor can ask for accounts before giving. This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. The graded-services pipeline in section 9 lists price lists as the only thing disclosed and everything downstream of them as hidden. The one set of accounts this page can show, those of Rigpa UK, is public because Rigpa UK is a registered charity (section 9).

2 · Fear to Dependence to Fear



Vajra hell is attached to criticism before the student understands the vow, so the fear is installed at initiation.

How it runs.

1. The student takes samaya vows, and the penalty for criticizing the teacher is taught before the terms of the vow are explained (section 12, stages 5 and 6, technique 7).
2. The penalty is taught as cosmic: vajra hell for criticizing or leaving the guru (sections 1 and 15).
3. Doubt and discomfort are redefined as obscuration, impure perception or ego, so the student stops trusting their own judgment (section 12, stage 3, technique 21).
4. Senior students enforce silence without any instruction from the lama, and those who report are shunned as samaya-breakers (sections 15 and 19, technique 16).
5. Fear of leaving deepens dependence on the lama, who offers the way back as repair of samaya on condition of recanting (section 12, stage 2), and the fear is renewed.

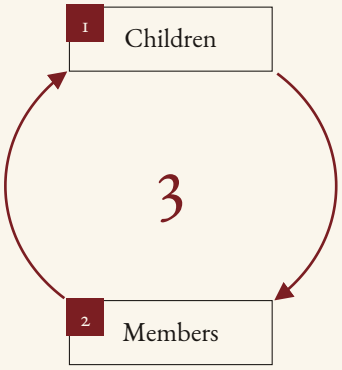
Techniques that feed it. 4 · Hoovering, 7 · Double Bind, 16 · Flying Monkeys, 21 · Learned Helplessness.

Why it closes. The threat attaches to the act of complaining, which is the one act that could expose the threat. Each report becomes further evidence of broken samaya.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where the vow loses its hold. Samaya vows have no legal force in most jurisdictions, and a student can leave a teacher or centre (section 24). The Dalai Lama's advice to speak to an abusive teacher and, if that fails, make the behaviour public is on the record (sections 21 and 24). A major lineage could publish in its own training materials that samaya does not cover teacher misconduct (section 20). This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. In the Rigpa case, whistleblowers had been shunned as samaya-breakers before the investigation's findings were published (section 19).

3 · Children to Members to Children



Tulku recognition and monastic boarding assign children's lives before consent.

How it runs.

1. A child is recognized as a tulku and removed from his family for monastic training, with his life course determined before he can consent (sections 10 and 11).
2. He is educated in monastic institutions, and monastic boarding schools in exile communities have documented abuse and inadequate safeguarding in some institutions (section 11).
3. Tulku estates (labrang) hold property and authority that are transmitted by recognition rather than by will (section 7).
4. Celibate leaders cannot produce heirs, so the estate and the lineage need a successor, and recognition supplies one (section 10).
5. A new child is recognized and the cycle repeats (section 10).

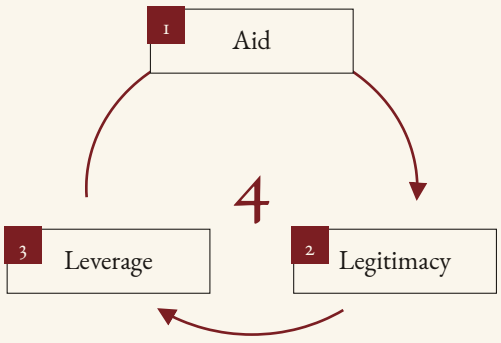
Techniques that feed it. 19 · Manufactured Consent, 23 · Infantilization, 24 · Identity Erosion.

Why it closes. Recognition is what transmits the estate, and the recognized child has no route to decline that does not delegitimize the institution (section 17).

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where outside safeguarding reaches the boarding institutions. Section 18 names the point: monastery teachers could accept a boarding institution with external safeguarding. Adopting it is in the institutions' hands. This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. In May 1995 the Panchen Lama recognized by the Dalai Lama was taken into Chinese custody three days later, aged six, and has not been seen publicly since (section 5). Beijing then installed its own candidate, which shows what kind of asset the recognition is (section 10).

4 · Aid to Legitimacy to Leverage to Aid



Western funding sustains the exile institutions, and the contest over who recognizes the next Dalai Lama draws outside support to the exile side.

How it runs.

1. Western sanghas are major funding streams for exile institutions (sections 9 and 16).
2. In July 2025 the Dalai Lama declared that his Gaden Phodrang Trust alone holds authority to recognize the 15th (sections 1 and 5).
3. Beijing contests that authority under Order No. 5 (2007) and maintains its own Panchen Lama, installed after the recognized child was taken in 1995 (sections 5, 7 and 8).
4. The contest draws outside support to the exile side: United States law since 2020 makes succession a matter for Tibetan Buddhists alone and authorizes sanctions on Chinese officials who interfere (section 8).
5. That support and the donor funding sustain the exile institutions, and the contest continues (sections 7 and 9).

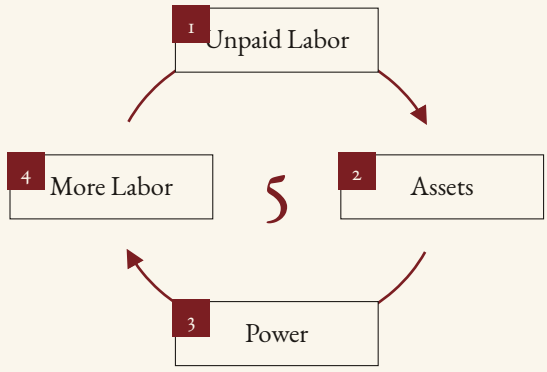
Techniques that feed it. 15 · Triangulation, 26 · Financial Control, 30 · Plausible Deniability.

Why it closes. Each side's claim to legitimacy is what attracts the support that sustains it, and the recognition machinery is the asset both sides are contesting (section 7).

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where funding or recognition is no longer a trade. Reporting to donors is in the exile institutions' hands, and a single agreed recognition, or a decision that the institution ends, would falsify the succession prediction in section 7. This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. Order No. 5 is published regulation, and the 2025 statement is published by the Dalai Lama's office; each side's claim is public, and each is also a claim on outside support (sections 5 and 9).

5 · Unpaid Labor to Assets to Power to More Labor



Student labor and donations build centres held by organizations, and whistleblowers leave with nothing.

How it runs.

1. Students supply volunteer labor and donations to build retreat centers (section 9).
2. The centers are held by organizations and teachers, and the students never own what they build (section 9).

3. The assets give teachers and boards standing over the students who built them, and teachers benefit personally in some documented cases (sections 9 and 16).
4. Students who leave lose years of donations, unpaid labor and relocated lives, with no equity (section 15).
5. The cost of leaving keeps students in and keeps the labor coming, and leavers are replaced by newer students (section 12, techniques 26, 28 and 29).

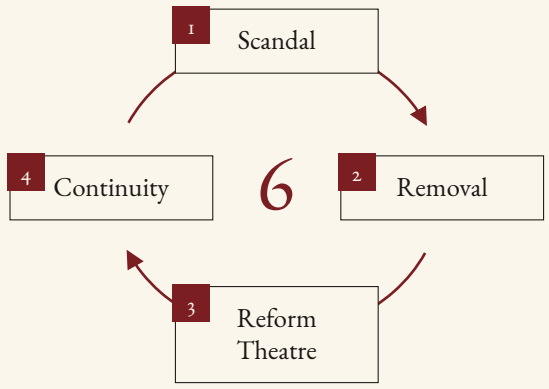
Techniques that feed it. 26 · Financial Control, 28 · Discard, 29 · Replacement.

Why it closes. What the student has put in is held by the organization, so leaving means abandoning it. Staying means giving more.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where the assets are accountable to those who built them. Volunteers could work under a written agreement (section 18), and public accounts are a condition of registration for charities (sections 8 and 9). This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. The 'Who pays' list in section 16 names long-term Western students who gave decades, savings and labor, and whistleblowers in Rigpa and Shambhala who were shunned for reporting.

6 · Scandal to Removal to Reform Theatre to Continuity



The teacher dies or withdraws, the organization restructures, and samaya doctrine is not revised.

How it runs.

1. Complaints about a teacher are managed by senior students rather than escalated (section 19).
2. Whistleblowers are shunned as samaya-breakers while the accused continues to teach (sections 12 and 15).
3. The organization commissions its own investigation and publishes it (sections 19 and 20).
4. The teacher withdraws or steps back, and the organization restructures (section 19).
5. Samaya is still taught unchanged, and the next case is met with another restructuring (section 14).

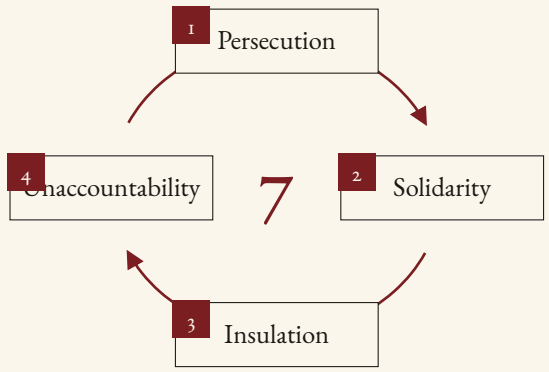
Techniques that feed it. 12 · DARVO, 18 · Silent Treatment / Stonewalling, 30 · Plausible Deniability.

Why it closes. The teacher and the structure are treated as separate things, so removing the one leaves the other. Samaya doctrine is the mechanism that produced the silence, and it is never the thing revised.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens only if the doctrine itself changes. A major lineage publishing in its own liturgical and training materials that samaya does not cover teacher misconduct would revise the page's central mechanism (section 20). Regulators can also act on registered charities (section 8). This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. Rigpa's founder had withdrawn from teaching by the time the 2018 report was published, and he died in 2019. The Charity Commission removed a trustee in 2019 (section 8). This page does not record whether the report's recommendations were fully implemented (section 20).

7 · Persecution to Solidarity to Insulation to Unaccountability



The attempted destruction of Tibetan Buddhism was real and is invoked to make accountability look like collaboration.

How it runs.

1. Tibetan monasteries were devastated in the Cultural Revolution, and Beijing still restricts religious life and claims authority over reincarnation (sections 3, 5 and 11).
2. The persecution produces solidarity around the tradition and its figurehead (sections 3 and 4).
3. Criticism of the tradition can then be read as doing China's work (section 3).
4. Lineage authority has no external address, so little outside scrutiny reaches it (section 8).
5. Abuse goes unaddressed, and the persecution is invoked again against those who raise it (sections 3 and 14).

Techniques that feed it. 11 · Projection, 18 · Silent Treatment / Stonewalling, 25 · Spiritual Bypassing.

Why it closes. The threat from outside is real, so an objection from inside can be made to look like the same threat. The solidarity that protects the tradition also protects the teacher.

Where it could be broken, and by whom. It weakens where the two are separated. The Dalai Lama has instructed students to expose abusive teachers, and following that instruction is following the summit of the tradition (sections 3 and 14). Charity regulators can reach Western organizations (section 8). This paragraph is analysis, not a documented finding.

An example from this page. The page leads with the persecution and Order No. 5 (section 3), and the same page records that the two central abuse findings came from investigations the organizations commissioned themselves.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

The loops explain why good people stay in arrangements they would never sign up for from scratch. The more you have already put in, the harder it is to walk away. Researchers call this the sunk-cost effect (Arkes & Blumer, 1985), and it works on time, money and relationships alike. Ask yourself: if you were starting today, knowing what you know, would you join?

The seven loops below show how the practices connect, so that each step makes the next one easier and the last step feeds the first.

14 Say versus do

BEFORE YOU READ

Direct, checkable comparisons: a public statement on one side, the documented record on the other, and the receipt that links them. This is the most falsifiable section on the page, because each row either matches its source or it doesn't.

Lineage holders, tulku estates, and — for succession — the Chinese state.

What they say, what the record shows

THEY SAY	THE RECORD SHOWS	RECEIPT
Criticizing the guru breaks samaya and endangers you.	The Dalai Lama has publicly told students to expose abusive teachers: after a 1993 meeting with him, Western teachers agreed that a student should confront an abusive teacher and, if he does not reform, make the conduct public, and in a later talk the Dalai Lama said such teachers' names should be published [5] [18].	LEADERSHIP STATEMENT
These were cultural misunderstandings between Tibetan teachers and Western students.	Both investigations were conducted by Western firms at the organizations' own request and found abuse.	INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
Reincarnation is a purely spiritual matter.	A government has legislated its own approval over it, and installed its own candidate.	OFFICIAL POLICY

Accountability or theatre?

Last time the chair ran. Two organizations investigated themselves and published; neither revised the doctrine that produced the silence.

Who holds the chair now. Lineage holders, tulku estates, and — for succession — the Chinese state.

Prediction. The next case will be met with a restructuring and a new safeguarding office, and samaya will still be taught unchanged.

Words used here

TERM	WHAT IT MEANS INSIDE	WHAT IT DOES	SAID PLAINLY
Samaya	The sacred bond between student and teacher.	Breaking it is taught as carrying catastrophic consequence. In documented cases it functioned as a prohibition on reporting a teacher's conduct — a use nobody has published an exemption for.	'Speaking about him will destroy you.'
Crazy wisdom	Crazy wisdom is unconventional teacher behaviour understood as skilful means.	It supplies a doctrinal frame in which harmful conduct is reinterpreted as advanced instruction, and the student's distress as their own limitation.	'What he did was teaching and your reaction is your problem.'
Pure view	Pure view is the practice of seeing the teacher as enlightened.	It is a genuine contemplative practice. As an epistemology applied to a teacher's conduct, it makes disconfirming evidence unperceivable by design.	'Do not believe what you saw.'

Sources for this section: 5 18

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Test one row yourself. Pick a "they say" line you have actually heard said in person, then read the receipt. If the record matches the statement, this page is wrong about that row, and you should tell us. If it doesn't, what does it mean that you had never seen the receipt?

15 Cost & cover

BEFORE YOU READ

What leaving actually costs here, in family, work, housing, money and legal status, and how each of those costs is officially denied. Where the cost is low, the page says so plainly.

What leaving costs

- Leaving after tantric commitment carries taught cosmic consequences ('vajra hell'); whistleblowers in documented cases faced community exile and samaya-breaking accusations. FORMER MEMBER TESTIMONY / INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

The ledger of exit

COST	DOCUMENTED?	DETAIL	THE OFFICIAL DENIAL
Spiritual threat (samaya breach)	Yes, it is doctrinally explicit.	The taught consequences include vajra hell for criticizing or leaving the guru.	“It's a description of karma, not a threat.”
Community and identity	Yes	The student's whole social world is housed in one sangha, and whistleblowers were shunned in documented cases.	“Members made their own choices.”
Financial loss	Yes	Leavers lose years of donations, unpaid labor and relocated lives, with no equity.	“All giving was voluntary.”
Reputation	Yes	Leavers are accused of samaya-breaking, ego or demonic influence.	“Concern for their spiritual welfare.”

How the cost is denied

CHANNEL	LEVEL	NOTE
Explicit policy	Low in part	Samaya obligations are written in tantric literature — a rare case where the silencing mechanism is textually explicit.
Informal enforcement	High	Senior students manage complaints, protect access, and isolate dissenters.
Leadership distance	High	Lineage heads disclaim individual teachers; exile institutions disclaim Western organizations.
Doctrinal ambiguity	Very high	'Crazy wisdom' and 'skillful means' retroactively sanctify anything a teacher did.
Cultural outsourcing	High	Abuse is attributed to cultural misunderstanding between Tibetan teachers and Western students.
Volunteer enforcement	High	The inner circle enforces; the lama never issues an instruction.
Sacred secrecy	Very low	Deniability is very low once the practice is named. Tantric secrecy is explicit doctrine, and the Rigpa report records witnesses who felt they would be breaking samaya by speaking to the investigator [19].
Exit cost denial	High	Officially students may leave any time; doctrinally they were taught it could damn them.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

After tantric commitment, leaving can carry taught cosmic consequences ("vajra hell"). In documented cases, whistleblowers were exiled from their communities and accused of breaking samaya. That is a heavy weight to put on someone for speaking up. If you have stayed silent about something because of samaya, the page records that the Dalai Lama told Western teachers to make an abusive teacher's conduct public, and said in a later talk that such teachers' names should be published.

16 The ledger

BEFORE YOU READ

The balance sheet. It shows who benefits, who pays, and what leverage flows back to the institution in return for what it gives.

Who benefits

- Lama estates and lineages benefit, as does the Chinese state, which is seeking to own the succession machinery, and so do Western

organizational structures around charismatic teachers.

INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

Money out, leverage back

- Beijing asserts state authority over reincarnation itself, including the next Dalai Lama, in order to own the succession machinery of a religion — the most audacious act of religious capture by a government in the modern era. **OFFICIAL POLICY** · PRC Order No. 5, 2007
- Western sanghas function as major funding streams for exile institutions; devotion generates transnational revenue with no reporting requirement to the donors. **PATTERN OBSERVED**
- Empowerment and retreat economies price spiritual advancement in tiers, with students supplying both fees and unpaid labor to build assets they never own. **INVESTIGATIVE REPORT**

Who pays

Six groups carry the cost.

- Female students in documented consort-framed abuse cases.
- Recognized tulku children, whose lives were assigned before consent.
- The 1995 Panchen Lama, taken into custody as a child and not seen publicly since.

- Whistleblowers in Rigpa and Shambhala, shunned for reporting.
- Tibetans under Chinese religious restriction — external persecution that is real and severe.
- Long-term Western students who gave decades, savings, and labor.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Find yourself in this table. Are you among those who benefit, those who pay, or both? Most readers are both. The question is whether the exchange was ever explained to you in these terms, and whether you would agree to it if it had been.

17 Who gets hurt most

BEFORE YOU READ

Where the weight lands hardest, and what it compounds with: poverty, childhood, gender, a lack of civil alternatives. This is the human stakes stated plainly.

Where the weight lands

The costs in section 15 do not fall evenly. They fall hardest on people with the least power inside the institution and the fewest places to go outside it. The table names who carries the most, how, and what makes it worse.

WHO	HOW	WHAT IT COMPOUNDS WITH
Female students in consort-framed abuse	They were taught that refusal endangered their own attainment.	It compounds with samaya, which made speaking a cosmic risk.
Recognized tulku children	They are removed from their families and their life course is assigned before consent.	It compounds with the lack of any route to decline that does not delegitimize the institution.
Whistleblowers	They were shunned as samaya-breakers while the accused continued teaching.	It compounds for those who had relocated their lives to be near the teacher.
Long-term Western students	They gave decades of donations and labor and hold no equity.	It compounds in late middle age with no savings.
Tibetans inside China	They face severe state restriction of religious life.	It compounds with the succession itself being under state control.

From The Children's Codex

- *Initiation, vows, and the consent a child cannot give* — Recognition of child lamas: The recognition of a six-year-old as Panchen Lama in 1995

was followed within days by his removal into state custody; he has not been seen publicly since. The Dalai Lama's Trust and the Chinese state now maintain competing procedures for appointing a child to an office he cannot resign.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

The table puts female students first, those in abuse framed as consort practice, taught that refusing would endanger their own attainment. Then tulku children recognized in childhood, whose life course is assigned before they can consent. If you are a parent, or a student, ask whether consent is even possible when refusing is framed as spiritual danger.

They fall hardest on people with the least power inside the institution and the fewest places to go outside it.

18 The middle tiers

BEFORE YOU READ

The people in the middle: local clergy, teachers, officials and volunteers who apply rules they did not write. The section exists so that an institution is not collapsed into a monolith, and so that people in the middle can see their own position in it.

Between the teachers and the students sit people who apply rules they did not write. The table names four middle roles, what each does and sees, what each is asked to do, and what each could refuse.

ROLE (continued)	DOES	SEES	IS ASKED TO	COULD REFUSE
Centre directors and inner-circle students	Mediate all access to the teacher	Every complaint, because they are where complaints stop	Protect the teacher and the lineage	To be the place a report goes to die
Translators	Hold the only bridge between teacher and student	What is actually being said in both directions	Render devotionally	To soften an instruction they know is coercive
Retreat and land-project volunteers	Build the centres	Years of labor accruing to an entity they do not own	Treat it as merit	To work without a written agreement
Monastery teachers in exile institutions	Educate recognized children removed from families	Which children are struggling and cannot leave	Maintain the system	To accept a boarding institution with no external safeguarding

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

If you are a local leader, a teacher or a volunteer, this section is about you. It is not an accusation: most of the people who carry out a rule did not write it. But the middle tier is also where a rule is most often quietly softened, or quietly enforced. Which do you do, and what would happen to you if you chose differently?

19 Documented cases

BEFORE YOU READ

Named, dated, sourced incidents: court records, government inquiries, regulators' findings and on-the-record reporting. Read the outcome lines in particular. They show what actually changed, if anything.

Independent investigation into Rigpa

WHEN: 2018

WHAT: An independent investigation commissioned by the organization itself confirmed that its founder had physically, sexually, and emotionally abused students over decades. It recorded that witnesses were taught that breaking samaya — the vow binding student to guru — meant vajra hell and that many felt pressure to keep it, found that senior individuals in Rigpa knew of the abuse and failed to act, and found evidence that proactive steps had been taken to discredit those raising concerns [19].

RECORD: Lewis Silkin independent report, commissioned by Rigpa

OUTCOME: Founder had withdrawn from teaching and died in 2019. Report published. Whistleblowers had been shunned as samaya-breakers before the findings.

TACTICS: 6 · Gaslighting, 12 · DARVO, 22 · Benevolent Control

GRADE: DOCUMENTED

Investigation into Shambhala

WHEN: 2019

WHAT: An investigation commissioned by the organization examined allegations of sexual misconduct by its leader and found misconduct by its leader "more likely than not" in two cases [2]. The Interim Board that released the report said Shambhala's Care and Conduct structures and reporting processes had not been adequate [20].

RECORD: Wickwire Holm independent report, commissioned by Shambhala

OUTCOME: Leader stepped back from teaching and administrative duties in July 2018 [22], resumed teaching in late 2019 and stepped aside from the Shambhala organization in February 2022 [23]. Organizational restructuring followed.

TACTICS: 6 · Gaslighting, 28 · Discard

GRADE: DOCUMENTED

PRC Order No. 5 on reincarnation

WHEN: 2007

WHAT: China's State Administration for Religious Affairs issued regulations requiring government approval for the recognition of reincarnate lamas — a state asserting authority over who may be reborn.

RECORD: PRC administrative regulation (published policy)

OUTCOME: In force. Beijing has installed its own Panchen Lama; the child recognized in 1995 has not been seen publicly since his detention at age six.

TACTICS: —

GRADE: CODIFIED

Sources for this section: 1 2 3 7 19 20 22 23

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

These are not hypotheticals. Three documented cases on this page rest on a named record. The most common reaction to documented cases is "that was them, not us." Before settling on that, read the outcome lines. Did anything change in the structure that allowed each case to happen, or did one person leave while the structure stayed?

20 Precedent

BEFORE YOU READ

What has already been broken once, somewhere, and what would count as real change here. It is a benchmark, not a prediction.

It has been broken before

WHAT	WHO	WHEN	WHAT IT COST
Two independent investigations were commissioned by the organizations and published.	Members and survivors forced them.	2018–19	It cost years of being called samaya-breakers first.
The Dalai Lama gave a public instruction to expose abusive teachers.	The tradition's most senior figure gave it.	1993, and in a later talk	This page does not record whether the organizations it addressed acted on it.
Geshema degrees were awarded to nuns.	Nuns and reforming institutions achieved it.	2016	It came after centuries of delay.

Promises on the record

COMMITMENT	MADE	STATUS	NOTE
Rigpa committed to implementing the Lewis report recommendations.	2018	Not recorded	An independent investigation was commissioned and published, which is more than most institutions in this codex have done. This page does not record how far the recommendations were implemented.

What would change this page

A major lineage publishing, in its own liturgical and training materials, that samaya does not cover teacher misconduct would revise this page's central mechanism.

Sources for this section: [5] [6]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Some rows here record a change that has already happened somewhere; others name what would count as change here. When you are told something "can't change", it is fair to ask: can't, or won't? And who decided?

21 Voices from inside

BEFORE YOU READ

People from inside Tibetan Buddhism who raised the hard question publicly, often at real cost. They answer the objection that criticism only ever comes from outsiders.

- **The Rigpa students.** Their complaints led to the 2018 investigation and the Charity Commission's inquiry [11].
- **The Dalai Lama in 1993.** He told Western teachers that students should speak to an abusive teacher and, if that fails, make the

behaviour public [5].

- **The first Geshema nuns.** Twenty nuns were awarded the highest Gelug degree in 2016, the first awarded to Tibetan nuns [6].
- **Gedhun Choekyi Nyima.** The Panchen Lama disappeared at six and has not been seen publicly for over thirty years, so there is no public account from him [7].

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Were these people traitors, or the most loyal members their tradition had? Most were treated as the first at the time, and some are honored as the second now. If someone in your community raised one of these questions tomorrow, how would they be treated, and by you?

He told Western teachers that students should speak to an abusive teacher and, if that fails, make the behaviour public.

22 Regional variants

BEFORE YOU READ

The same tradition under different governments. What a member can say, leave, marry or inherit depends heavily on the state, and these cards show how differently it plays out.

China (Tibet)

APEX: The state holds the apex, through Order No. 5 [3].

LAW: The law requires state approval of reincarnations [3].

DOCUMENTED: The documented case is the disappearance of the Panchen Lama (1995) [7].

EXIT: Practice itself is controlled.

REGULATOR: The state is the controlling party.

TELL: The tell is a government that says reincarnation needs its licence.

India (exile)

APEX: The apex is the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Administration (the Tibetan government in exile) [4] [6].

LAW: Indian law applies.

DOCUMENTED: The documented events are the 2025 succession statement [4] and the 2016 Geshema degrees [6].

EXIT: Exit is legally free.

REGULATOR: The regulator is the Indian courts.

TELL: The tell is an exiled institution making its own rules on succession, against a state that claims the right to make them instead.

United Kingdom

APEX: Each centre's teacher and trustees hold the apex.

LAW: Charity law applies [11].

DOCUMENTED: The documented events are the Rigpa inquiry and the trustee's removal [11] [11].

EXIT: Exit is legally free.

REGULATOR: The regulator is the Charity Commission [11].

TELL: The teacher was beyond any lineage's reach; the trustees were within the regulator's.

North America

APEX: Shambhala's leadership and each centre's board hold the apex [2].

LAW: Civil law applies.

DOCUMENTED: The documented event is the 2019 Shambhala report [2].

EXIT: Exit is legally free.

REGULATOR: The regulators are the civil courts and, where they exist, charity regulators.

TELL: The investigation was commissioned by the organization itself, and its findings were made public [2].

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

This page covers China (Tibet), India (exile), the United Kingdom and North America. Your country changes what this tradition can do to you, and what you can do about it. If you live somewhere not listed, ask which of these cards your country most resembles. If you are a voter, note that each of these arrangements was chosen by a government.

23 The questions

BEFORE YOU READ

The six questions the documented record could not resolve. Each is set out below: why it is being asked, and a concrete example already on this page that it points back to.

QUESTION 1 OF 6

Two independent investigations, commissioned by the organizations themselves, confirmed abuse. Name what changed structurally in each afterward.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

An investigation proves only what happened. Structural change is what prevents the next case. The question asks what changed in each organization afterward.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The history section records independent investigations finding abuse by Sogyal Rinpoche (Rigpa, 2018) and sexual misconduct by Sakyong Mipham (Shambhala, 2019), with the Rigpa report recording samaya

as a pressure to stay silent and the Shambhala report recording a power imbalance.

QUESTION 2 OF 6

If samaya forbids criticizing a guru, then a guru cannot be caught — so what exactly does the vow protect, and whom?

WHY THIS IS ASKED

A vow that forbids all criticism of a teacher makes that teacher impossible to catch. The question asks what the vow protects, and whom.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The cases section records that Rigpa's commissioned investigation recorded witnesses taught that breaking samaya meant vajra hell, and that whistleblowers "had been shunned as samaya-breakers before the findings."

QUESTION 3 OF 6

A six-year-old was taken into custody over a religious recognition and has not been seen publicly since. Ask which institution has made that its central demand.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

The detention of a child over a religious recognition is the clearest case in this book of a state seizing control of religion. The question asks which institutions have made his release a central demand, and which have not.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The law table records that the Panchen Lama recognized by the Dalai Lama was taken with his family in 1995, aged six, "and has not been seen since" [7]. The cases section records that Beijing installed its own Panchen Lama.

QUESTION 4 OF 6

Ask a lama to explain the difference between crazy wisdom and misconduct in a way that could be applied *before* the fact rather than after.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

A distinction that can only be drawn after harm has occurred protects no one. The question asks for a test that could be applied in advance.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The structure section calls the samaya structure, with its cosmic penalties for criticizing the guru after initiation, the tradition's highest-risk mechanism, recorded in the Rigpa investigation.

QUESTION 5 OF 6

If a student's refusal endangers her attainment, how would consent ever be possible? Ask whoever taught you that to answer it plainly.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

Consent requires the freedom to say no. If refusing endangers a student's spiritual attainment, she is not free to say no. The question asks the teacher to answer that directly.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The who-gets-hurt table lists female students in consort-framed abuse, "taught that refusal endangered their own attainment," compounded by samaya, "which made speaking a cosmic risk."

QUESTION 6 OF 6

You were taught that doubt damages your practice. Ask who is protected by a rule that makes your own perception the first casualty.

WHY THIS IS ASKED

A rule that makes your own perception the first thing you doubt protects whoever benefits from your silence. The question asks who that is.

EXAMPLE ALREADY ON THIS PAGE

The say-do table sets "Criticizing the guru breaks samaya and endangers you" beside the record that the Dalai Lama told Western teachers to make an abusive teacher's conduct public and said in a later talk that such teachers' names should be published.

In closing

The Dalai Lama himself has told students to expose abusive teachers: he told Western teachers to make the conduct public, and in a later talk said their names should be published [5][18]. That instruction comes from the summit of your own tradition, which means anyone telling you that silence is devotion is contradicting the authority they claim to serve.

You can keep the practice, the deity, the whole beautiful apparatus of mind training, and refuse a specific man's access to your body, your money, and your silence. Ethics precede tantra in the tradition's own sequence. Someone taught you to invert that order, and it was not the Buddha.

Sources for this section: [1] [2] [5] [18]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Choose one question and ask it this month, out loud, to a real person who could answer it. Then write down what happened. Were you answered, redirected, or told that asking was the problem? Whichever it was, the response is information.

24 Leaving safely here

BEFORE YOU READ

Practical, non-theological guidance for someone who needs to step back or step away safely. It is a safety document, not an argument.

Practical guidance, not legal advice.

1. **Samaya vows** made to a teacher have no legal force in most jurisdictions; you can leave a teacher or centre.
2. **If you were abused,** go to the police; in the UK you can also report a charity to the Charity Commission [11].
3. **The Dalai Lama's own advice** to students of abusive teachers was to speak up and, if that fails, make it public [5].
4. **Find support** through the organizations listed in section 25 [14] [15] [16].

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Even if this section is not for you, it may be for someone you know. Most people who leave a high-demand community say that the first person who listened without trying to argue them back mattered more than anything else. Could that person be you?

25 Where to get help

BEFORE YOU READ

Organizations that can help, each checked directly against its own site, with the date of the check. Nothing here is endorsed beyond that check.

Checked 2026-10-03.

ORGANIZATION (continued)	FOR	WHERE	CONTACT
Faith to Faithless	People leaving high-control religion	UK	**0800 448 0748** (freephone; Monday 10:00–13:00, Wednesday 10:00–13:00, Thursday 16:00–19:00 UK time) [14]
Recovering from Religion	People questioning or leaving faith	US, Canada and online	**(844) 368-2848** (aims to answer 24 hours a day; chat also available) [15]
ICSA	Former members of high-control groups; families	International	Via website [16]
NAPAC	Adult survivors of childhood abuse	UK	**0808 801 0331** (free; Mon–Thu 10am–9pm, Fri 10am–6pm, closed weekends) [17]

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Save one contact now, before anyone needs it: **Faith to Faithless** (people leaving high-control religion; UK). People in crisis rarely have the energy to research options. Having a name ready is one of the most useful things you can do for someone else.



26

Sources

BEFORE YOU READ

Every numbered citation on this page, with a named, checkable source. Spot-check a few before trusting the rest; that is the honest way to read any page in this book, including this one.

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WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

Don't take this page's word for anything either. People tend to believe a claim more the more often they have heard it, whether or not it is true; this is the "illusory truth effect" (Hasher, Goldstein & Toppino, 1977). Spot-check three citations at random. If any fails, tell us, and it will be corrected and logged.

27 What changed on this page

BEFORE YOU READ

A dated log of what changed on this page: corrections, additions and new sources. Changes are logged in public rather than made quietly.

- **2026-10-03:** Fixed the closing lines that said the authority was attributed to God: this tradition names the lineage, the deity and the guru as buddha. Corrected what the page says the Dalai Lama told students about exposing abusive teachers (a 1993 meeting and a later talk), the years of the two Karmapa recognitions (1992 and 1994), the date of his succession statement (July 2025, days before his 90th birthday) and the nuns' geshema degree. Replaced the claim that both investigations named samaya as the cause with what the Rigpa report records, and said plainly what the Shambhala material does and does not show, including the leader's later status. Re-graded twelve techniques whose evidence was teaching or custom rather than a written rule, so the page now counts one technique as sourced to a named document. Removed an offshore-accounts card and several unsourced claims about donors, convert students and unfulfilled recommendations, and added opening hours for three help lines. Sources 18 to 23 are new.
- **2026-09-27:** Added Branches, Law & state, Money in numbers (Rigpa UK accounts 2020–2024), Voices from inside, four regional cards, Leaving safely and Where to get help.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

This page keeps a public log of its own changes, mistakes included. Does the institution you belong to, give to, or were raised in keep one like it? If not, how would you know what it got wrong, and when?

Colophon

Set in EB Garamond (SIL Open Font License), regular, italic and bold, with true small capitals and old-style figures in text and lining tabular figures in tables. Laid out with Paged.js in Chromium from the same Markdown that feeds the website. US Letter, single-sided, tagged for accessibility and checked against PDF/UA-1 with veraPDF. Built 2026-10-27. Text checked 2026-10-03.

Palette: ink, oxblood, gold, cream, rule. Seven type sizes. Rules of 0.4 pt and 2 pt only.