

## **Statement of His Holiness the Dalai Lama**

**10<sup>th</sup> March 1968**

The commemoration of this day has become sacred to all Tibetans and is an important landmark in the historic struggle of men to free themselves from their oppressors. For it was on this day, nine years ago, that the people of Tibet made a very brave attempt to free themselves from their Chinese rulers who in 1950 had forcibly occupied our country under the guise of an ambiguous and obsolete claim to suzerainty. Thrown against the superior size of the Chinese forces, our resistance that day was doomed and resulted in the large scale massacre of thousands of our countrymen. But the spirit of a people who believe in the dignity of man and in the freedom of all nations large or small cannot be quelled by the might of an aggressor. It was that fateful day which united the whole country in defiance of the Chinese and redeclared our sense of nationhood in no uncertain terms to the outside world, and that struggle to assert ourselves as a people still continues today both inside and outside Tibet.

For those of our countrymen remaining in Tibet the struggle is both physical and moral. The Chinese have used every ruse and force to beat down the resistance of the Tibetan people. The fact that they have not succeeded is admitted by China and evidenced by the number of Tibetans who escape into India and other neighbouring countries every year in spite of increasingly stringent border controls imposed by the Communist Chinese. Only recently almost 500 Tibetans died trying to flee to India. They knew that chances of their bid for escape are well nigh impossible, and yet they preferred to face this risk. Is it conceivable that a people whom the Chinese Communists claim are content with the regime under which they live, would resort to such suicidal measures?

With every year that passed the Chinese have successively tried to indoctrinate the thousands of Tibetan children by forcibly separating them from their parents and sending them to China, where they are alienated from everything that is Tibetan and are taught the doctrines of Mao and made to deride and ridicule the Tibetan way of life. But contrary to the Chinese expectations, a great majority of these are now resisting the Chinese rule in Tibet. As long as men have the capacity to think and as long as they seek after truth, the Communist Chinese will not completely succeed in indoctrinating our children. There is no doubt that the Chinese treatment of the conquered minority nationalities is a clear case of Han chauvinism. However, far from succeeding in their aims the Chinese are only adding fuel to the flame of nationalism. It is for this reason that even young Tibetan Communists are solidly lined up with the rest of the country against the Chinese.

Cultures and religious belief in our country have been one of the major targets of Chinese Communist oppression. The destruction of monastic universities, cultural centres and other allied institutions which were undertaken from the very beginning of the Chinese takeover was intensified with the recent Cultural Revolution and Red Guard Movement. The remaining monks, nuns and scholars have been driven out from the monasteries and cultural institutions and, with many of the local populace, are forced to build a vast network of strategic roads linking Tibet, which has now been turned into a huge military

base, with the borders of its neighbouring countries, thus posing an ever increasing threat to the peace in those regions.

In 1966 drastic changes have taken place in Tibet. While the Chinese continue to suppress the Tibetan people, the Chinese themselves have been engaged in a long struggle amongst themselves. The total bankruptcy of Chinese policy in Tibet is evidenced by the fact that all the 301 so-called elected representatives of the Tibet Autonomous Region Council have been dismissed. Likewise, practically all Tibetan cadres have disappeared. Tibetans who have been trained for years in China have been accused of "regional nationalism" and removed from their posts for 're-education' in forced labour camps. Since September last year, the military has taken up every apparatus of the administration and the country today is entirely in the hands of the Chinese occupation forces without even a semblance of civilian administration.

It now remains for those of us who have been fortunate to escape from the Chinese Communists to take up the noble task for which so many of our patriots have laid down their lives on this memorable day. Our people living in exile are conscientiously striving to prepare for the day when we can return to a free Tibet. For instance, Tibetan children, whom I look upon as the future foundation of a free and independent Tibet, are being provided with the best possible opportunities of development, of growing mentally and morally into men and women, deeply rooted in their own culture, belief and living habits, as well as acquainted with modern civilization, enriched by the greatest achievements of world culture, and thus becoming sound and creative Tibetan citizens, capable of serving our nation and the whole of mankind. There are 85,000 Tibetans living in exile outside Tibet. Of these, we are in the process of rehabilitating 20,040 in agricultural settlements, animal husbandry, small-scale industries and handicraft centres in India, Bhutan, Nepal, Sikkim and Switzerland. This would not have been possible without the generous assistance, both financial and otherwise, in particular of the Indian government, of the governments of the respective countries, and of the voluntary agencies, and I take this opportunity to express my personal gratitude and that of my people to them. There are still 20,000 refugees who are yet to be rehabilitated and it is up to us to work hard to help expand and improve on what has been done so that we may not only contribute to the prosperity of our host country and our benefactors, but also that a truly Tibetan culture may take root and flourish outside Tibet until such time as we are able to return.

That we will be able to return some day is a hope which will always be with us and for which we must always work. Many countries have supported our cause in the United Nations and have condemned Chinese aggression in Tibet. We are very grateful to them and hopeful that they will continue to support us both in the United Nations and elsewhere, for we firmly believe that the Chinese occupation of Tibet poses a threat to Asia and more particularly to those countries which share a common frontier with it. In this light as also from the humanitarian standpoint of support for a just cause, we would once again request the government of India for increased political support; for it is only the voice of India which, we believe, can lead the way in championing our cause, not only because of her position in the Asian world, but also because of its cultural and physical affinity with Tibet and its role in sheltering the thousands of Tibetans who have

been forced to flee their homeland. We believe that this support must come as long as men believe in freedom. As Tibetans, let us then work for this and renew our resolve to continue the struggle for what is truly our heritage.

In conclusion, I wish to offer my prayers to invoke the blessings of the Triple Gems for peace and happiness of all the sentient beings.

The Dalai Lama  
10 March 1968