

Statement of His Holiness the Dalai Lama 10th March 1969

The tenth of March is a day of special significance to us. It is so, not only for the Tibetans but also for all those who cherish freedom and peace as the hallmark of the highest human values. The historic revolt of the Tibetan people, which has come to be a symbol of the tenacious determination of the Tibetan people to regain the sovereign freedom of Tibet, is a decade old. A decade is a long time indeed if we just pause to recall the harrowing experiences of naked terror, sufferings and nightmarish hardships undergone by those of our countrymen left in Tibet. With each passing year, the anguish and sufferings brought about by man's cruelty to man perpetrated on the roof of the world, have increased in magnitude and intensity. Each new movement, whether it be "three-antis", or "proletarian cultural revolution" or revolutionary committee, or "thought propaganda team" has only been an instrument of destruction under a different garb to wipe out the totality of Tibetan identity. The situation is deteriorating at an accelerating pace, spelling out all the characters of a grave crisis.

The Chinese Communist propaganda machinery constantly boasts of a new life of prosperity and happiness enjoyed by the Tibetans. This is what they want the world to believe. This is nothing but the stereotyped Chinese Communist pattern of distorting the true facts in their bid to deceive the people of the outside world, and to create public opinion which would lend support to their garbled version. But, the reality of the situation and the facts as we find them in Tibet repudiate these shameless assertions.

In fact there is a surging tide of dissatisfaction and opposition to be seen in all spheres of activities — in words, thoughts and actions. Increasing number of Tibetan youth trained and indoctrinated in China are publicly denouncing the very presence of the alien rulers, and participating in acts of sabotage and other anti-Chinese activities.

To the Chinese Communists, Tibetan lives are of no value except as the hewers of wood and drawers of water. The Chinese conception of Tibetans is that they are as good as mechanical robots. Not to speak of fundamental rights, a Tibetan is denied even the right to exist as a human being. Tibetans continue to be subjected to inhuman treatment and atrocities resulting in a heavy toll of lives. Yes, the one enduring fact is that as the measures of persecution grow in intensity, so has their determination to resist the aggressor. With an unshakable confidence and strength of mind they are all waiting for the day when their country can be free again. In the recent period, reports have reached us that the movement of resistance has even spread to the prisons and concentration camps. Indifferent to the wrath and fury of the Chinese guards, Tibetans condemned to prison cells and labour camps keep up their morale by talking among themselves about the facts of Tibet being an independent nation and the armed violations of Tibetan sovereignty by the Chinese Communists. Those of the prisoners who have read about the history of Tibet are asked by other fellow mates to speak to them about the political history of free Tibet. Criticism and dislike of the alien rule are voiced by the prisoners and other enslaved people through songs which soon spread like a wildfire. The suffering people left in Tibet look upto us. To them we are a symbol of their hopes and aspirations in the fulfillment of

the cherished goal of national freedom. It is for this reason that we have been making every effort to fulfill the hopes and trust that have been placed in us by our countrymen in Tibet.

The Tibetan question was raised several times in the United Nations. Constant efforts are being made to arouse the conscience of the world to the anguish and suffering to which the innocent people of Tibet are being subjected, and to make known the true facts of Tibet. Likewise, we have adopted a number of other measures to draw support and sympathy for our cause.

One should not be oblivious of the fact that the prime necessity of our waging a relentless struggle emerges from the gravity of the situation that has gripped our country, Tibet. It is because people in Tibet have fallen in the abyss of mental and physical miseries going beyond the limit of human endurance, and yet fired by the determined will to live as free people again that we have taken upon ourselves the great and sacred responsibility of unmitigated continuation of the national struggle. There is no point in our participation as a key figure in the national struggle for freedom if the masses of people left in Tibet were contented and at peace as the Chinese claim.

When the day comes for Tibet to be governed by its own people, it will be for the people to decide as to what form of government they will have. The system of governance by the line of the Dalai Lamas may or may not be there. It is the will of the people that will ultimately determine the future of Tibet. In particular, the opinion of the forward-looking younger generation will be an influential factor.

While mindful of the great responsibility that has fallen upon our shoulders, I call upon my countrymen to be wide-awake to the developments that are taking place in this fast-changing world. There are many ways in which we can contribute our share to the enrichment of human knowledge. The scope, wealth and opulence of our own culture and learning are vast. Today, more and more people are giving their time and energy to the study and practice of the higher spiritual values. The philosophy of Buddhism, in particular, is attracting the attention of a growing number of people. People make great sacrifices, undergo travail and hardships, in their efforts to dig out and study the wisdom of Buddhist teachings. It is fortunate for us that our system of learning has diligently retained the complete Buddhist teachings including the profound and subtle subject of philosophy. And, we do not have to take the help of another language in understanding the subtle and deep meanings outlined in it. Our younger people should realize the value of these facilities. I hope more of our youths will make use of these rare facilities so as to contribute our mite to the world of learning and spiritual cultivation.

During the past ten years of our exile, much has been achieved in the education and rehabilitation of our people. The process of rehabilitation is fast nearing completion. When this is complete, attempts should be made to achieve continued progress in the standard of living. We owe much to the government and the people of India for their sympathy and magnanimity, which have made possible the favourable conditions we enjoy today. At the same time, it is essential for us who have been able to reach free countries to strive for the liberation of the majority of the Tibetan people still suffering

under the yoke of Red Chinese oppression, and, towards the achievements of a free Tibet governed by Tibetans themselves. I call upon my countrymen to rededicate themselves to this sacred task. Whether Tibet will be free and independent in the near future depends on the efforts of the Tibetan people themselves.

The Chinese believe that all activities can be achieved only through violent means. That is why they are giving military training to the old as well as the young. They consider that the acquiring of arms, digging of trenches in strategic areas and the building of roads are the essential groundwork of military preparedness. Moreover, they believe in and strive towards the achievement of these goals purely through the application of Mao's teachings, assuming that these teachings contain the quintessence of wisdom. But as it is impossible for millions of people to think on the same line as one person, Red China is facing today, from what we learn from various sources, an enormous problem of ideological differences among the elder leaders who have for many years stood firmly and faithfully with Mao. The total outcome of these has been the creation of strife and dissension of a magnitude unknown in the past.

It is necessary for the Chinese to remember that oppression has never, anywhere, succeeded in suppressing the eternal desire of people to live as free men; free to think their own thoughts, free to act as they consider best for the common welfare and live as human beings and not as robots or slaves. Even if the Chinese leave nothing but ashes in our sacred land, Tibet will rise from these ashes as a free country even if it takes a long time to do so. No imperialist power has succeeded for all time to keep other people in colonial subjection for long.

The Dalai Lama
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