

Statement of His Holiness the Dalai Lama 10 March 1973

This year marks the 2100th anniversary of the founding of the Tibetan Royal Dynasty by Nyatri Tsenpo. The year also marks the fourteenth anniversary of the Tibetan people's struggle against foreign domination. On this occasion when we remember and commemorate these two glorious anniversaries, I send my greetings to all Tibetans, both in and outside Tibet.

I would like to deal briefly with the history of these 2100 years. The earliest Tibetan Kings in dynastic succession were the seven Tris, the two Thengs, the six Legs, the eight Dhes and the five Tsens. During the reigns of these twenty-eight Kings, Tibet made steady progress in handicrafts and education. In the reign of the twenty-eighth King, Lha Thothori Nyen-tsen, Buddhism was first planted in Tibet. During the reigns of Songtsen Gampo, the thirty-third King, Trisong Detsen, the thirty-seventh King, and Tri Ralpachen, the fortieth, who are collectively known as the Three Great Religious Kings, Tibet emerged as the powerful state. In the field of religion, many Buddhist scriptural texts were translated into Tibetan. Religious and civil codes were promulgated and Tibetan social behaviour was made decent and civilized. Politically, land was equally distributed to people and in summer and winter people's representatives held regular meetings. All this made the Tibetan social structure then prevailing, democratic and modern. The fame of Tibet spread throughout Asia.

The forty-first King, Langdharma, suppressed the Buddhist faith and in his time Buddhism received a severe set-back. The two sons of Langdharma made rival claims to the throne of Tibet and western Tibet was divided between them. Consequently, the whole of Tibet was reduced to many petty principalities and the former strength of Tibet, both military and political, greatly decreased. The frontier provinces of Tibet seceded from Tibet and religion and policies suffered degeneration and decline.

Subsequently, since the time Chogyal Phagpa of Sakya, the successive dynastic reigns of Sakya Pha-drupa, Rinpungpa and Tsangpa, made the strength of Tibetan politics firmer and the hold of religion deeper, unlike during the period of Tibetan disintegration. However, the standard they attained never reached that of the one which prevailed during the reigns of the Three Great Religious Kings of Tibet. Moreover Tibet was internally continually rocked by disunity.

In the reign of the Fifth Dalai Lama, the political influence of the Tibetan government grew and the Tibetan people enjoyed happiness and prosperity. However, in 1949 the Chinese communists invaded Tibet and since then we all know the extent of happiness which we Tibetan people enjoy.

As such, if we look back at Tibetan history, we will realise that during the time of the Three Great Religious Kings of Tibet the country did not only enjoy immense military strength but was culturally rich. Also, as we have seen, after Langdharma, Tibet

disintegrated into many petty principalities and because of Tibetan weakness the country also suffered politically. Even in our times because of the fact that Tibet did not have a strong central government it was easy for the Chinese communists to invade Tibet and the subsequent suffering which has been inflicted upon the Tibetan people is something which can be proved. Mere propaganda is unnecessary here. As such the Tibetans must at all times remember these and remain united, and determined to achieve their rights and freedom.

After the period of Tibetan disintegration and during the time of the Sakyapas the influence of the Mongol rulers of China was first felt in Tibet. After this, during the time of the Manchu emperors China began interfering in the affairs of Tibet. However at that time the Han Chinese themselves were under the domination of at first the Mongols and then the Manchus. The Yuan dynasty of the Mongols came to an end. The Manchus themselves were overthrown by the Chinese revolution of 1911, after which a republican government was established in China. At the same time, after the overthrow of the Manchus, Tibet declared its independence. However some countries because of their territorial ambitions concluded several treaties, which stated that Tibet was under the suzerainty of China. That these treaties contain neither truth nor they tell the objective reality can clearly be seen from the way earlier and later treaties were made. The violent aggression of the Chinese into Tibet and the way they forced the Tibetans to sign the 17-point Agreement was emphatically and clearly publicised by the Tibetans to the whole world. Besides, looking at any period of Tibetan history, we know that Tibet existed as an independent nation.

Especially here I would like to touch on the real conditions in Tibet today. After being 'liberated' from the 'three big feudal lords' the Tibetans were made the "masters" of the country. Through such pleasing propaganda the Chinese are publicising that the progress achieved in Tibet under their rule is unprecedented and all the Tibetan people are happy! The aim of the struggle of the Tibetans outside Tibet is the attainment of the happiness of the Tibetan people. If the Tibetans in Tibet are truly happy under Chinese rule then there is no reason for us here in exile to argue otherwise. Fourteen years have passed since the 10th March Uprising of 1959. It is needless for me to point to the Tibetans, since they have experienced all these, that our unique culture is being deliberately undermined, that the Tibetans in Tibet are denied the basic rights of religious worship, free expression and movement. The basic need of every human being is adequate food, clothing and shelter. But even here, the Tibetans in Tibet face difficulties. Because of scarce food, many of the elder Tibetans fall sick and die. Every day most Tibetans live in fear, suffering and hardship and do not get a moment of rest and relaxation. Even to the young Tibetans, whom the Chinese have reared and educated, they, the Chinese, do not give jobs corresponding to the type of education which the youths have received. Evoking the ideal of "voluntary work", the Chinese drive the Tibetans like a herd of cattle to work in the fields, in road-building and construction. In short, the Tibetans in Tibet are not treated like human beings. Because the Tibetan people, like all other peoples in the world, are endowed with the capacity to differentiate good from bad, all of them, young, old and middle-age, despite their minor individual differences, will never trust and put their faith in foreign aggressors. All of them will want their country to be ruled by their own people.

This is the reason why we are continuing to struggle for the rights and freedom of the Tibetan people.

As such, considering the history of Tibet and the present aspirations of the Tibetan people, the present pitiable condition will never be continued to be borne by them for long. There are many changes which have occurred and are occurring in the international political scene and I hope that the Chinese leaders will discard their present narrow-minded policy and listen to reason and see the reality that is lying all around them. There will be a satisfactory conclusion, and there will inevitably be one, for the just cause of the rights and freedom of the Tibetan people. Without working hard at something there will never be a good, positive result. This is only natural. Consequently, all Tibetans must continue to work towards their cause with one mind, and utmost dedication.

The Dalai Lama
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