

Statement of His Holiness the Dalai Lama **10 March 1976**

Seventeen years have passed since the Tibetans began their just struggle for their inherent rights of Tibetan national independence. On this Anniversary Day, I remember with gratitude and reverence all those Tibetans who have sacrificed and who are continuing to sacrifice everything they hold dear for this supreme cause.

Realisation and promotion of the national interest and the national aspirations of the broad masses in Tibet is the cause and objective determining our struggle for Tibetan freedom. Being subjected to coercion and restrictions under enemy's rule, the large masses of Tibetan people have no freedom of movement. Physically, they are afflicted with gnawing hunger and thirst, and the situation is such that when they meet and converse, they invariably first talk of food difficulties. However, the Tibetan people, not content with the sweet Chinese slogan of "equality and progress" and unmindful of the oppression and suppression, hunger and thirst unleashed by the enemy, are locked in waging an unceasing revolt against tyranny and oppression. With courage that knows no frontier of defeat, and sacrifice of their very life-breath, our people are continuing to create a situation of desperate tension and crisis for the Chinese. They are doing this for the fulfillment of the cherished goal of Tibetan freedom.

If our brethren in Tibet are waging such a glorious struggle, and that too against such odds and risks, surely it behoves those of us who are in exile to work with greater zeal and perseverance and without regret so that our brethren in Tibet are speedily emancipated from the anguished torments, and the common cause of the Tibetan freedom, which is a cherished goal of all Tibetans, is realized. Doesn't it become all the more emphatic when we realise that those of us who are in the free countries of the world are free from the sufferings to which our people in Tibet are being subjected?

In this twentieth century, the world has witnessed the rise of the sun of equal freedom. People of many nations are enjoying the warmth of freedom which they did not have before. In ancient times, we Tibetans were known for our high degree of civilization and courage in all Asia. Should we always remain slaves of the barbarous, suffering under their cruel domination?

The snowland of Tibet is blessed with a bountiful natural wealth, and rich natural beauty. Should this country of ours be converted into a war-machinery manufacturing fortress, and the Tibetan people, its rightful owners, reduced to the status of criminals perpetually subjected to oppression and humiliation?

By virtue of our secular Karma, we Tibetans have been endowed with priceless mineral resources of gold, copper, iron, oil, gas, coal and lead. Do you wish to allow the barbarous brigands who have no right whatsoever, to plunder and cart away these resources of ours as they are doing now?

My countrymen, beware of the yawning chasms. Forgetting the enemy who invaded and wrested the country, you indulge in squabbles and factionalism. Discarding the thoughts and motives to promote the interest of the larger masses of one's own people, you seek and work to promote your own interest only. Refusing to recognise the grave economic situation that the Tibetan people are in, you desire and emulate luxury life-style of other rich people. These are unhealthy trends and matters of serious concern. So, give a thought to these seriously.

Turning to the situation that the enemy is in, a time has now come when they are being reluctantly forced to admit the one and hundred acts of omissions and commissions they perpetrated in utter violation of their own documentary and oral commitments, their own principles and ideology.

All worldly phenomena are characterised by the inherent nature of arising, developing and passing away. Does it not behave us to wrestle with greater vigour and determination for the recovery of our rights, taking advantage of the ripe conditions and the timely opportunities?

Every year we commemorate the March Tenth Anniversary Day. This we do neither for gay pageantry and pleasure nor is this forced upon us by others. This solemn occasion is a time for uplifting one's spirit, for rethinking and summarising the present plight of the Tibetan people. Reminding ourselves of these, we should strive with renewed dedication and determination for freeing the Tibetan people from the present plight, and for realising the ultimate objective of Tibetan national freedom.

Banish the sense of timidity, lethargy and the effort to evade hardships. Cultivate and develop the spirit of complete self-reliance. Volunteer for challenges and hardships. Work with devotion and with pleasure in the sense that it is in your own interest, and above all, in unity for achieving the goal of national freedom of the Tibetan people.

The Dalai Lama
10 March 1976