

## **Statement of His Holiness the Dalai Lama 10th March 1979**

Today, on the commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day, I express my warmest greetings to every Tibetan, inside and outside Tibet, united by our common language, race, traditions and customs while having a variety of ideology, behaviour and profession.

During the past 20 years 100,000 or so Tibetan refugees (mostly in India and 16 countries in the East and the West) have been earning their livelihood by agriculture, small business, handicrafts, etc., and their living standard is improving and they are becoming self-sufficient. Of special importance is the fact that over 20,000 Tibetan youths who were provided with both the traditional and modern education, which are like the wings of a bird — are joining the mainstream of modern life. Our religion and culture — considered poison by the Chinese — are not only preserved and their centres firmly established in the Tibetan settlements in India, but are also spreading among peoples of different social strata and races and gaining much interest and respect in the East and the West. Regarding our political situation, we follow the democratic system and tread the path of freedom, not only in word but in deed. And considering that we were forced to leave our land and wander in other people's lands, the fact that we have achieved a lot of success for the benefit of both the society and the individual is worth remembering.

We must not, however, be content with what we have achieved so far, for we must still strive for greater progress. Especially, since the main reason why we are in exile is the welfare of the 6 million Tibetans. Learning from our past experiences — without being discouraged by our tragedy — we must persevere and carry on the struggle until the day the 6 million Tibetans are fully satisfied, and peace and freedom are fully restored to our land.

The Chinese, of course, say that we are against progress and revolution, against the Tibetan people and very oppressive, following the wrong path. It is not necessary for us to say repeatedly that these are lies, nor is there a need for us to lie. The free world knows that we have fought for change and reforms, what we have done to preserve our ancient culture and race and how we have tried to work, with justice and impartiality, for the welfare of our people; our actions are clear like a writing on a wall. If friends, enemies or observers investigate, it will be clear as to who is telling the truth, who is following the right path; and where it is that black is changed to white within only a year or two without a single basis for trust, and where earlier statements are contradicted by later ones and statements are like the words of a mad man.

We had no wish to challenge the Chinese military might, but the Tibetan masses in desperation, from 1955 onwards and in 1959, opposed, resisted and rose up in rebellion against the Chinese and cried; "Chinese Quit Tibet! Tibet Will be Governed by Tibetans!" This was a spontaneous feeling expressed by all Tibetans against the Chinese. But the Chinese declared that it was fomented and led by external opponents who were

the paper tiger American imperialists and the expansionist Indians, and the internal enemies who were a few reactionaries. They forcibly suppressed the Tibetan national uprising and misrepresented to the world that the Tibetan people actually supported the Chinese.

Similarly, in China, many campaigns were launched from the 1950s onwards, such as the Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution, Learn from Tachai, which, as is known and accepted by all today, contained faults and mistakes and did not succeed but brought heavy losses. But, at that time the Chinese said these campaigns were great successes. Moreover, in China many old Chinese leaders who had worked for the Revolution for many years were purged under various pretexts and names; and when actual conditions necessitated their reinstatement they are appointed again on various excuses. In a short period it seems that in Chinese politics a person is purged many times and reinstated many times and thousands of reasons are given for the most unexpected changes. But, the Chinese are an intelligent people and can no longer believe the words of their leaders. Also, in the case of nations, the U.S.S.R., who was once a trusted and close friend of China, is now regarded as her chief enemy.

For a long time there were successive heavy losses and problems in the Chinese economy, education and so forth. However, to hide these problems, propaganda about great success was drummed up; even workers and common cadres were made to publicise statistics learnt by rote. The amount of energy spent on these could have moved mountains and churned oceans but all these efforts achieved nothing and only exhausted the people.

So now, in order to catch up with the rest of the world, to cope with realities and to modernize China, great changes in Chinese politics have taken place recently. And, particularly, since their propaganda failed, the Vice-Premier Deng Xiaoping has been repeatedly making statements like; "seeking truth from facts", "if the masses feel some anger, we must let them express it", "if you have an ugly face, it is no use pretending to be handsome", "we must recognize our shortcomings and mistakes". Unlike the previous Chinese leadership, there now appears to be a desire for honesty, modernization and leniency.

The present Chinese leaders should give up the past dogmatic narrow-mindedness and fear of losing face and recognize the present world situation. They should accept their mistakes, the realities, and the right of all peoples of the human race to equality and happiness. Acceptance of this should not be merely on paper; it should be put in practice. If these are accepted and strictly followed, all problems can be solved with honesty and justice.

During the commemoration of the last 10th March Anniversary, I said that Tibetans inside Tibet who desire to travel abroad should be allowed to do so and those outside Tibet should be able to visit their country and meet with people. If this freedom existed, the truth about conditions on both sides would be clear to the Tibetans. This opportunity is the right of the Tibetans. Such a policy is also practicable and reasonable.

A beginning has now been made of granting such an opportunity for the Tibetans in exile to meet their families and relatives. It is their right and so this is a welcome gesture. But, it is important that, besides the showcases, they must be permitted to see the actual conditions in Tibet, because so far the true conditions have been hidden from all foreigners who have visited Tibet. Such actions may serve the Chinese purpose a few times but will, in the end, bring only disgrace. This is clear from recent events in China. Therefore, I hope the Chinese will not resort to similar attempts when Tibetans visit Tibet in the future.

In short, to find the truth about conditions in Tibet from such visits we shall have to investigate whether all the conditions for a satisfactory meeting of the visitors and residents exist. I hope that any Tibetan who desires to travel outside Tibet will be able to do so without any restriction, and such an opportunity may not be denied on various excuses and pretexts as done in the past.

My statements, which have been based on our experiences of the past 20 years or so might not at first mean much to the present Chinese occupation forces and some Tibetan cadres, but if they discarded bias and chauvinism, and remembered past experiences, stopped being narrow-minded and egoistic and making statements like, "East Wind Will Prevail Over the West Wind," and instead considered the good and the bad aspects of the actual conditions and welfare of both the East and the West, I hope and believe that this statement becomes the basis for discovering the truth and thereby bringing improvement. Finally, I would like to make special mention at this time of our 20 years in exile the assistance given by the government of India to the Tibetan people in rehabilitating, educating and in preserving and promoting our culture and religion. We also deeply appreciate India's humanitarian concern and the warm relationship that exists between the two countries from centuries ago and in particular our religious and cultural relationship, which may be described as that of one, between a teacher and student. The incalculable good-will and assistance that the Tibetan people have received from the people, the central and state governments of India at a particularly tragic period in the history of Tibet, will never be forgotten and will be accorded an important chapter in the history of Tibet as well as the history of world Buddhism.

The Dalai Lama  
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