

Statement of His Holiness the Dalai Lama 10 March 1984

On the occasion of this March 10th anniversary, when we also observe the 25th anniversary of our exile, I convey my warm and sincere wishes to the Tibetans, in and outside Tibet and earnestly pray for those brave Tibetans who gave up their lives for the common cause of our people, religion and political rights.

When we look back to the past 25 years since we first came into exile, we see that compared to the world's other refugees, our number of 100,000 is small. And although the majority of this number lives in India, amidst its teeming millions, instead of scattering and being absorbed like water in sand, we have managed to preserve our entity and cohesiveness by living in groups of thousands. Most Tibetans in India, Nepal and Bhutan live in agricultural settlements, others make their living in various professions, different handicraft industries and small business. There are between two to three thousand Tibetans living in about 30 other countries, earning their living successfully just as the citizens of their country of refuge and succour. As for the young Tibetans, they are taught the themes of our cultural heritage with the Tibetan language as the basis. At the same time, they are given modern education and today's section of young Tibetans are walking shoulder-to-shoulder with the educated youths of other modern, developed countries. Above all, as for our religion and culture, more than a thousand years ago, the complete teachings of the Buddha, which includes the Mahayana, Theravada and Tantrayana, were introduced from India and along with this came the influence of an enlightened culture. The Tibetans through the generations studied, practiced and preserved them. These fine traditions of Tibet recently underwent deterioration, destruction and annihilation. However, we in exile, through great efforts, have collected, preserved and published whatever scriptural texts we could find and we have also established centres for the study and practice of Buddhism where young monks can study the Sutra and Tantra. As a result, firm foundations have been laid for the continuity and further spread of Buddhism. Moreover, hundreds of new centres have been established throughout the world where previously there was no trace of Buddhism. And today, many educated people the world over are studying and practising Buddhism.

Similarly, with regard to the fundamental question of the Tibetan people's freedom struggle, the United Nations passed three resolutions as a result of our appeal to the world body. Furthermore, an increasing number of people throughout the world are acknowledging the fact that the Tibetan race, language, traditions, religion, culture, political and economic systems are completely distinct and separate from that of the Chinese people and the fact that Tibet was an independent country with a recorded history of more than a thousand years. Many are still becoming aware of the present true situation inside Tibet and the aspiration of the Tibetan people. Consequently, there is a growing number who is supporting and sympathising with our just cause.

The main factor that has contributed towards the Tibetan accomplishments briefly sketched above is the tremendous support the government and people of India have given to the Tibetans, a support based on the age-old ties of religion and culture that bind India

and Tibet. The Tibetan accomplishments are also due to the help and guidance from various international aid agencies, philanthropists, countries that stand for peace and justice and statesmen, all of whom are motivated by their belief in the oneness of mankind and by their love and compassion for their fellow human beings. On this occasion of the 25th anniversary, I would like, on behalf of the Tibetans, in and outside Tibet, to sincerely thank our supporters and friends. When we are going through immeasurable hardship and suffering, unprecedented in our history, the sympathy, support and help that the people of the world, led by India, have accorded to us will forever be remembered and recorded in history.

Irrespective of varying degrees of development and economic disparities, continents, nations, communities, families, in fact, all individuals are dependent on one another for their existence and well-being. Every human being wishes for happiness and does not want suffering. By clearly realising this, we must develop mutual compassion, love and a fundamental sense of justice. In such an atmosphere there is hope that problems between nations and problems within families can be gradually overcome and that people can live in peace and harmony. Instead, if people adopt an attitude of selfishness, domination and jealousy, the world at large, as well as individuals, will never enjoy peace and harmony. Therefore, I believe that human relations based on mutual compassion and love is fundamentally important to human happiness.

Regarding the situation inside Tibet during the past four or five years, most of the many innocent Tibetans who have been imprisoned unjustly for about twenty years have been released. There has also been a comparative degree of freedom of movement between Tibet and the outside world. This has enabled those who have survived the ordeal to meet with their long-separated family members, relatives and friends. In the agricultural and nomadic sectors, families have been given full management responsibility as well as the freedom to engage in private side-line production and petty business. Consequently, in Lhasa and some towns and villages, people's livelihood has slightly improved. There is also the restoration of the Tibetan language, which the Chinese had neglected, undermined and corrupted. New publications in the Tibetan language are being brought out. Because of the lessening in the intensity of unremitting supervised labour, the Tibetans are given a breathing space.

Despite these recent changes the situation is far from satisfactory. Although much publicity has been made about the freedom of religious worship by restoring a few of the destroyed monasteries, obstructions are still placed on those entering the monastic order and those who start to preach, study and practice the Dharma. Similarly, regarding the Tibetan written language, apart from the general publication of some Tibetan folk tales, plays and stories, it is not used either in the administration of the affairs of the country or in its economic management. Instead another language is used, this is a clear indication that the administration of Tibet is in the hands of an alien people who do not know the Tibetan language. The so called freedom of religious worship and national autonomy, through impressive slogans, is simply empty talk. Moreover, recently, another issue has been brought to light. Under cover of their campaign to root out criminals, thousands of Tibetans were arrested, imprisoned and sent to hard labour camps, irrespective of whether

they were innocent or guilty. Many were executed openly as well as secretly. The present campaign of terror which the Chinese have unleashed in Tibet have once again made the Tibetan people live in a state of anxiety and fear. The brutal act of playing with the lives of people by believing in the power of weapons cannot subdue the human mind. Till now the number of Tibetans who were killed in action, who were executed, who died through starvation, who were tortured to death and who were driven to suicide in order to escape a hellish existence all add up to about one million. What has been achieved by all this killing? If people were given a basically satisfactory standard of living, full opportunity for learning and freedom to pursue their aspirations, then it is possible that eventually a climate of mutual trust, goodwill and fellowship will prevail. The Tibetan people, in and outside Tibet must examine the facts of the real situation by abandoning speculation and breaking away from the bondage of fear. They must struggle with greater determination and dedication to regain the right which is justly ours and enjoyed by people the world over — the right to govern ourselves.

With prayers for the cessation of sickness, famine, conflict and the causes of disharmony and human suffering and for the achievement of peace and human brotherhood.

The Dalai Lama
10th March 1984