

**Statement of His Holiness the Dalai Lama on
the Forty-Sixth Anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day
10th March 2005**

On the occasion of the 46th anniversary of the Tibetan People's Uprising, I convey my warm greetings to my fellow Tibetans in Tibet and in exile and to our friends around the world.

During these more than four decades great changes have taken place in Tibet. There has been a great deal of economic progress along with development in infrastructure. The Golmud-Lhasa railway link that is being built is a case in point. However, during the same period much has been written by independent journalists and travelers to Tibet about the real situation in Tibet and not what they have been shown. Most of them portray a very different picture than what the Chinese government claims, clearly criticizing China about the lack of human rights, religious freedom and self-rule in Tibet. What has actually happened and is still happening is that since the establishment of the Tibet Autonomous Region the real authority has been solely held by Chinese leaders. As for the Tibetan people, they have been facing suspicions and growing restrictions. The lack of true ethnic equality and harmony based on trust, and the absence of genuine stability in Tibet clearly shows that things are not well in Tibet and that basically there is a problem.

Prominent and respected Tibetan leaders in Tibet have spoken out on this from time to time and even suffered because of their courageous acts. In the early 1960s, the late Panchen Lama outlined the sufferings and aspirations of the Tibetan people in his petition to the Chinese leaders. Baba Phuntsok Wangyal, one of the foremost Tibetan communist leaders, in his recent biography published in English dwells at length on the need to meet the interests of the Tibetan people. In fact, it is clear that most senior Tibetan officials in Tibet deep in their hearts are extremely dissatisfied.

This year the Chinese government will mark the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the Tibet Autonomous Region. There will be much fanfare and many commemorative events to celebrate the occasion but these will be meaningless when they do not reflect the ground realities. For example, the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution were celebrated with great pomp as real achievements at the time they took place.

China has made tremendous economic progress during the past more than two decades. China today is not what it was twenty or thirty years ago. Much has changed in China. As a result she has become a major player in the world and China rightly deserves this position. It is a big nation with a huge population and a rich and ancient civilization. However, China's image is tarnished by her human rights records, undemocratic actions, lack of rule of law and the unequal implementation of autonomy rights regarding minorities, including the Tibetans. All these are a cause for more suspicion and distrust from the outside world. Internally, they are an obstacle to unity and stability that are of utmost importance to the leaders of the People's Republic of China. In my view, it is

important that as China becomes a powerful and respectable nation she should be able to adopt a reasonable policy with confidence.

The world in general, of which China is a part, is changing for the better. In recent times there is definitely a greater awareness and appreciation for peace, non-violence, democracy, justice and environmental protection. The recent unprecedented response from governments and individuals across the world to the tsunami disaster victims reaffirms that the world is truly interdependent and the importance of universal responsibility.

My involvement in the affairs of Tibet is not for the purpose of claiming certain personal rights or political position for myself nor attempting to stake claims for the Tibetan administration in exile. In 1992 in a formal announcement I stated clearly that when we return to Tibet with a certain degree of freedom I will not hold any office in the Tibetan government or any other political position and that the present Tibetan administration in exile will be dissolved. Moreover, the Tibetans working in Tibet should carry on the main responsibility of administering Tibet.

I once again want to reassure the Chinese authorities that as long as I am responsible for the affairs of Tibet we remain fully committed to the Middle Way Approach of not seeking independence for Tibet and are willing to remain within the People's Republic of China. I am convinced that in the long run such an approach is of benefit to the Tibetan people for their material progress. It is encouraging that there is support from various parts of the world for this approach as being reasonable, realistic and of mutual benefit to the Chinese and Tibetans. I am particularly encouraged by the recognition and support that has come from certain quarters of the intellectual circle from within China.

I am happy with our renewed contacts with the Chinese leadership and that the third round of meetings last September shows that gradually our interactions are improving. Now that our elected political leadership is shouldering more responsibility in Tibetan affairs, I have advised them to look into the issues raised by the Chinese side during our third round of talks and to take steps to address or clarify them as needed. We remain hopeful that eventually we will be able to develop the necessary trust and resolve this long-standing issue to our mutual benefit.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to express the Tibetan people's gratitude and appreciation to the people and Government of India for their steadfast sympathy and support. I very much feel a part of this nation not only because of the centuries-old religious and cultural ties that India and Tibet enjoyed but also because I and most of the Tibetans in exile lived in India for the past 45 years.

I offer my prayers to the brave men and women of Tibet who gave their lives for the cause of Tibetan freedom.

The Dalai Lama
March 10, 2005