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**Tibetan Women's Association  
Central Executive Committee**

Bhagsunag Rd. P.O. McLeod Ganj

Dharamsala-176219

District Kangra (H.P)

INDIA

Tel: (91-1892) 21527/21198

Fax: (91-1892) 21528

Email: tibwomen@gmail.com

Web.: [www.tibetanwomen.org](http://www.tibetanwomen.org)

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**Dedicated to His Holiness  
the 14th Dalai Lama**



## **PREFACE**

In order to serve the interests of humanity in general and those of the Tibetan people in particular, His Holiness the Dalai Lama travels frequently to many parts of India and even abroad. His concerns include the protection of the environment and the preservation of the Buddhist tradition, as well as the promotion of world peace and harmony among different ethnic groups and religious faiths.

In 2001, with the permission from the office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan Women's Association compiled excerpts from statements made by His Holiness the Dalai Lama wherever he travels, into a book in Tibetan and published it. In order to benefit wider world community, we decided to translate the book into English. We hope this book will contribute to the protection of environment and promotion of world peace and inter-religious harmony.

The Tibetan Women's Association is very grateful to the Office of H.H the Dalai Lama for granting the permission to publish this material both in Tibetan & English. We would like to acknowledge our heartfelt gratitude to Mr. Pema Thinley for translating the second edition of the book into English.

Finally, we extend our sincere appreciation to Tso Pema Non-profit organization ([www.tsopemanonprofit.org](http://www.tsopemanonprofit.org)) for granting the funding for publication of this second revised edition.

Tibetan Women's Association  
Central Executive Committee  
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## **INDO-TIBETAN TIES**

Tibet and India enjoy a profound and centuries-old religious and cultural relationship. The Tibetan people's deep sense of reverence for India is borne out by our reference to her as the Holy Land. Usually, I tell people that Indians are the teachers and we Tibetans the students. When the students are in trouble, the teacher has a special responsibility to help ensure that the students, namely Tibetans, are able to stand on their own feet and achieve the goal of returning to their homeland.

We Tibetans have been living as refugees in India for over forty years now. Despite her own difficulties, India has been exceptionally generous in her assistance to us: resettling Tibetan refugees, preserving and promoting our religion and culture and providing educational facilities for our children. India's generosity to our people must be clearly written in the history of Tibet. We should never forget our sense of gratitude to this country.

It was only after the establishment of Chinese rule in Tibet in 1959 that China and India went to war in 1962. And this was the first direct confrontation in history between the two nations. The Sino Indian border was unknown before 1949. Earlier, there were no military personnel at all posted on the Indo-Tibetan border in the Himalayas. All we had were a handful of Indian police.

This situation changed dramatically after China forcefully invaded the peaceful land of Tibet. Now, both sides of the Himalayas are heavily fortified. It is neither the presence of the Dalai Lama and Tibetan refugees in India, nor the demarcation of borders between India and Tibet that are the sticking point in Sino-Indian relations. Instead, what has soured relations between the two countries is the fact that China's illegal occupation of Tibet poses a direct threat of incursion into Indian Territory. Without the Chinese invasion, Tibet would today be serving as a buffer between them, which would be beneficial for long-term peace and stability on the Asian continent. Notably India, Nepal, Bhutan, and so forth, would be free from the fear of external threat. In this context, I think that it is futile to remain preoccupied in overcoming immediate problems. What one must do is to address the root of the conflict.

Before 1959, we had Indian traders in Phagri, Gyangtse and Lhasa. There was even an Indian Mission in Dekyilingkha, Lhasa. When I visited India

on the occasion of the 2,500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mahaparinirvana of Lord Buddha, at the invitation of the Mahabodhi Society, the Indian government extended me the same reception and honour as accorded to any leader of an independent nation.

I should mention that in the past, Indian pilgrims did not need permits to visit Mount Kailash and Lake Manasarovar; pilgrims had as free access to these holy sites as if they were visiting just another part of India. Now both the internal and external situation has changed beyond imagination.

The Tibetan issue is not only about the welfare and interests of the Tibetan people. In the long run, it has a very important bearing on India's national interests as well. I may venture to draw the attention of the government and the people of India to this. Many of India's major rivers, such as the Ganges and Bramaputra, originate in Tibet. What's more, India is now obliged to spend huge sums of money on border security. Even a single day's expenditure on border security-if freed for investment on rural development, schools, hospitals and roads-would make a definite improvement in ordinary peoples' living conditions. It is easy to gauge the benefit of such a situation on India's economic and social advancement. This is an area, which demands thought and attention from us all.

If Tibet had not been occupied by China, India would be ten times more developed than it is now. Basically, India is a very stable nation. However, sometimes she seems a bit too patient or too willing to please other nations, thus giving the impression that she is not sure of her strength. Then, at other times, politicians, ruling parties and people in positions of power give the impression that they are either unjust or too preoccupied with averting controversy and immediate problems during their tenure, thus causing the long term interests of the nation to suffer. I only hope that this impression is mistaken.

## **NON-VIOLENCE**

India is rich in religious and cultural traditions. While Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism and Buddhism originated in India, other major religions, such as Islam and Christianity, also flourish in this country. The followers of all these religions have full freedom to teach and practice according to their own traditions. A huge nation, India serves as an example of religious tolerance, mutual respect and understanding among the followers of

different faiths.

India is a great nation in terms of her landmass and population. She is known as the largest democracy in the world. Different religious traditions and cultures spread from India and brought light to the people of many countries around the globe. The theory and practice of Ahimsa or non-violence is originated from India. Many Indian leaders of the past worked hard to ameliorate the plight of their people-on both a local and national level-through the great path of non-violence. The legacy of those great leaders is alive even today.

Nowadays, we see growing interest in non-violence in many parts of the world. And, indeed, non-violence is India's gift to the world. At such a time, it would be unfortunate if in India non-violence were to become a matter of mere words, words to be used in documents and speeches rather than practiced as a living tradition. I sometimes tell my Indian friends, half-jokingly, that the most appropriate way of exporting non-violence to other countries is by first practicing it thoroughly in India. Likening non-violence to material goods, I tell them that it would be a pity if a country exports all its produce without keeping enough for use at home.

## **CHINESE PEOPLE AND THE TIBETAN ISSUE**

The relationship between Tibet and China began in the 7<sup>th</sup> century when Tibet's 33<sup>rd</sup> king, Songtsen Gampo married to the Chinese princess, Wengchen. At times, Tibet exerted its influence on neighbouring countries and their populace, while at other times; Tibet fell under the influence of Mongols, Gorkhas, Manchus and British India.

Although the Chinese government assumes a hard-line stance on the issue of Tibet, the attitude of the Chinese people-namely the intellectuals, freedom activists, democrats, some thoughtful cadres, and objective public-gives us cause for optimism. They are beginning to realize the truth of the Tibetan cause. They understand that the Tibetan issue is unique and different from that of other regions in China. Some of them have written articles explaining the unique nature of the Tibetan issue, expressing the need to give special consideration to Tibet. In doing so, they have advocated the need for the authorities to make direct contact with me to resolve the Tibetan problem. Recently, I met some of these Chinese and found that they were liberal-minded and supportive of my middle way approach. They thought that

the Chinese government should consider the real situation of Tibet. This is a positive development of great significance. We Tibetans do not harbor a sense of hatred or animosity toward the Chinese people. We are all the same as human beings, who desire happiness. We have lived as neighbours over the past centuries and will have to do so in future, whether we like it or not. Therefore, I believe that we will have peace, stability and happiness only if we help each other in a spirit of love and harmony.

China is one of the largest Buddhist nations in the world. I say this because Buddhism flourished there some three or four centuries before it came to Tibet. Unfortunately, in recent years Buddhism has suffered serious setbacks in China. I believe that Tibet has a potential to make a significant contribution to China by way of helping to revive Buddhism and serving as its spiritual brother. It is possible that before long I will have an opportunity to give the Kalachakra empowerment in Tiananmen Square and visiting the holy site of Wu-tai Shan in China. Whether this possibility is realized or not will depend on the empathy and support of our Chinese brothers and sisters towards us.

## **TIBETAN ISSUE**

The Tibetan issue is not merely a matter of the interests of 150,000 odd Tibetans in exile. Rather, it specifically concerns the happiness of six million Tibetans, who are living human beings irrespective of whether you consider such numbers to be large or small. To put it more explicitly, it is an issue relating to the right of a people to determine their future. If the six million Tibetans in Tibet are happy and satisfied, the will of the Tibetans in exile or the Dalai Lama is of no consequence. In other words, the Tibetan issue should be considered resolved on the day Tibetans in Tibet are happy and satisfied.

Our struggle is not an ideological conflict. The Tibetans are neither anti-revolution, nor anti-reform. Similarly, we are not against the Chinese people. Over the past five decades, we have had to face unbearable oppression and hardship. However, I see no point in harbouring anger and animosity toward the perpetrators. Therefore, I have consistently made open-minded and sincere efforts to achieve genuine autonomy for Tibet, based on justice and equality. This, I believe, is the only way to happiness for both the Tibetan and Chinese peoples.

History bears witness to whether Tibet in the past was an independent nation or part of China. Even if I make a statement in conformity with the Chinese government's wishes, it will not change the reality of history. What is more, I cannot lie, being, as I am, a Buddhist monk.

Whether Taiwan reunites with the People's Republic of China or not will be depending on Beijing's actions on one hand and the wishes of the Taiwanese people on the other. It is inappropriate for an outsider like me to interfere in the future of Taiwan. We Tibetans are entitled to independence and self-determination. Even so, it is better to let bygones be bygones. I am more concerned with the future Tibet. Surprisingly, Beijing's spoken statements and printed documents keep on insisting that I am seeking Tibetan independence. The people of the world can testify whether or not I am indeed struggling for Tibetan independence.

In international forums, the Chinese government consistently expresses concerns over the territorial integrity and stability of China. If that is the case, Beijing should realize that I am working for a Middle way solution, which, while helping to prevent the separation of Tibet from China, seeks human rights, equality and democratic freedom for Tibetans so that we have the freedom not only to preserve and promote our religion and culture, but also to work for the development of our thoughts, education, health and economy. I sincerely believe that this solution will bring lasting, mutual benefits, just as it provides practical advantages for realizing cooperation and collective responsibility.

If the Chinese government, instead of making sincere efforts to achieve a negotiated solution, continues to paper over its mistakes and turn a blind eye to the real problems of Tibetans, it will not be able to legitimize its position even in the eyes of thoughtful Chinese people, much less the international community.

Within the Tibetan community, people hold different views on my stand. As a leader of Tibetans, I frequently explain my position to the Tibetan people and advise them to follow the path of non-violence in our struggle. However, when Beijing persists in ignoring my policy of non-violence, I feel deeply concerned that the Tibetan people, particularly the youth, may be driven to the point of desperation where they find themselves forced to change the nature of Tibetan struggle.

On the other hand, if the Tibetan issue is resolved peacefully and the Tibetans in exile and Tibet are reunited, I will hand over the Dalai Lama's historical power to an interim government and live as a private citizen, who can occasionally be called upon for social or community service. But I will not hold any governmental or political position. I have stated this both in public and in writing and remain firmly committed to it.

## **TIBET TODAY**

In the recent past, there have been some negative developments in Tibet. Though not labeled as the Cultural Revolution, these developments have brought as much pain, hardship and repression as did the Cultural Revolution. Let me cite a few examples: the Chinese claim that there is religious freedom in Tibet. In reality, there are very stringent restrictions on the promotion of religion.

Monks and nuns are required to obtain two or three different permits to travel from one place to another. As part of the "patriotic education campaign", the authorities have expelled a large number of monks and nuns from monasteries and nunneries. Many religious institutions have been closed down. An age limit has been fixed on those allowed to join monasteries and nunneries. Similarly, there is a ceiling on the number of monks and nuns that each religious institution is allowed to take in. Even hermits are required to pay taxes to the government, making it impossible for them to pursue their spiritual practice. While strict bans are enforced on the construction of new stupas and monasteries, the old ones are being destroyed. Spiritual teachers and popularly revered spiritual figures are persecuted under the charge of being counterrevolutionaries or splittists. It is seen as crime to make offerings to the monasteries, monks and nuns. Thus, people do not have the freedom to engage in spiritual activities.

Although Tibet has a large landmass and rich resources, its population is small. Nevertheless, the Chinese authorities enforce birth control measures on the people. If a Tibetan couple has only one child, the family is given rewards. On the other hand, those with more than one child are penalized; the family is fined and the additional child is denied a residential permit. If you are a Tibetan, you do not have the freedom even to be born. This has had a devastating effect on the population of Tibet.

Farmers and the nomads have to submit a major portion of their produce to government in the form of tax and compulsory sale. What the Chinese government terms as the exploitative system of the past is now being imposed on the Tibetan people. Tibet's ancient forests are exploited to meet the timber needs of China. Similarly, Tibet's wildlife, including its aquatic life, is being decimated.

For financial gain, China offers the Tibetan plateau for the disposal of radioactive waste from other countries. The authorities are also engaged in large-scale mining operations in many parts of Tibet, from where the minerals are exported to China. In this way, Tibet is experiencing alarming environmental degradation and pollution.

Hospitals turn away Tibetans patients who do not have money to pay their bill. Many Tibetans cannot afford to consult a doctor or buy medicines. Some Tibetan patients are used as guinea pigs in giving surgical training to new Chinese doctors. We have heard cases of Tibetan patients having died as a result of this kind of utter disrespect for their lives.

In major cities, there are standard schools run by the state. But admission to these schools is reserved for Chinese students and children of Party members and government officials. Ordinary Tibetan children do not have a similar right to join these schools. Individual Tibetans and foreign aid agencies have opened some schools to promote education among Tibetan. The curriculum in these schools is designed to give more emphasis to the teaching of Tibetan language, although other subjects are also taught. While some of these schools were forced to close on the charges of engaging in "splittist" and "counterrevolutionary" activities, others have had their administrative control seized by the government. The Chinese language is given so much importance in Tibet that unless one is well-versed in Chinese one cannot get any job in Tibet, no matter how proficient a person is in Tibetan. And, when parents send their children to Tibetan schools in India, the authorities accuse them of holding the wrong political ideology; and they are harassed and penalized. These campaigns threaten to leave our children, the future of Tibet, without adequate education and without any knowledge of their own culture.

The chinese government undertakes a policy of sinicising Tibet by transferring a large number of civilian and military personnel into Tibet. Alcoholism, gambling, smuggling, wildlife poaching, internecine fights

over grasslands and water, robbery, theft, and prostitution are becoming increasingly commonplace in many parts of Tibet. That the authorities connive with such elements reflects their hidden agenda to encourage young Tibetans to sink into depravity so that they merely display a human form without any of the concomitant human virtues.

In providing roads, water and electrical facilities, the areas inhabited by the Tibetans are discriminated against in favour of the predominantly Chinese areas.

It is considered illegal for Tibetans to demonstrate loyalty to their religion, culture, language and traditional values. Even if Tibetans demand the rights guaranteed by the Chinese constitution, such as religious freedom, nationality equality, equal opportunity, educational opportunity, etc., they are accused of nursing a sense of Tibetan nationalism. Peaceful demonstrators are jailed and beaten, and their arms, legs and ribs are broken-sometimes even their internal organs are damaged, rendering them handicapped for the rest of their lives.

## **ADVICE TO VISITORS FROM TIBET**

Recently, the situation in Tibet has deteriorated even further. Photographs of me are banned from the monasteries and temples. People are forced to sign documents criticizing me. When a large number of monks and nuns refused to comply with these orders, many of them were expelled from their institutions; some of them were tortured, while others simply disappeared. Surprise raids are conducted on the homes of the general populace, and particularly of the Tibetan officials, to search for photographs of me. Those found with such photographs suffer the prospect of expulsion from their jobs, loss of provident funds, deprivation of the right to gain a government job in future, or deduction of fines from their salaries. Anyone-a monk, a nun, or an official-found in possession of a photograph of me is considered a criminal.

The bond of faith and loyalty between the Tibetan people and me is strong, pure and deep. This fact is so obvious that it needs no explanation. One only needs to look at the events of the last four decades to realize this.

In the past, the Chinese government called me such names as a “butcher”, a “wolf in monk’s clothing”, etc. later they called me a “counterrevolutionary”

and now a “splittist”. These are just thoughtless utterances. They will not make any difference to me. And, I want to tell you not to be perturbed by what the Chinese say about me. Just be happy and set your mind at rest.

I hear reports of Tibetans having to suffer beating, torture and even imprisonment for possessing a photograph of me. This worries me. I cannot do anything practical to ameliorate your suffering. All I can do is to pray for you. If the Chinese authorities tell you to oppose or criticize me, just do so without hesitation.

When you return to Tibet, give this message to other Tibetans back home. Tibetans in Tibet live under Chinese rule. It is common knowledge that you are deprived of freedom, equality and justice. So when you criticize or oppose me, every sensible person would understand that you are doing so at gunpoint. Unless someone is completely ignorant of the actual situation in Tibet, he will not believe the words of the Chinese government or its propaganda machinery. Today, the world community has enough information to know what kind of person I am and what kind of government the Chinese have. They also know about the critical situation in Tibet.

## **INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR TIBET**

We Tibetans have been fortunate to receive a great deal of support for our cause. This is because our cause is based on truth and justice. The nature of international support for our cause today is different from that in the past. In the past, people supported us due to their ideological leanings. By way of contrast, people today support us because they have learned the truth.

Lately, the support for our cause has gained considerable momentum across the world. Governments, parliaments and non-governmental organizations (NGOS) show a great deal of interest and concern for our cause. We also find unbiased spiritual figures, politicians, social workers, scholars, legal experts, historians, writers and ordinary individuals showing much interest in the Tibetan cause and doing all they can to help us, directly or indirectly. Their support has been a great source of hope and inspiration for the Tibetans. Needless to say, it has had a significant influence on our freedom struggle.

When you support the Tibetan issue, you are supporting not only the Tibetan people, but also truth and justice. Supporting truth and justice is a special

responsibility of human beings, who are sensitive to the pain and happiness of fellow beings. By supporting truth, you are not only enhancing your prestige, you are also leaving behind an important legacy.

To shun the truth is to indulge in the ultimate act of pettiness, and act that is unbecoming of a self-respecting human being. On the other hand, it is an ultimate act of courage to speak up and fight for truth and justice. When the cause of justice is undermined, the human community as a whole suffers a setback. Therefore, it is the duty of all to work for the cause of truth and justice. When a group of people suffers oppression, we should not turn our back on them by saying that these are their “internal affairs”. Rather, we should show our solidarity with them. This will make a huge difference to a large number of people, for it will indeed serve as a deterrent for acts of oppression, suppression and tyranny.

## **HUMAN RIGHTS**

Shaken by the unimaginable devastation and suffering wrought by the second world war, the United Nations General Assembly in 1948 proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Containing 30 articles, this document was signed by the representatives of member states and publicized throughout the world. In this context, I would like to point out that human rights are the basis of freedom, justice, happiness and peace.

Providing for equality under law, the declaration states that everyone is entitled to equal rights and freedoms without discrimination of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, political opinion, social origin, property, birth or other status. It goes without saying that every signatory has a responsibility to adhere to the declaration and bring violators to justice. Otherwise, the declaration will lose its essence.

There cannot be a complete guarantee for peace and freedom as long as fundamental human rights are violated. Similarly, there cannot be peace and stability as long as there is oppression and suppression. It is unfair to seek one’s own interests at the cost of other people’s rights. Truth cannot shine if we fail to accept truth or consider it illegal to tell the truth. Where will be the idea of truth and reality be if we push the truth and facts under the carpet and allow illegal actions to triumph? The victims of oppression look to the United Nations and peace-loving countries for succour. And, if

the United Nations and peace-loving countries let them down, whom else can they turn to? The members' states of the United Nations may not be able to help all sentient beings. But they can at least show love for other human beings, and help them out of their suffering. If they cannot do even this much, then what is the purpose of their life as human beings, with all the attributes of human intelligence? It is precisely for this reason that Tibet's by gone spiritual masters prayed for sinners to have a short life.

The UN member states should bring trade, economic and political pressure to bear against violators of the declaration of Human rights. Nothing gives as much impetus to the violation of human rights and international laws as succumbing to the offending nation's threats or appeasing it by offering a favourable trading status. If nations, individuals and societies pursue self-interest without any consideration of the sufferings of others, it will be, as the Tibetan saying goes, like a robber supporting a thief. This is just the kind of situation which drives anguished people to the point of desperation, whereby they resort to acts of violence. And, this is the worst thing that can happen in the world. Therefore, the United Nations and its member states must adhere to the principles of the Universal Declaration of human Rights just as they must encourage others to do so. If our failure to support truth drives people to desperation and acts of violence, the responsibility must be borne by all those countries that have encouraged the evil.

## **RELIGIOUS HARMONY**

All religions teach the virtues of love, altruism and patience, although they may be at variance in philosophical and ideological terms. We should therefore respect all religions. Every religious faith has made significant contributions to humanity for centuries in the past. In the future also, religious traditions will help us to promote peace in our own respective communities or at least to bring harmony and understanding between neighbours.

Philosophical differences are not important in that philosophy per se is neither the ultimate purpose, not the goal of any religion. Similarly, philosophy cannot help us in serving others. If we criticise each other's ideology, we will find ourselves embroiled in unending arguments, which will only cause unhappiness and disharmony. Whatever the differences between the philosophies and ideologies of different religions, the important thing is for all believers to practise the teaching of their respective religious

traditions in their day-to-day life. For instance, if someone believes in the Creator, he must try to follow the law of the Creator. Otherwise, he cannot be referred to as a true follower.

Essentially, all religions teach us to develop our minds so that we can achieve tranquillity and a kind heart. In other words, we should work towards spiritual development alongside material progress. We cannot achieve lasting happiness without a peaceful and tranquil mind. If we harbour unhealthy motivation or evil designs, people will ultimately see through us, no matter what appearance we adopt.

As in the past, today we see conflicts and wars in the name of religion. People fight in the name of religion only because they are too parochial and unable to understand or practice the true message of their respective religious traditions. I say this because religion should never be the cause of war. Fights in the name of religion occur when people fail to grab the true meaning of their respective religions. I think the following measures will help to foster understanding and harmony among different religious traditions, and thus promote peace and security in society:

1. Frequent inter-faith meetings among leaders of different religious traditions to share their spiritual experiences and insights.
2. Meetings of scholars to discuss and study what they have in common, rather than what is different, among various religious traditions.
3. Increase in contacts among the followers of different religions and visits to each other's places of pilgrimage and prayer.

If these steps are taken, the general public will develop respect for other religious traditions. This, in turn, will help to promote harmony in society.

## **RELIGIOUS CONVERSION**

I always say that if you are a believer, it is best and most appropriate to follow your traditional religion. Conversion is unnecessary. It generates a great deal of complication, controversy, ill feeling, and suspicion. It can also lead to conflict. On the other hand, if some individuals find another religion more suitable for their spiritual development, then it is alright for

them to change to that religion, provided they do so on their own initiative and without coaxing from anyone else.

For example, I am a Buddhist monk. I follow Buddhism single mindedly because it extremely helpful for my mind. For me personally, Buddhism is the most suitable, appropriate and helpful religion. But it would be unfair and unreasonable for me to persuade and exhort others to follow Buddhism. Since human beings are born with different propensities, I risk the possibility of sowing the seeds of problems if I ask everyone to follow Buddhism.

As a rule, each individual follows one religion. But, we also come across cases of individuals professing to follow more than one religion. Such individuals cannot do justice even to one religion. But from the point of view of society, in which there are many people with varied mental propensities, it is healthier to practice religious pluralism. The reality is that since people have different mental propensities, one religion cannot fulfill the spiritual needs of all. Therefore, it is a good thing that there are different religions to fulfill the spiritual needs of different mental propensities. It is a bit like a restaurant with a large menu to cater to the different palates of its customers. If the restaurant serves only one dish, we will either have to go hungry or eat that single item regardless of whether we like it not or whether it is harmful to our health or not.

## **RELIGION AND POLITICS**

The political struggle for the restoration of Tibetan freedom should not be seen in the same light as we view ordinary politics. The Tibetan political struggle is aimed at preserving Tibetan identity and culture, a culture that is closely related to Buddhism and its fundamental principle of compassion. This culture has the potential to benefit not only Buddhist, but also non-believers. It has the potential to bring happiness to all sentient beings. This being the case, I do my best to serve the cause of Tibet. As a Buddhist monk, I see this as a spiritual practice which will not only make my life meaningful, but also lead me to the path of enlightenment. If we serve sentient beings by engaging in political activities with a spiritual orientation, we are actually following the Bodhisattva's way of life. Therefore, I call upon Tibetan spiritual figures, as they have influence in the community, to work for the common cause of Tibet.

If a layperson in the service of our administration is able to devote 5 percent of his or her time to the common cause of Tibet, celibate monks and nuns have the potential to devote 75 percent of their time to our cause. This means spiritual figures with the potential to make a difference must shoulder responsibility for the cause of Tibet. It would not do for them to shirk their responsibility under such pretexts as, “I am a spiritual practitioner. I do not understand politics.”

I sincerely believe that we should follow secular democracy when Tibet becomes free. Take the case of India. Here, people are free to follow any religion as long as they do not break the law of land. Although 90 percent of Indians are Hindus, the state gives equal treatment to all religions. This is the measure of India’s greatness. Every religion is equal before the law. The Indian government does not have a religious ministry or religious representations in the parliament. Religion in India is regarded as a personal matter. I think this is very healthy.

These days, in some countries religious figures enter politics in order to gain titles, material advantage, reputation and other privileges. This is not a good sign. It is possible that they have joined politics for other reasons. Even so, they run the risk of exposing themselves to manipulation by politicians hankering after votes. It is also possible that the religious figures join politics when they forget their real obligations. Whatever the case may be, if people do not question such religious figures, they become used to taking things for granted.

If religious people enter politics, they will find themselves forced to indulge in nepotism and acts of currying favour. They will sometimes find themselves telling lies to safeguard the interests of themselves and their party. They will also have to criticize the opposition party on the basis of personal prejudice. What then will become of their role as spiritual practitioners? Their involvement in politics will create factions in their religious institutions. It will also divide their followers into different factions. Is this helpful to social peace and stability?

If religious figures overreach themselves to enter politics, they will have to approve and support every single action of their party members. They will have to appease those who have put them in positions of power and those who have voted for them. They will have to see the opposition party as their foe. Let us do some soul searching and ask ourselves if this is what

spiritual practitioners should be doing. Let us ask ourselves if spiritual practitioners engaged in such deeds during the time of Lord Buddha. At times, it seems that people who profess to be spiritual practitioners are actually engaged in bringing disgrace to their spiritual tradition. As I see it, it is more becoming for spiritual practitioners to be impartial and worthy of trust and respect.

All spiritual figures- be they Buddhists, Hindus, Christians or Muslims should examine their behaviors to see if it is indeed in line with the teachings of their respective religions. Spiritual figures should ask themselves why people are losing respect for them. They should ask themselves the cause of conflicts that occur in the name of religion. If they are able to find answers to these problems and take corrective measures, they can be called true practitioners. Otherwise, they are only putting up the outward appearance of being spiritual practitioners. There is nothing wrong with religion *per se*. But when spiritual practitioners harbour unhealthy thought and motivation, it brings disrepute to religion and religious practitioners as a whole. All spiritual practitioners and believers have a responsibility to challenge these problems.

## **BUDDHISM AND SCIENCE**

Buddhism is a rich and deep religion. It is also a practical religion. The teaching of Buddhism is for all sentient beings, not just for one group of people or one country. People of high, medium and low intelligence can practise this religion according to their respective level of intelligence. I started my Buddhist education as a child. Although I am now in my sixties, I still have not mastered the complete teaching of Buddhism and I continue to receive Buddhist teachings.

Among modern scientists and intellectuals, some refer to Buddhism as a science of mind. Buddhism teaches us to seek enlightenment through reasoning and experience rather than through faith and belief. From this point of view, one can say that it is indeed a science of mind. Buddhism teaches us to investigate all internal and external phenomena. This is the reason why modern scientists take special interest in the Buddhist teaching. The philosophy of Buddhism can stand the test of logic and reasoning. What is more, Buddhism encourages us to test its teaching logically before accepting it. The Buddha said:

**Bhikshus and scholars should not accept my words out of reverence  
But only after thorough analysis and examination,  
Just as a goldsmith would test gold  
By way of burning, cutting and rubbing.**

Buddhism and science follow similar procedures for arriving at the truth. Buddhism teaches us that our direct perception is the first step in trying to understand a phenomenon. Based on this, we use reasoning to understand the less perceptible facts of the phenomenon. The deduction we have made in this way is put to test in practical application. This is similar to the methodology used in scientific research.

With the advent of science in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, spirituality has suffered setbacks in that some religious traditions have lost followers. But Buddhism has stood the test of science. Since Buddhism is about facts and logic, it goes very well with science. As a matter of fact, discoveries made by scientists like Newton and Darwin are akin to the teaching of Buddhism. Many aspects of the laws of gravity and motion, atomic energy, the theories of evolution, etc. are similar to theories propounded in the Abhidharma texts and the sutra of Mindfulness. More particularly, Einstein's Theory of Relativity, which overthrew the concepts of earlier physicists, is similar in many ways to the theory of dependent origination, expounded by the Indian Buddhist master Acharya Nagarjuna some 2000 years ago.

Scientific disciplines such as astronomy, particle physics, neurology, biology, cosmology and physics share common ground with Buddhism in many ways. The Quantum Theory expounded by Einstein's principal students-Max Planck, Niels Bohr and Heisenberg-is similar to the teaching of Buddhism.

We had held a series of conferences called "Mind and life" to facilitate an exchange of views between Buddhism and science. So far we have had seven such conferences in Dharamsala. In addition, I have opportunities to meet and exchange views with foreign scientists during my visits overseas.

Physiologists like Freud and Jung trace the origin of many of our mental troubles to our upbringing, particularly to our relationship with our mother. Some of our mental problems, they believe, have a connection to the education and habits of our parents. According to them, we can overcome

our unhappiness or pain by releasing it in the form of painting, music or other physical representations.

The teaching of Lord Buddha is focused on the path of uprooting negative afflictions and their roots from our minds. This teaching holds true under all circumstances. This will become plain if you study Buddhist teaching and conduct an objective investigation of its validity.

## **DEATH AND IMPERMANENCE**

Death is imminent whether we like it or not. No one is immortal. Therefore, it is important that we use our lives to do something meaningful. We all want to achieve happiness. And for this, we keep ourselves busy from morning to evening in spiritual and worldly affairs.

We are deluding ourselves if we believe that happiness will come solely from material sources like money, goods and power. Material goods can only give us partial happiness. Therefore, instead of engaging in a one-dimensional pursuit of material things, we should work also towards enriching our minds. Unless we develop a sense of contentment, no amount of wealth will bring us satisfaction. The more we have, the more we will want. And the more we have, the greater will be our anxiety.

On the other hand, if we cultivate contentment and kindness, we will feel empathy for all sentient beings in recognition of our similarity in the wish to achieve happiness and get rid of suffering. This will make our lives happier for it will encourage us to help others. A self-centred person cannot enjoy true and lasting happiness.

It is foolhardy to expect that material advancement alone will solve all our problems and difficulties. A peaceful mind is the best and most effective means of addressing our problems. We sometimes find rich people having recourse to sleeping pills. This is a clear indication that they lack a sense of contentment with what they have. When people are dominated by limitless desires for worldly fame and wealth, they spend the whole day in jealousy, anxiety, and competitiveness, thereby generating a great deal of mental tension. Some of them even meet untimely deaths. This is sad. Despite their wealth, they are actually objects of pity and compassion. What's more, the wealth that they have amassed with so much hard work may actually become the object of disputes after their death. In some ways, this

is similar to the plight of bees, who toil to gather honey, only to find it taken away by others.

No matter how high or low our occupational and financial standing, ultimately, everyone has to face the fact of death. Therefore, the wise course of action is to remind ourselves every minute of death, and reform our minds. Death keeps no calendar. There is no guarantee that older people will die before young ones. In preparation for the eventuality of death, we must lead a life of altruism, honesty and kindness with respect for the laws of karma. Instead of flattering the high and mighty while browbeating the less fortunate, if we lead a life of caring for the poor and helpless, we will have less fear of death when it comes. We will be able to face death peacefully in the confidence that our rebirth will be good.

It is important to realise that our worldly possessions will be of no help at the time of death. A house crammed with gold and precious stones is as useless at the time of death as are social position, authority, reputation, and heroism. Relatives, friends, comrades-in-arms, and even our siblings and parents will be unable to save us from death. Neither physical beauty nor physical strength will save us from death. Nothing will help us to deceive or elude the lord of death. Neither currying influence nor the use of threats will work. Manipulation and deception will not work either. Lying and calling on your connections are equally useless. Bribery will not work. Death will not go away even if you join forces with others and shout at it. It will show no respect to letters of recommendation from powerful people. Even hypocrisy and influence-peddling will not work. In other words, nothing can save us from death.

At the same time, we know that if we engage in positive actions, we will enjoy the harvest of happiness. On the other hand, negative actions will lead to suffering, irrespective of whether you are a believer or not. If you sow the seed of sour fruits and expect sweet fruits to grow, you are making a wrong calculation.

We should point the finger at ourselves and scrutinize our actions so as to make sure that we do not engage in shameful acts. We must check our own actions to ensure that they are based on truth and justice. If we come up with all kinds of excuses for our wrong actions, we will find that even a parricidal son might have good excuses for his action. Each individual must make a decision and draw a clear line.

## **RACIAL DISCRIMINATION**

Regardless of the differences in our racial origins or religious beliefs, all human beings are equal in the sense that we all want happiness and do not wish for pain or suffering of any kind. Therefore, it goes without saying that we should help and support each other.

Some 2,500 years ago, lord Buddha taught us to avoid the unhealthy practice of racial discrimination. The Buddha explained, “ In my Dharma, perseverance is what matter, not race or caste.” During the time of the Buddha, barbers and manicurists were looked down upon as belonging to inferior castes. In his effort to discourage such caste discrimination, the Buddha instructed the king to make obeisance to a senior monk belonging to the barber caste. People like Mahatma Gandhi and Dr., Ambedkar similarly strove against the practice of caste discrimination. Each one of us must make efforts to change the social evil of caste discrimination.

If the weaker sections of the society are oppressed and exploited in the name of religion, religious people should regard it as a disgrace and a source of sadness. The Buddha knew that religious figures could use religion to indulge in activities that contradicted religious tenets. That is why he clearly spelled out the qualifications required by spiritual teachers and masters. The Buddha gave us the right to examine our spiritual masters as meticulously as goldsmiths examine the purity of gold by burning, cutting and rubbing it. We must exercise this right and examine our spiritual teachers thoroughly to establish if they are worthy of our respect and veneration.

Now a days, we see movements against gender, caste and racial discrimination in every society, movements that are changing societies. The general public and intellectuals must pay attention to the problems of discrimination and make efforts to change them.

## **NON-VEGETARIANISM**

In the *Descent into Lanka sutra (Lankavatara Sutra)*, the Buddha talks about the need to live on a vegetarian diet. But the Vinaya texts do not forbid non-vegetarian food as long as the meat does not come from an animal slaughtered specifically for your consumption. This may be the reason why there is no special restriction on eating meat in most Buddhist countries.

In Tibet, people eat non-vegetarian food because of the severely cold climate. After coming to India, I tried to give up meat on two occasions. But when I suffered from a severe case of jaundice, my doctor advised me against complete vegetarianism. Now, I usually only eat meat on alternate days and I continue to make efforts to reduce the consumption of non-vegetarian food.

When I took temporal power at the age of sixteen, I banned the excessive consumption of meat during official functions and parties. I also requested the Tibetan people to reduce their consumption of meat.

Similarly, I continued the old tradition of issuing decrees to protect wildlife. A small section of people in Tibet hunted and fished for a living. I issued a plea in my name that this practice be discontinued.

In 1959, when Tibetan settlements were founded in India, Nepal and Bhutan, aid agencies in some settlements introduced fish farms, pork farms and poultry farms to serve as the means of livelihood for the new refugees. Since pigs and fish had to be killed before they could be eaten, it was clear that this did not fit well with our religious beliefs. So, fish and pork farms were soon shut down. A settlement in Mysore and one in Orissa had a poultry farm each. The communities and their leaders discussed the pros and cons of the farms and eventually closed them down in 1996.

Recently, the Department of Religion and culture issued a circular to all the Tibetan institutes and government offices, requesting them to abstain from meat during official functions and parties. This, I think, is very worthwhile.

In some countries, hunting and fishing are regarded as sport and are undertaken in the name of tradition, without any regard for the lives of animals. We find it difficult to bear even the small pain caused by a pinch. If this is the case, how can we regard as sport activities which involve taking of the lives of animals? Everyone must think this over.

## **ETHICS AND MORALITY**

Ethics is the lifeblood of human existence. When a body loses its lifeblood, it turns into a corpse. In the same way, if we lose our sense of ethics, we will be like a tree with dead roots.

To put it another way, if a person lacks moral discipline, his or her body is little different from that of an animal. It is precisely for this reason that great teachers have described immoral people as physically human with the consciousness of animals.

Honesty, respect for the law of karma, and ability to face the test of both this and future lives are qualities that religious practitioners must have. Irrespective of whether or not someone is watching what we are doing, we must be able to avoid acting hypocritically, knowing that the law of karma is witness to all our actions. It is in our own self-interest to see to it that we act according to the laws of karma. We hear some people say very strange things. They say that there is no place for ethics in this pragmatic world of ours, and that an ethical person sticks out like a sore thumb. This is as absurd as saying, "I want to take the life of my father because someone else has done that." Do you think it is right to do such a thing? If we imitate other people's unethical conduct, it is we who shall suffer the consequences.

Our life will become meaningless the day we lose the value of justice and ethics. We all have an equal right to pursue happiness. No one wants pain and suffering. Justice and equality are the unique prerogatives of human beings. We should not sacrifice these principles in the pursuit of power or material wealth. Instead, we should use these prerogatives to serve other's interests. But to do so, we need a firm foundation of ethics. If we are not guided by a sense of ethics and morality, our action tends to seek our self interest to the detriment of others. Such actions are the biggest impediment to the cause of justice and equality. These days, many people bemoan the loss of ethics and morality, to which they attribute the myriad problems of our world. I would like to express my appreciation to them. We need effective change in our society if we want to promote ethical values.

However, some hardliners resist change, claiming that change will bring problems in society. I would like to ask them if we should avoid all the issues that are problematic in nature. Are we not, as individuals, the masters of our society? Social problems were created by human beings. Therefore, we have a responsibility to make changes whenever required. It is the government which must first change unbecoming practices within itself. It can then promote similar change among the general public.

What happens at present is that it is only when unethical activities become

manifest that the authorities take punitive measures, imposing fines, imprisonment and even the death penalty. This leads to a situation where people abide by the law only when baton wielding policemen are around. Sometimes, even these armed authorities become amenable to bribes or manipulation by people who can offer them money. Therefore, it is apparent that unethical behaviour will persist as long as there is no change in human hearts.

Whether you believe in the concept of the after-life or not, everyone will benefit if we put others before ourselves. I am convinced that fortitude and long-term effort to this end will bring peace and stability in human society. Since other people need happiness just as much as we do, we should not exploit others for our selfish ends. Regardless of material progress, if we, who have to share this planet from birth to death, lose mutual respect, love, friendship and empathy for one another, our lives will become meaningless. If we spend a day preoccupied with kind thoughts, we will feel peaceful in the evening, which, in turn, enables us to sleep soundly. On the other hand, if from the time we wake up in the morning, we indulge in unkind thoughts and deeds, even our triumph over others will leave us with a bad taste in our mouths. We will have to suffer from high blood pressure, and may even have recourse to taking sleeping pills. Even then our sleep will be assailed by disturbing nightmares. If you examine yourself to determine whether this is true or not, a new realization may dawn on you. As we say:

**A kind heart will find the earth and sky kind.  
And unkind heart will find the earth and sky unkind.  
Verily, it is the heart that determines everything.**

Thus, if you are kind, you will enjoy happiness, just as others will benefit in turn. Your colleagues too will enjoy happiness. This, in the long run, will contribute to peace and security in society. On the other hand, if you harbour unkind thoughts, you will be unhappy and others will be put out. Similarly, there will be uncomfortable feelings among friends and colleagues. This, in the long run, will have a negative effect on peace and security in the whole community.

Our experience tells us that mere materialism cannot help foster ethical values within us. Compassion and contentment are the essence of Buddhist teaching. Community leaders, political leaders and religious leaders have a responsibility to promote these indispensable values. Therefore, everyone

must make earnest efforts to this end. It is in the interest of us and the larger community to promote the values of compassion, justice and equality. Every one of us must make effort to ensure the well being of the world. Our efforts must be based on ethics and morality. To create such a world, we must educate the younger generation from childhood so that they are able to internalize these values.

## **POLITICS AND ETHICS**

Politics devoid of ethical and moral values cannot serve the interests of society. These days, some religious people assert that ethical values are eroded when religion is mixed with politics. This kind of thinking is selfish and contradictory.

All religions seek to help sentient beings. But when religion is divorced from politics, it loses a potent tool for serving the society. The combination of religion and politics can become an effective means of fulfilling the needs of society if the concerned individuals are endowed with an ethical philosophy of selflessness. Politicians who are guided by ethical codes become good leaders. Such politicians can bring peace in society, a society in which people are happy, even if they have nothing more than water to drink. On the other hand, if there is mutual hatred, envy, jealousy, and competitiveness in the society, even expensive alcoholic drinks will taste bland. Most especially, it is disgraceful to misappropriate public funds. The theft of public funds is considered a grave sin in religious teachings.

If a politician deviates from ethical and moral discipline to pursue selfish interests, we can easily imagine the consequence of his actions on society. Ethical values are as indispensable to politicians as they are to spiritual practitioners. If a politician acts against moral principles, the whole of society suffers the consequences. Whether we are believers or non-believers, we cannot afford to ignore ethical values.

A human being's most invaluable possession is a kind heart. You cannot create a kind heart in a hospital, nor can you buy it from a shopping complex. What's more, no one can steal your kind heart from you. As long as we live in a human society, we have to depend on each other. No one can survive as an island. This being the nature of human society, if we oppress each other for our own personal ends we will create a breeding ground for pain and suffering. Whether we believe in religion or not, we

all have to leave everything behind--- knowledge, wealth, power, rank, strength, friends and even our bodies-at the time of our death. Therefore, if we conduct ourselves ethically by creating happiness for others, we can die with a smile on our faces. And this is the greatest favour we can do ourselves for our future lives.

These days, most politicians pay lip service to peace and justice while hankering for money and power. Because of this, truth and justice are in danger of losing their value. This is very sad indeed.

## **TEACHERS**

With a clear goal in mind, a person goes through a teacher's training course and begins work as a teacher, gaining experience and undergoing refresher courses as he or she goes along. However, all this learning will be effective only if the teacher has a sense of dedication. A sense dedication, joy and a responsibility towards one's duty are very important. A teacher who makes this commitment, "I will perform my job faithfully, irrespective of whether people are watching me or not. I will not fail in my duty," will be able to overcome all obstacles.

A teacher must have a caring attitude and sense for responsibility towards his or her pupils. Teachers who perform their duties perfunctorily, merely in exchange for the salary, in effect, fool themselves and others, because they are creating bad karma for themselves, while harming the future of their students.

It seems that some teachers use their working hours to perform personal tasks or to exchange malicious gossip about others. This is indeed sad and deplorable. A student who has imbibed good ethical and moral qualities will distinguish himself in his attitude, speech and respect for others. If there is no difference between the moral principles of school graduates and those who have not had the opportunity to learn ethics, the schools have not served their purpose.

If teachers serve as a good example to their pupils in terms of their attitude, speech and conduct, if they show love and care for their pupils' future, the latter will be happy and develop a natural respect for the former. There is no doubt that the child who grows up with love and care will enjoy a happy life. Such children will then be an ornament to their community insofar

as they will conduct themselves ethically and work for the happiness of others. In other words, teachers hold the key to the future generation of a nation.

In our world, there are people with high-sounding university degrees and high grades and high ranks. They have knowledge in many fields of learning; they can speak eloquently and have very resourceful minds. At the same time, some of them lack moral standards. They have no qualms about cheating and lying. They are selfish, unmindful of the law of karma and extremely deceitful.

Apparently, these people either did not receive love and care in their childhood, or the grown-ups in their environment failed to set a good example for the growth of their personality.

Let us think about teachers of the past, those who were referred to as gurus, and enjoyed the respect and love of the community and pupils. Let us also reflect on why the teachers of today do not enjoy the same respect and love. Although changing times may be blamed to some extent, the primary responsibility for this must be borne by the teachers themselves.

When we look at western countries, we see that they have excellent methods of imparting knowledge and that they have wonderful facilities in schools. But they do not seem to have adequate role models for ethical living, just as they do not have enough education in ethics and morality. Consequently, we hear reports of school children indulging in such unimaginable acts as killing their fellow students, starting forest-fires and even rape. Academic knowledge must be accompanied by spiritual maturity. A person who does not possess both of these qualities is like a one-eyed man. It is questionable whether academic knowledge alone will help or hurt oneself and society at large. A progressive person is one who examines his own shortcomings and takes correctives measures before it is too late. Otherwise, the person becomes a burden on society.

## **MEDICAL PROFESSION**

Both the teaching and medical professions are extremely precious. They are considered valuable both from religious and secular perspectives. Every individual, no matter who he or she is, goes through two kinds of pain and happiness. One is physical and the other is mental. To relieve our

physical pain and make ourselves comfortable, we have medical science. And to heal the pain of our minds and to develop peace and courage, we have spiritual science.

People do not go to hospital for merry-making, leisure, or picnics. They go to hospital when they are afflicted with a physical ailment which makes them mentally unhappy. Therefore, doctors have a responsibility to listen to the patients' complaints with compassion and concern. They have to conduct their diagnosis calmly and meticulously.

It is unfortunate if a doctor looks upon patients with apathy or disdain, using rude language and attending to them perfunctorily. Similarly, it is unjust and contradicts the law of karma to give special care to the rich and powerful, while ignoring the weak and poor. A doctor's life would be devoid of purpose if his sense of duty were only measured against the yardstick of his patients' financial resources.

It is important for doctors to view their patients with a sense of compassion and altruism. However skilled a doctor may be, if he lacks compassion for his patients, his treatment will not be efficacious. And, in performing surgery or using other modern technical gadgetry, the patient must be respected as a living human being and not treated as a machine. Otherwise, a time will come when the surgeon will be inclined to see his patients just like an automobile. This will indeed be unfortunate.

If the doctor's skill is accompanied by love, compassion, closeness and a concern for the patient, irrespective of whether the patient responds well to the treatment or not, he will experience a joyful stirring in his heart. On the other hand, if the doctor lacks a feeling of love, compassion and concern, and if he speaks disdainfully to the patient, the latter will feel uneasy and begin to worry about the former's commitment to treating him.

A sense of concern may not be tangible, but its worth is very great because it is what gives our lives meaning; it is the root of all human happiness. If we lead a life of concern for others' wellbeing, we can rest peacefully when our death comes. Similarly, it brings us success during our life. One who has no concern for the wellbeing of others cannot partake of genuine happiness, no matter how sumptuous a meal, opulent a house, enormous a reputation or high a rank he may have.

It is a disgrace that there are times when medical professionals go on strike

for many days at a time to demand a pay rise or perks, while hundreds of patients are left unattended on the brink of death. Governments, concerned officials and medical professionals should give serious thought to whether this is a proper way to behave.

## **CORRUPTION**

The desire for happiness is universal. However, lasting happiness cannot come from the use of unfair and devious means to achieve short term gains. Such actions are seen as non-virtuous from the spiritual point of view, and immoral from the worldly point of view. If we feel sad when deceived and cheated, others feel the same. We often talk about moral values, justice and truth. But the important thing is to translate them into action in our every day life. If our actions are unfair, if we indulge in corruption and misappropriation of public money, we will lose popular respect, what's more our family and friends will be ashamed of us too. Ultimately, we will be filled with remorse.

Freedom of expression and a free press are indispensable in a democracy. The media should not fight shy of exposing cases of hypocrisy and double-dealing by politicians, parliamentarians and government officials. Sensible and educated people should shoulder greater responsibility in uprooting this social malaise. However, it is not helpful to make baseless allegations on the basis of personal enmity, prejudice or ideological differences. If our accusations are based on facts and are aimed at serving the community, then things will definitely move in the right direction. On the other hand, if we let our personal dissatisfaction get the better of us, and if we slander people like maudlin drunkards, we may be able to fool simple people, but not the learned and well-informed. As a matter of fact, we will merely be making fools of ourselves.

Sometimes, journalists publish prejudicial reports under political pressure, or because of the writer's personal affiliation with a particular faction, or to promote some commercial interest. When they suspect that this has happened, readers should investigate the matter for themselves and set the record straight.

Just as parents bring up their children with love and care, teachers, school administration and foster parents should make every effort to inculcate students with ethical values so that they grow up to be good human beings,

with sound moral character and a commitment to the wellbeing of society. Parents should take equal responsibility in this respect; they should present themselves as good examples to their children. Passing examinations is not the be all and end all of education. Rather, we should bring up children in such a way that they grow up to be responsible individuals.

One of the causes of social unrest is the existence of huge economic disparity in society today. Therefore, central and local governments and other civic authorities should formulate long-term plans to bridge this gap between the rich and poor. The plan should not end with the paper work; there should be serious follow-up actions.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

Our natural environment, the source of sustenance for all living beings, is undergoing serious degradation these days. Therefore, it is high time each of us made a concerted effort to restore and rejuvenate it.

Of the very many advantages of a clean and healthy environment, let us reflect on a rather simple one. Trees keep the air clean, helping to provide oxygen to living organisms, and sustaining the ecological balance. A tree's shade provides respite from intense sunlight. Plants help to maintain the cycle of rainfall and thus create conditions for the flourishing of crops and animals. They also enhance the beauty of nature, bringing us joy and developing our intellectual capability. This ultimately contributes to the development of the economy as well. In particular, fruit trees provide nourishment for human beings and animals. Eating fruit increases our strength and appetite.

As for flowers, if we have flowers of all colours growing near where we live, we experience a stirring of joy and tranquility. The sight of flowers is particularly good for people suffering from depression and other psychological problems. If they walk or rest in a flower garden, they feel restful and at peace. A Buddhist practitioner accumulates much merit by offering the visualization of a beautiful landscape to the Three Refuges.

It is noteworthy that Lord Buddha was born under a tree; he attained enlightenment under a Bodhi tree, and he passed away under a tree. The vinaya code instructs Buddhist monks and nuns that it is virtuous to plant and look after trees.

Now, let us reflect on the consequences of environmental pollution. When you pollute the lakes and rivers, you are imperiling the survival of aquatic life. Deforestation deprives the soil of its fertility and nutrition. It disrupts the rain cycle and brings unprecedented storms, cyclones, floods, etc. We have also seen that environmental degradation has brought disease over the years.

It is therefore important that we protect our forests and wildlife, and also that we put an end to the dumping of nuclear waste. Even simple things like littering our environment with fruit skins, paper, plastic bags, glass bottles, rags, garbage, food, etc. or urinating and defecating here and there spoil the beauty of the landscape and foster all kinds of diseases. Therefore, we should refrain from such doing such things.

Our abiding disrespect for the environment may one day pose a serious threat to the ecosystem, and thus endanger the survival of this and future generations. This is something we must recognize.

## **NUCLEAR ARMS**

A human community free of all weapons is my dream. The process must begin with a reduction of the present stockpile. The building and testing of nuclear weapons is most unfortunate. I have always been opposed to nuclear weapons, the source of inconceivable suffering for sentient beings.

Some nations have tested nuclear weapons over and over again, and built up stockpiles while preventing other nations from doing the same. This is both unfair and an example of outright bullying. Some powerful nations seem to believe that they alone have the right to test and stockpile nuclear weapons. When other nations follow suit, they raise a hue and cry. This is unfair and undemocratic. If the powerful nations were to destroy their entire nuclear arsenal and then tell other nations to ban the testing and stockpiling of nuclear arms, they would have a valid case, for they would be crating conditions for the happiness and peace of all sentient beings. Everyone would welcome and support such a move.

Just as war serve as a deterrent for further war, it is possible to view nuclear weapons as serving as a deterrent against nuclear proliferation. Whether this is borne out or not will depend on world leader's wisdom, altruism, courage, holistic understanding, long-term vision and their genuine wish to make the right effort.

## **THE DALAI LAMA AND REINCARNATION**

The issue of the Dalai Lama's reincarnation belongs to the spiritual realm. Non-believers have nothing to do with this and it is not appropriate for them to discuss this issue. Recognizing a reincarnation is like appointing an official, or electing a representative. A reincarnation is someone who has deliberately chosen to take rebirth to serve sentient beings. He chooses the place, parents and biological lineage of his rebirth. The system of reincarnation is unique to Buddhism, although we also have a tradition of passing a lama's lineage from father to son.

I do not think anything untoward will happen to me during my life in exile. However, if the Tibetan people decide to recognize my reincarnation in the event of my death in exile, I will not be born under Chinese rule. Instead, I will be reborn somewhere in the free world. This, I would like to make clear right now. Why? Because, the very purpose of a reincarnation is to continue and bring to completion the work initiated by the previous body. The reincarnation would never undo the work begun by the previous body. If the reincarnation had taken birth in a place where he cannot continue the work of the previous body, the purpose of reincarnation is defeated. Having said this, I would like to point out that it is the people of Tibet who must decide whether they need my reincarnation or not.

In the past, under the Dalai Lama's rule, Tibet had close ties with Mongolia and, to a lesser extent, with the people living in the Himalayan region. Ever since we came into exile, people from many other countries started taking interest in Buddhism. Many of them subscribe to our way of thinking. This new development has led to worldwide respect and recognition for the institution of the Dalai Lama. I believe that these people will support my wish.

## **THE DALAI LAMA AND THE PANCHEN LAMA**

The successive Dalai lamas and the Panchen lamas have had a special relationship, in that each has helped in identifying the other's reincarnation and has acted as a teacher to the young reincarnation. Since the demise of the Tenth Panchen Lama, Lobsang Thinley Lhundrup Choekyi Gyaltsen, in 1989, concerned people, both in and outside Tibet, repeatedly requested that I identify and recognize his reincarnation in line with our tradition. I am aware of the enormous responsibility that I have in this regard. Year

after year, I looked for possible candidates and scrupulously examined them. Finally, in 1995, I recognized a boy named Gedun Choekyi Nyima from Lhari county of Nagchu. His mother was called Dekyi Choedon and his father was called Konchok Phunksok. With formal recognition, I gave him the name of Tenzin Gedun Yeshe Thinley Phuntsok Palsangpo.

The panchen lamas are among the highest of Tibetan spiritual figures. But they did not, traditionally, have any position or power within the Tibetan political establishment. Recognition of the Panchen Lama's reincarnation is purely a religious matter, and it has nothing to do with politics. However, the Chinese government claims that the Dalai Lama and Panchen Eridini are titles conferred by the Qing administration. It claims that reincarnations of the Dalai Lamas and the Panchen Lamas were recognized through the system of drawing lots from the Golden Urn, which would then require approval from Beijing. This is a politically motivated claim, with not basis in fact.

It is a well-known fact that the title "Dalai Lama" was first conferred in 1578 on the third Dalai lama, Sonam Gyatso, by a Mongol Khan. The first Dalai Lama, Gendun Drubpa, was honoured by Bhotong Chogley Namgyal with the title Thamchey Khenpa Gedun Drubpa (All-knowing Gedun Drubpa). Palgon Dhongshi also honoured him by calling him the Pandita Chenpo (Panchen in short form), which means great scholar. Since then, he has become known popularly as Thamchey Khenpa Gedun Drubpa or Penchen Gedun Drub. He founded the Tashi Lhunpo Monastery. Gedhun Drupa was followed by thirteen successors to the throne of Tashi Lhunpo, all of whom inherited his tile "Panchen".

In 1731, the Manchu Emperor conferred the title Erdini on the fifth Panchen Lama Losang Yeshe. Erdini is a Mongolian word, meaning Rinpoche or the precious one. The Tibetans, in return, gave the Manchu Emperor the title of Manjushri (Budhisattva of Wisdom). It must be remembered that this exchange of titles had no political implications. The title "Erdini" is not exclusive to the Panchen Lamas; some Mongolian reincarnations have the same title.

The relationship between the Dalai Lamas and the Panchen Lamas began during the reign of the Great Fifth Dalai Lama and Panchen Losang Choegyen. The latter recognized the Great Fifth Dalai Lama. When Panchen Losang Choegyen passed away, the fifth Dalai Lama recognized Panchen

Losang Yeshi as his reincarnation. In this way, the tradition of recognizing each other's reincarnation came into being. It is in line with this tradition that I recognized the tenth Panchen Lama's reincarnation.

The Chinese government refused to accept the reincarnation I had recognized. Instead, they removed him from the scene and, even today, we have no knowledge of his whereabouts. This is very sad indeed. It only serves to undermine China's image. What's more, it does not befit a Communist government to play a role in this kind of spiritual matter. Be that as it may, the Chinese government now has the full responsibility of looking after the Panchen Lama's health and seeing to it that his education does not suffer.

It is my hope that in due course the Chinese government will adopt a more relaxed attitude to the issue of the Panchen Rinpoche. From our side, we offer fervent prayers for the Panchen Lama's long life and the accomplishment of his virtuous wishes. There is nothing more we can do at this stage.

## **THE WORSHIP OF SHUGDEN**

It was in 1978 that I first spoke against the practice of worshipping Dholgyal, also known as Shugden. Over two decades have passed since then. Shugden is a worldly spirit, the focus of controversy for more than 350 years. I made the decision to discourage the worship of Shugden after thorough analysis and research. This decision was neither arbitrary nor was it influenced by advice from others.

In addition to investigating the events surrounding the origin of Shugden during the time of the Great Fifth Dalai Lama, I studied the views of a number of undisputed and highly realized spiritual masters. Similarly, I reflected on my own personal experiences. In doing so, my only consideration was the wellbeing of the spiritual and political cause of Tibet, as well as the benefit of Tibetans both as individuals and as a community.

After years of careful examination and analysis, I found enough evidence to suggest that the worship of Shugden is harmful to the individuals involved and to the community as a whole. I realized that the worship of Shugden had brought about many problems. Therefore, on several occasions, I explained why it was wrong to worship Dholgyal. I am confident that the

majority of Tibetans and objective foreign dharma students have clearly understood my advice.

My principle reasons for discouraging the practice are as follows:

- 1 Taking the context of the Two Truths and the Four Noble truth as the fundamental principles, Lord Buddha showed us the path of refuge and the law of kama. But, in this era of five degenerations, people in Buddhist religious robes look up to controversial worldly spirits as the refuge both in this and future lives. They assert that certain worldly deities, serpent gods and worldly spirits hold the key to all our fortunes or misfortunes. This is in stack contradiction to the Buddha's teaching.
- 2 In order to promote world peace and social stability, I advocate mutual respect and understanding between different religions. In Tibetan Buddhism, we have four schools, namely the Nyingma, Sakya, Kagyu and Gelug. The doctrine of each of these schools originated from Lord Buddha. And these different schools exist to provide us with access to all the traditions taught by Lord Buddha, which comprise the great and lesser vehicles, including the tantric tradition. In other words, they are merely different paths to the same goal. In light of this, I have made consistent efforts to bring about harmony and unity among these schools. The followers of Shugden, on the other hand, denounce and disparage other Buddhist schools, thus creating bad karma for themselves. They preach that a Gelug follower practising any aspect of Nyinma tradition will incur the wrath of Shugden. In this way, they manage to foment sectarianism, causing rifts and disharmony amongst the different schools of Tibetan Buddhism.
- 3 Due to shugden's distorted prayers, differences arose between him and the Great fifth Dalai Lama. Ever since, shugden has sought to harm the Gaden Phodrang government of the Dalai Lamas.

During my visit to Tibetan settlements, I met many people-the old, young, poor and sick-who complained of problems attributed to shugden. They requested my blessing and protection, saying that they had been

experiencing an series of mishaps after they had unknowingly offended Shugden. Now, to worship worldly spirits, who terrify and harm the poor and weak, is contrary to the teaching of Lord Buddha.

And then, there were unmistakable indications that Tibet's national dharma protectors like Palden Lhamo and Gyalpo Ku-nga were displeased with Shugden. Likewise, other dharma protectors like Kyibusum-gui-sungma and Dhamchan Gyatso were displeased with Shugden.

My decision was also motivated by my wish to preserve the doctrine of Tsongkhapa from corrupting influences.

It seems that some people are petrified about giving up the worship of Shugden, believing that in doing so they will invite Shugden's wrath. This is akin to worrying about the prospect of the sky falling down. Thousands of former Shugden followers have given up the practice and nothing untoward has happened to them. Although I am not a highly realized being, I can guarantee you that Shugden and the like will not be able to harm you.

In addition, I would like to ask the followers of Shugden not to seek from me the vows of ordination as novices and Bhikshus. Similarly, I would ask you not to seek spiritual teaching from me. Doing so would be a breach of trust between the teacher and disciples, which will rebound negatively on the teacher's life while the disciples will suffer for many lives. This is clearly taught in the doctrine of tantra. Just as a burnt seed cannot come to fruition, a disciple without a pure bond of trust with his teacher cannot achieve spiritual realization.

Having understood the demerits of following Shugden as I do, it would be my mistake if I did not show you the path. Whether you listen to me or not is up to you. I have a responsibility to show you the path. At the same time, as everyone knows, neither I, nor anyone else, can coerce or pressurize you to do anything against your own wishes.

## **GLOBAL PEACE**

Achieving truth, justice, friendly relations, and peace depends on a number of causative and elemental factors. On the matter of striving to make contributions that are beneficial to humanity, one should have a long term vision and perspective, rather than aiming for just short term objectives.

Of the many problems that continue to arise in this world, some are tragedies brought about by natural causes. Some are, however, man-made. Nevertheless, we have to deal with both the types of problems, and make efforts to solve them. Conflicts are taking place over very small problems arising from ideological, political, and religious disagreements. What this shows and symbolizes is the fact that the intrinsic qualities of nobility that define a human being are degenerating. We all should understand well the fact that there are in this world numerous different kinds of religious traditions, ideologies, and political systems. It is not proper to always adopt an actual means that is contrary to the end one aims to achieve.

It is important that the leaders of the powerful countries of this world should initiate moves to completely eliminate their atomic weapons; these are human creations for their own complete destruction. In case an atomic weapons war takes place, there is no way one side will emerge victorious, with the other side being vanquished; rather, everyone will be inevitably killed. Therefore both the sides should have the sense to understand that the people on the other side are also human beings like themselves. If on that basis they take to understand each other well, there is a way for the chaos of the conflicts raging in this world to be solved at the fundamental level.

These days weapons technologies are undergoing fast improvements, the reach of international trade has expanded vastly, relations between countries are going from strength to more strength, and travelling has become ever more convenient, with the result that the world has become considerably smaller than at any time before. And the areas of mutual dependence among peoples and nations have greatly increased. As a result there is no choice for the peoples and nations in this world but to greatly increase their reliance on each other. And so, if we do not have a sense to understand that we are all members of one vast human family, if we do not have a sense of faith in each other, it will be very difficult to usher in peace and happiness in this world. And it will be very difficult for one country to have the ability to solve with full satisfaction all of its problems by itself alone. Rather, each has to strongly depend on the attention, suggestions, and sympathies of others to solve their problems in a cooperative manner. And so I believe that the only fundamental basis for ensuring an enduring peace in this world is to adhere to the approach of universal responsibility and altruism towards fellow-human beings with regard to the many problems that exist in this world.

All sentient beings are alike in that they all desire happiness, not sorrow. By thinking only about one's own well being, working hard to attain one's petty minded goals, invariably bulldozing all the suggestions and wishes of the people in one's close neighborhood, there is no way one can ever be happy. On the other hand, if while striving to work for one's own happiness, one, at the same time, also thinks about the well being of the other people, that is the thinking person's way of working to achieve one's own aims. Where, on the other hand, one thinks only about one's own interests and do not pay any heed to the desires and happiness of other people, but, rather, acts under negative motivations of greed, jealousy, and sense of rivalry, it is unthinkable that one will gain peace of mind and fraternal harmony.

All the major religions of the world, including Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Jainism, Sikhism, and Buddhism have similar thoughts about love and compassion. And they are all alike in their advice about responsibility towards others, love and compassion, and helping the needy; about the need to eschew sinful conducts like the taking of life, and so on. They all aim to strive for the well being of the entire humanity.

When one examines the differences in the doctrines of the different religions, one finds that they had occurred due to the different influences exerted on each of them by the circumstances of place and time, culture, habits, and customs. And so the existence of so many different kinds of religions in this world acting to benefit humanity as a whole can be seen as different unique methods of treatment designed to cure corresponding specific kinds of ailments. Therefore it would be more beneficial if instead of engaging in meaningless disputes over what are after all only different methods, we make efforts to put into practice on a day to day basis the noble advises that are common in each of the different religions. If we succeed in that, everyone – both oneself and others – will be greatly benefited. And if the religious leaders who have concern for global peace keep on instructing their followers about the need to employ their abilities for the well being of humanity as a whole, rather than distorting and misusing the teachings of the respective founders of the different faiths, that will be a noble way to contribute towards benefiting the peace and well of this world. If, on the contrary, they act in suspicion and distrust of each other, remaining resentful and hostile towards each other, and, in particular, adhere to the mentality of exacting revenge on each other due to historical enmity and conflicts between them, it will be difficult to achieve any fruitful reconciliation between the two sides.

Religions are not separated by any kind of national boundaries. They can be used for both public and private individual purposes to whatever extent one sees them to be beneficial. While remaining in a single-minded devotion to one's own religion, whichever religion it may be, one should also be considerate towards other religious faiths. Holding other religious faiths in protest, criticism, or disregard should never be resorted to. Were one to do any such thing, it will be like accepting a lawyer's brief in a lawsuit, with all the attendant problems of being required to deal with all the problems from their very depths.

The fundamental aim of a religion is to work for the benefit of others. So, one should at all times examine the motivation one has towards others. And if one sees any error in it, one should take immediate steps to cleanse oneself of it.

## **HARMONIOUS COEXISTENCE OF RELIGION AND POLITICS**

All of us who share a common Tibetan ancestry should strive to follow the path of harmonious coexistence between religion and politics. Even in the case of a person committed to a religious way of life, it is impossible to remain aloof from politics by claiming oneself to be ignorant about the secular way of life. The political system itself should, of course, embody ethical values. A harmonious coexistence between religion and politics is indispensable for the survival of the Tibetan identity. Not only is there no one today who dreams about the revival, in future, of the ways of the old Tibetan society, but also the very existence of a person who entertains such a thought is impossible. Occasionally, however, there can be differences of opinion due to age gap between generations. For example, those who advocate that we should follow the path of a new society may entertain thoughts that without undertaking radical changes, on the line of what the Chinese call earthshaking events, a needed revolutionary transformation is not possible. On the other hand, there is another section of Tibetan people who think of achieving the aims of a revolutionary change by pursuing the path for it in a gradual process. The difference between the people with these two separate ways of thinking lies only in the time frame; otherwise, both are equal not only in their sense of patriotism, Tibetan ethnic spirit, and reverence for the Buddhist faith, but also in the commonality of the objectives they aspire to achieve. When confronted with differences in

strategy on the question whether change should be pursued at once or only gradually, we should think in terms of what the Chinese call the united front strategy and be able to work together, shoulder to shoulder. Speaking from another perspective, we not only plan to pursue the path of harmonious coexistence between religion and politics but also see a bright future in it. And so, as being aimed for by us, it is important that we should begin our journey towards it right from this moment, even if it means taking only just one step.

Just being driven by sincerity and having the determination in us is, however, by itself not enough; we also should be equipped with wisdom to be able to exercise proper judgment. Without it, any deed of great magnitude simply cannot be accomplished. It is there of utmost importance that we should be equipped with the wisdom to discern what is right and what is wrong.

Our aim is that the system that we will have in Tibet shall be of a government based on a harmonious coexistence of religion and politics, combined with freedom rooted in democracy. It will not do for this system to be based only on religion or only on politics. Rather, it is important that the system should be founded on the path of a harmonious coexistence between the two. Both any thought on the part of a person committed to a religious way of life that religion and politics cannot coexist and any feeling on the part of a layperson that he neither knows anything about religion nor can he practice it is equally wrong. The coexistence between religion and politics is a state of affair that can be realized. Let me explain this with an example. The Bodhisattva way of life is based on both religion and politics. For one thing, the Bodhisattva is a religious practitioner of high order. On the other hand, when carrying out human purposes, he or she should commingle with sentient beings and work for their well being by acting in accordance with their characters, preferences, and situations. One can describe this also as a practice of harmonious coexistence of religion and politics. It is quite wrong to assume that a person committed to a religious way of life should restrict himself to living life in a cave while a politician should inevitably preoccupy himself in society with a routinely negative way of life of that include deceiving, lying and other forms of immoral behavior.

Harmonious coexistence between religion and politics is a term which should be understood in a broad sense. To follow the path of coexistence between religion and politics, one should have an understanding of both religion and politics. And if we do not have the wisdom to understand

the merits of the coexistence of the two, there will be no benefits for us even though we may keep pronouncing the term “harmonious coexistence between religion and politics”. Likewise, it is important for the general Tibetan populace to make efforts to learn things they have never known anything about before. I hold the general Tibetan populace in high esteem, and they rightly deserve to be held in such regard. This in itself is a sort of strength. However, the general Tibetan public should have a sense of discernment borne of their knowledge and wisdom as well as from their having an open mind towards knowing about wide range of new things. This will enable them to discriminate between what is beneficial and what is harmful, and what is good and what is bad. Absence of such a course of development of the mind will present an obstacle to any effort towards enhancing the intellectual standard and level of consciousness of the people.

## **BUDDHISM AND BEING A BUDDHIST**

The Buddha, the founder of our faith, has taught a religion that is of the highest quality. The essence of his teachings is that one should make efforts to be of good help to other sentient beings; that even if one is, however, not capable of such help, one should at least never harm others.

Religion is the best means for one to make efforts to accomplish one’s purposes both for this life and the lives hereafter, and for one to become a morally upright, kind-hearted person. Being able to fulfill religious objectives is not just a matter of building external manifestations of them such as temples and installing the body, speech and mind objective-embodiments of the Buddha and his teachings. Rather, it should, in more concrete terms, be fulfilled from the level of one’s mind. If one is a genuine believer in one’s religion, it is important for one to pay close attention to its teachings and make serious efforts to practice them.

A number of various kinds of religions have appeared on this earth since ancient times. Some among them have already disappeared. Some others, however, continue to exist. All these religions have their good points. The religion that is the most prevalent in our land of Tibet is Buddhism. The reason we give for the goodness of the good points about Buddhism can be narrated in the following manner. We do not say, for example, that if you repose faith in the Buddha, then you will be happy. Rather, we speak

in terms of the law of cause and effect. That if one desires happiness, one should seek out the source of that happiness and make efforts to realize it; that if one wishes to avoid suffering, one should make efforts to stay clear from its causes. For example, if it rains heavily today, this will become the cause for a cool weather tomorrow. And if the sun shines blazing hot today, this will become the cause for a hot weather tomorrow. These are cases in which the causes have preceded and yielded the results that followed. Likewise, a child is given education from a young age not just for the sake of ensuring his or her current happiness but also as a matter of fulfilling the causes for ensuring for him or her a happy life in future.

Buddhism had flourished greatly in Tibet in the past. However, while the religion was treated as something very precious and the people revered it out of their faith in it, the number of people who had a good understanding of the fundamentals of its teachings was few. Besides, there was the shortcoming of even those who had a little bit of understanding of the religion not putting their knowledge into practice. We should learn from our past experiences to ensure that the mistakes are not repeated. This is something that one should do by oneself and there is no question of some other person doing it for us in the manner of helping to take out an embedded thorn prick from our skin.

If one desires to become a genuine believer in Buddhism, there is no choice but to practice abstention from the Ten Non-Virtuous Deeds. Practicing abstention from the Ten Non-Virtuous Deeds is something of a first stage in the steps towards entering the higher level spiritual realm and towards the path for attaining liberation. So, one should definitely strive to practice it. Anyone who does so is qualified to be counted as a Buddhist.

If one puts into practice the positive words of wisdom being taught by Buddhism, one will surely enjoy a life permeated with happiness. The main requirement for ensuring for oneself a happy life depends on one's mental orientation. External material wealth with their attendant power, authority, and fame, though facilitative, are not the main conditional requirements. It is one's mind which is responsible for bringing one to ruination; and it is also, equally, one's mind which is the antidote that can cure one of it.

The underlying reason why it is stated in the Buddhist treatises that one is one's own savior is that a feeling of misery is an affliction that can be cured and one should know that one should not make a mistake about pursuing

the correct strategic path for overcoming one's sorrow. If on such basis one takes into one's hands the conditions of sorrow that have afflicted one's mind, the conditions of suffering that have permeated one's mind could be dispelled. And once the objective conditions that had brought suffering to one's mind are dispelled, the resultant effect will be that one will be freed from that suffering. That is why it is stated that the means to escape from suffering lies within oneself.

If one has a positive moral character within oneself in one's day-to-day conduct to be altruistic, helpful towards the weak, tolerant, being devoid of selfishness, having a sense of contentment with one's given conditions, and so on, there will be a sense of harmony within oneself and one will have a happy life. As to whether all that is true or not, a course of testing this assertion by oneself will surely prove the point.

## **DOCTRINAL ECUMENICALISM**

The Buddhist faith which spread and flourished in the religious land of Tibet exists in the form of four major great schools. On the basis of the different periods of time in which they emerged through the early spread and later spread of Buddhism in Tibet, we have the great tantric Nyingmapa school, the exalted Sakyapa school, the victorious Kagyupa school, and the unequalled Gelugpa school. Through their teaching, practice and religious activities systems, they are all worthy holders of the entire corpus and comprehensions of the precious sutra and tantra teachings of the Buddha. They all differ only in a transient, temporary sense due to their different emphases on the stages of the path and the systems of strategy for guiding those seeking liberation to the path of salvation. At the ultimate level, however, they are all equal in their final focus on the original fundamental teachings of the Buddha in terms of the primacy of the doctrine of the Four or, as the case may be, Two Noble Truths as the Basis, the Two Strategies as the Path, and the Two Bodies of the Buddha as the Fruit. Thus, the four schools rest on their profound understanding of the primacy of the trinity of the Basis, Path and Fruit system, the Philosophy of Interdependent Origination and the Conduct of Non-Violence as taught by the Buddha.

In India, the land of Aryas, there are two groups of adherents to the Hinayana (the Smaller Vehicle) doctrine, namely the Vaibhasika (The Particularists) School and the Sautantrika (The Original Discourses) School, and two groups of adherents to the Mahayana (the Greater Vehicle) doctrine,

namely The Cittamatra (The Mind Only) School and the Madhyamika (The Middle-view) School. However, in Tibet, the Land of Snows and of the supreme Arya Chenresig's designated spiritual subjects, it is only adherents to the Mahayana tradition which prevailed in keeping with the nature of the spiritual subjects there. To elucidate this a little further, the Tibetan spiritual subjects are all same in being followers of the treatises of Two Pioneers of the Buddha's Teachings, namely those of the Profound View Pioneer Nagarjuna and the Extensive Deeds Pioneer Asanga.

Apart from some differences in such terms as the earliness or lateness of the translations of some texts, the lineages of lamas, and names and terms, the fundamental fact remains that all the teachings of the Buddha – with the Greater Vehicle, the Smaller Vehicle, and the Tantrayana teachings – have remained intact without any kind of violations. Whether it is the Sakya, Gelug, Kagyu, or Nyingma school, their differences are only in the manner in which they explain the doctrines. At the fundamental level, they are all same in being strategies for pursuing the way towards attaining liberation and Buddhahood and in being parts of the same ocean of milk that is of one taste and in being designed to benefit others. As regards the dichotomy between the terms Nyingma (The old School) and Sarma (The New School), those texts which were translated during and before the times of Pandita Smriti Jnana Kirti and Lochen Rinchen Sangpo are referred to as the Old Tantra tradition while the texts which were translated after them are referred to as the New Tantra tradition. This being the case, it would be improper to pass biased judgments on the teachings of the Buddha by claiming the tradition being followed by oneself to be better and the tradition being followed by others to be of the inferior kind.

In the case of the Highest Yoga Tantra practices of different kinds, for example, there are many teachings specific to each of them. However, even in the case of the Highest Yoga Tantra traditions, although their Mandalas are basically the same at the fundamental level, if there are no separate classes of practices with regard to each of them, then there was no reason for the Buddha Dorjechang to give different classes of tantra teachings. The reason why different classes of tantra teachings were given was because they were specifically designed for different courses of practices. However, there is no reason for one to imagine oneself to be in a superior position as regards the others simply because one has a class of teachings specific to one's own courses of practices. That is because each class of

such teachings is special only with reference to the period and situation in which it was given and should be practiced as such. There is, therefore, no question of the other classes of practices being inferior to one's own. That is simply not the case.

There is a class of people who not only maintain an ecumenical faith in all the teachings of Buddhism, irrespective of their doctrinal differences, but also imbibe them oneself through the threefold practice of studying, contemplating and meditating with regard to the teachings from all the different schools or traditions of Buddhism. Equipped thus, they give teachings adapted to the specific needs of the different particular disciples through being cognizant of the mental capacity and orientation of each of them. They thus serve Buddhism as a whole. This results in the beneficial effect of uniting the entire corpus of the teachings of the Buddhist faith and drawing attention to them all in a single container.

Such undisputed masters of great knowledge and wisdom of earlier times who were viewed with universal admiration had looked up to all the ecumenical masters as objects of refuge with wholehearted devotion. They imbibed and practiced the entirety of the Buddha's teachings and doctrines without any kind of violation. The number of such masters who had acquired great knowledge and won devotion is countless. When a person who is conversant with the teachings of all the schools of Tibetan Buddhism, namely Sakya, Gelug, Kagyu and Nyingma, gives a religious discourse, one gains an expansive range of understanding, with the teachings being that much more rich in meaning. In other words, one should strive to become an inclusive master of all the essential teachings of the Buddha.

It would be a great cause for atheistic degeneration for one to act as if one would violate tantrism if one practiced the sutra teachings, or that to practice tantra teachings is tantamount to violating the individual liberation (or *sothar*) teachings. One should never let such a course of development from ever taking place. The entire corpus of the Buddha's teachings and the commentaries thereon should be imbibed, put into practice, and fully complied with without the slightest bit of violations when an individual strives to achieve liberation. And this is the way in which one should understand the entire corpus of the Buddha's teachings without being in any violation of it. One should eschew the negative outlook of a sectarian who has a constrictive, narrow minded attitude while studying and practicing

the traditions of one's own school of Buddhism. And if, at the same time, one also studies and examines the doctrines of the other systems, one's horizon of seeing and hearing will be enhanced and there will be absolutely no doubt that one would be able to serve Buddhism and humanity with that much more great and admirable contributions.

I routinely make it a point to emphasize that there should be no sectarian squabbles within the Tibetan Buddhist community. Anyone who is knowledgeable enough about the whole issue, is well read in many scriptures and is, therefore, well equipped with knowledge based on wide range of "seeing and hearing" will easily be able to see that when one examines what is called the Dzogchen Kathag Lhundup teaching of the Nyingmapa school, the Seltong Zinme or Khordey Y'ermey teaching of the Sakyapa school, the Chag-gya Chenpo teaching of the Kagyupa school and the Detong Y'ermey teaching of the Gelugpa school, they are all based on one common critical essence. I am not saying this for the sake of sort of sounding good or in order to please any particular individual. That being the case, it is not at all good for anyone to engage in pressure groupings motivated by sectarian disaffection.

## **MONKS AND NUNS**

Monks and nuns are people who are reputed to have entered the gate of the Buddhist faith by taking oaths as such and thereby having changed themselves from people with families to ones without any such attachment to become the holders of the faith. That being the case, all such persons should conduct themselves with great care. In the case of a person who had taken the vow of a novice monk, the conduct should be of such high quality as to be in conformity with a genuine holder of this status, including in terms of one's symbolic attires, beginning from the manner in which one wears one's robes and so on. Wearing an upper garment with sleeves, dressing one in unseemly rag-tag attires, keeping a long hair, and so on should be avoided. Rather, one should scrupulously, and without any compromise in the nature of one's symbolic appearance, adhere to the courses of conduct prescribed in the Vinaya Sutras (that is, the sutras of monastic discipline). In other words, one should be an exemplary person who puts into practice the proper courses of conduct which prevailed right from the time of the Vinaya teachings. There are some people who, in a supposed following of a lineage of dressing and oral traditions handed

down by their teachers, do things as they fancy. However, it has to be borne in mind that if such courses of practices do not accord with the teachings contained in the relevant treatises, it is only in the fitness of things for one to abandon such practices of one's lama, for it simply won't do to continue them by oneself. Again, there are some who while having already defiled their monastic vows from the core of their being continue, however, to wear the robe of a monk, acting like the proverbial rabbit pretending to be a piece of rock. Such a conduct is a big disgrace both to the Buddhist faith and its practitioner. When one had already defiled one's vows from the essence of one's being, it is best to follow the others like oneself and take to wearing the dress of a layperson. To still continue wearing the robe of a monk is to bring disrepute on the religion itself generally. On issues such as this, even the general public must pay close attention. Once one had entered the gate of the religious way of life, one should remain true to it and be worthy of it, so that when death approaches one will have no cause for regrets but only reasons to look forward to it with a sense of satisfaction..

It will be a cause for nothing but accumulating sins on one's part once the public becomes disillusioned and gets negative impressions which make them say things like: "These monks cannot be trusted to adhere to the right course of conduct. Even though they have already violated their religious vows, they still cannot give up their privileges and income as monks and so still wear their religious robes. These monks and nuns are saying one thing and doing just the opposite. They are a disgrace as religious practitioners." That being the case, all monks and nun should at all times be exemplary in their conducts, imbued with gentility and humility in their behavior and being pleasant in their attitude towards others. Whether in the matter of "going or staying or in one's behavior," so to say, one must definitely make it a point to be in tune with the contexts of the place and the times in which one may find oneself in. The routine behavior of monks and nuns should be of much, much higher quality in comparison with that of lay people and should be marked by conformity with the prescribed courses, serenity, humility and positivity. It would be extremely unfortunate if they are worse than others in their behavior by being more easily given to fighting and arguing, or being more voracious.

Monks and nuns should mingle with the lay populace. However, this should be neither indiscriminate nor done as and when one fancies it.

Rather, the object of their mingling should have the general characteristics which make them permissible for intermingling. For example, one should be able to eat what the general population eats and take up residence where everyone else in the rest of the population does in like manners. And there are also unique characteristics which make intermingling improper and therefore impermissible. For example, one should at all times keep in mind and observe, if a novice monk, the thirty-six precepts, or don'ts, of a novice monk vows. Likewise, if one is a fully ordained monk, then he should observe the two hundred and fifty-three precepts of a full ordained monk vows. Speaking in general terms, it bears no mention that all monks should be persons who scrupulously adhere to their religiously prescribed courses of conduct. Any one of them with regard to whom there has been a degeneration of the religiously prescribed courses of conduct will suffer consequences far greater than befalling a layperson. As it is said, for example, that in the case of the corpse of a dead elephant which contains in its body the medicinal stuff called bezoar stone (*ghiwang*), the uniqueness arises from the fact that it was a unique elephant containing that medicinal stuff as compared with ordinary elephants.

In recent times I have been hearing a bit of bad things about the fact that with increases in the number of monks in monasteries and monastic hostels, there has been a slight decline in the discipline and conduct of the monks enrolled in them. If within the community of monks there are those who are unable to adhere to their religious discipline, it is best for them not to keep remaining in it. If someone who had taken it upon oneself to be viewed as a person committed to a religious way of life, and who is now known as a person who has give up his family life to become a monk without any family attachment, is, however, unable to observe the religious disciplines prescribed by the Vinaya treatises, it is best for him to properly follow the established procedure to return his religious vows. Whatever be the number of monks and nuns, it is important that they be qualitative and pure. At one level with regard to these infractions of religious discipline, the fault lies in the concerned individual violators. But at another level, it is also a clear sign that there has been a laxity on the part of the people entrusted to maintain the religious discipline in carrying out their responsibility with sufficient diligence. It is also important for the lay public to pay attention to make themselves aware of those monks and nuns who do not observe their religious discipline and thereby bring disgrace to the religion.

These days there are in some places in China and other countries fake lamas and fake monks who confer empowerment, make divinations, and so on, pretending to possess spiritual attainments, thereby cheating and deceiving many people who do not have spiritual saviors and masters. They accept monetary and other material benefits both for their own and for their circle of attendants' livelihood. They bring inestimable disrepute and disgrace to Buddhism in general, to Tibetan Buddhism in particular and to the Tibetan people. Charlatans engaging in such misconduct should be not only identified but also the general public should not remain silent about them. Rather, information about them should be provided both directly and through other channels to the concerned persons and entities as attempts to stop the evil practice.

## **SECTARIAN AND PROVINCIAL SCHISMS**

In the period of today, when we are exiled from our country and live on other people's land, there should be mutual cooperation and fraternal amity among the Tibetan people. To practice fraternal amity is to be in conformity with one's religious faith. And it will also be naturally beneficial to the cause of the Tibetan people. To eschew provincial and sectarian schism by engaging in mutual help and cooperation, with everyone maintaining an avowed bond of fraternity in a shared, united entity, is, therefore, particularly vital.

There is much merit in the fact that today the people of Dotoe, Domey, and U-Tsang live in intermingled communities. However, it is important to aim even further to consolidate more the entire six million or sixty-hundred-thousand people of The Three Provinces of Tibet by paying additional attention to this purpose. Everyone should hold as vital the need to avoid provincial and sectarian schisms. The essence of the matter, in the final analysis, is that it is fundamental, to the point of being something like our very life, that all of us six million Tibetan people should have a mind to stay together as a solidly integrated single entity.

It is in the unity of all The Three Provinces and the interests of all the religious schools, irrespective of their sectarian affiliations, that achieving the general purpose of all Tibet lie. Speaking about myself personally too, for example, when I wrote the "Words of Truth" prayer early on, I made it a point to say:

**“May this heartfelt wish of total freedom for all Tibet,  
Which has been awaited for a long time,  
Be spontaneously fulfilled;  
Please grant soon the good fortune to enjoy  
The happy celebration of spiritual with temporal rule.”**

I deliberately used the term “all Tibet” as a critically important one to emphasize the inclusion of all The Three Provinces of Tibet. The essence of the matter is that from the day we became refugees living in exile, we have held it as the very essence of our being to embrace the good and bad living conditions alike of our situation on the basis of an integral unity of all The Three Provinces, so that all of us will share as one our happiness through good times as well as our sorrow through bad times. Even now, I continue to abide by this policy, including also in my prayers.

The possibility cannot be ruled out, in my view, that in case the Sakya, Gelug, Kagyu, Nyingma, and Bon adherents maintain their distances from each other, then whenever any incident occurs which seeks to sow a seed of discord among them through slanderous hearsay and so on, and such a false information comes to be accepted as established facts, they may refuse to accept the innocence of each other while also not knowing what the truth really was. On the other hand, if they maintain a shared relationship and close contacts, they will all come to know each other well, will be able to gain an understanding of each other, and therefore will also have faith in the sincerity of each other. It is my ardent hope that there will be such an admirable oath-bound water-and-milk mixed unity of all Tibetans.

It is wrong for any person to carry names of provinces and religious sects on his or her lips and use it to exercise pushes and pulls and engage in factional politics in society. Whether it is in the area of provinces or religious sects, it is important for everyone to remain committed in every sphere of our existence to an oath-bound relationship of fraternal harmony. It will be very saddening if there is any occurrence of any adulteration in the purity of this commitment through the use, or misuse, of names of provinces and religious sects. From the times of the great religious kings of ancient times, to whom we owe great debts of gratitude, the people of all The Three Provinces of Tibet have been a single entity, having coexisted with the oneness of being a tsampa eating, mani-reciting people. Everyone should exercise care and caution to ensure that at no time in future shall there be any person who speaks in meaningless, incomprehensible terms

by saying things like: “I belong to U-Tsang, he is a Khampa, you belong to Amdo,” or “I belong to Nyingma, he belongs to Sakya, you belong to Kagyu, and those belong to the sect called Gelug,” and so on. Engaging in talks, exaggerations and slanderous rumors with a supposed feeling of parochial bias for the purpose of being helpful in a narrow, divisive minded way, which ruins one’s own reputation, and which sows seeds of discord in an otherwise harmonious society, should be avoided.

## **CULTURE**

Speaking in general terms, culture is a word with a vast connotation and includes or applies to the understanding of both The Five Major Sciences, namely, grammar, Sanskrit, medicine, logic or philosophy, and painting and handicrafts, and the Five Minor Sciences, namely poetry, semantics, lexicography, astrology, and performing arts.

As it used to be said by the ancient kings of Tibet to whom we owe much debts of gratitude, “Tibetans shall be happy in Tibet and the Chinese in China”. The question is why has it emerged that the Tibetan and Chinese peoples, despite having been intermingled, could not assimilate with each other? Well, the answer is it is a case of the differences in the unique native customs, habits and ways of life, languages, cultures, and so on of the two peoples self-evidently asserting their characteristic differences. We have set up many centres whose objectives are to preserve and protect Tibet’s religious traditions and culture, but especially the unique Tibetan customs and habits. These represent a great accomplishment on our part. We have achieved a measure of success so far in sustaining and perpetuating our religious traditions and culture, living in exile in foreign countries. People within the Tibetan youth community must strive to emerge as specialist scholars by paying particular attention to their own religious traditions and culture. Our basic aim in carrying out projects to establish settlements and schools exclusively for Tibetans living in exile in foreign countries has been to protect the Tibetan ethnic identity, the culture that characteristically inheres in the Tibetan people, and to secure the just cause of Tibet. It is, of course, naturally important for one to become knowledgeable by paying attention to all fields of knowledge of the modern world. In particular, however, a Tibetan should also pay specialized attention to his or her own cultural traditions, be able to score admirable results, and attain distinct accomplishments in this field.

Protecting one's culture means ensuring that culture is part of one's personal traits, or that one had imbibed it fully within oneself. Protection should be carried out on the basis of its being part of one's personal character. Protecting one's culture does not at all mean that one should put on display on one's religious altar the textual volumes with observances of great reverence. The Tibetan religious traditions and culture are endowed with attributes which could be of service not only the Tibetan people but also to people throughout the world to a fairly substantial degree. The question whether such a service could be actually accomplished or not depends on our own people.

It is not at all the case that we hold in high obeisance the need to protect our religious traditions and culture with a foolhardy display of bias and blind faith in spite of the fact that it is utterly devoid of any benefits. We have had clear experiences of the benefits of our religious traditions and culture in our day to day experience of carrying on with our livelihood during our period of living in exile. The Tibetan people living in Tibet have had even more vivid experiences of it. The fact that our youths have received modern educational opportunities has served to benefit the broader Tibetan issue in general. We should also use it to serve the Tibetan culture. If the younger generation fails to properly inherit and carry on with the task of protecting, promoting, and perpetuating the Tibetan culture, even as the older generation gradually dies out, it will be hard to find others who will carry on the work of protecting, promoting, and perpetuating it.

## **TIBETAN LANGUAGE**

The distinctiveness of Tibetans as a people is prominently projected by the way we think and in our mannerism, language, and in every other sphere of life in comparison with the corresponding attributes of the other peoples of this world. It is important that the characteristic distinctiveness the Tibetan people derive from their attributes such as the Tibetan language should be cherished and given the honored status it deserves. It would indeed be extremely tragic if during the period we remain in exile in other lands our own language should decline and disappear for want of proper attention. It would be another matter, of course, if among all our attributes as a people, this is one area in which we should be ashamed and not up to the mark. Otherwise, it is very vital for a people to take good care of their own language both in its spoken and written forms.

What indeed will become of the situation of our Tibetan language if Tibetans in India speak and write with particular attention in Indian languages as the main medium of their communication; Tibetans in Nepal speak and write with particular attention in the Nepalese language as the main medium of their communication; Tibetans in other foreign countries speak and write with particular attention in English language, for example, as the main medium of their communication, and Tibetans in Tibet speak and write with particular attention in Chinese language as the main medium of their communication? Speaking in general terms, it would, of course, be splendid and a wonderful adornment to have people equipped with multilingual skills and I can only congratulate any such achievement. However, if one abandons one's own linguistic heritage without care and use and, instead, clings to and remains dependent on some other language, there would be a real danger that someday the language of the Tibetan people will be lost forever. It is unavoidable, of course, that when interacting with the people of one's host community or country, one can only take recourse to the language of the place where one lives. However, within one's own family and when interacting with other Tibetan people, one should use uncorrupted Tibetan language. Unless the Tibetan people treat their own language with the honor and respect it deserves, there will be no others who will do that. It would be a shame and tragic if Tibetan people are ignorant about their own spoken and written language.

Learning and using the Tibetan language is indispensable if the religious traditions and the cultural heritage of Tibet are to continue to survive. Likewise, knowing the Tibetan language is indispensable if one wishes to look up, understand, and gain a taste of the teachings of the Buddha which are compiled in the *Kagyur* volumes and the commentaries of the great scholars of India and Tibet which exist in the numerous written volumes. Likewise, in order to pursue one's journey on the path of progressive improvements in one's successive future lives, one should, first of all, take refuge under a Lama. Thereafter one should look up the scriptures. It would be hard to gain that much benefit merely by offering prayers and having devotion and faith without looking up the scriptures. And in order to look up the scriptures, one should, of course, be able to read Tibetan. It would be hard to gain a comprehension of the Buddhist teachings through other languages in the way one can from the Tibetan language. That by itself gives us a measure of understanding of the status of the Tibetan language. Scholars of linguistics have stated that the Tibetan language is one of the ten or so most ancient languages of this world.

Speaking from other points of view too, it is the religious traditions, culture, and the language of Tibet which shows the distinct identity and ethnicity of the Tibetan people vis-à-vis other peoples of the world. In future too, as soon as the Tibetans in Tibet and in exile are happily reunited, all matters, big or small, connected with the governance of Tibet shall be carried out in the Tibetan language in keeping with the general practice prevalent in all the other countries of the world. In particular, in order to be counted among the community of advanced peoples of this world, one should be in a position to be able to explain the history of one's own language and culture. Otherwise, even if one manages to take care of one's livelihood issues, one will become an object of contempt and ridicule from the intellectually advanced peoples of the world. And so, with regard to this matter, the responsibility is great and unavoidable on the part not only of the children, which bears no mention, but also on the part of their parents and relatives, as well as on the part of the organizations and welfare associations set up to carry out objectives related to the general good of Tibet and the Tibetan people.

Likewise, if one desires to spend one's life in the Tibetan community, one should be conversant about the Tibetan culture and habits. There have recently been some good news about the fact that the Tibetan children attending foreign schools in the countries they live are paying special attention to studying the Tibetan language. It really made me feel happy. Being a Tibetan oneself, one will, no doubt, enjoy life better by living in the Tibetan society.

## **EDUCATION**

Many transformative developments took place in this world in the last century and these have also been accompanied by great progresses. However, we, the Tibetan people, being not equipped with the kind of modern knowledge that was commensurate with the times and circumstances brought on by these developments – because we chose to live in isolation from the rest of the world and therefore lacked exposure in the spheres of both seeing and hearing about these things – remained very backward. In fact, one of the fundamental causes of the tribulations in which we the Tibetan people found ourselves in the recent past was due to our lack of education and therefore too little exposure in the spheres of both seeing and hearing about the modern world developments.

On the basis of our experience of those past years we have made special efforts to education our children with a view to make them knowledgeable after we arrived in exile. And as a result of the fact that we did not relent in our determination but strived on with diligence despite a multitude of obstructive factors in that endeavor, we have attained a measure of accomplishments in the area of education. Examination results also show the outcome of our efforts to be positive. In fact today we are in a position to boast that there is hardly an illiterate person among the youth in the Tibetan community.

Many of the teachers and other staff who from the time of the establishment of our schools had worked hard in the field of education are no longer with us. Many are, however, still continuing to strive on. To all of them I express my feeling of indebtedness with gratitude. Speaking from a religious point of view, those who have worked diligently in the field of imparting education have accumulated merits. And speaking from a worldly perspective, it is a source of great satisfaction for the concerned persons as an accomplishment in their lives, this being a work concerned with the education mission for the people of one's very own ethnicity.

At the time we began our mission to educate our children for the first time, there were very obvious problems staring us in our faces. However everyone concerned with undertaking that mission remained resolute in their determination and worked hard. As a result we have achieved progress. However, at this time, when we have succeeded in establishing a substantially sound educational foundation and progress, we must be alert to the dangers of becoming complacent with a feeling of having done our job well and thereby becoming lax and even regressive in continuing our educational mission. There is no limit to the depth and horizon of progress and our commitment with diligence must continue.

We must prove ourselves worthy of our birth as human beings. On the other hand, if we become something like a burden on our society, creating additional troubles and new causes for sadness, the meaning and purpose of one's birth as a human being is not fulfilled.

A human being's gift for discernment, his capabilities, and his wisdom borne of ethical morality are not only beneficial to oneself but also to the entire humanity in general. One will not only be happy to the extent to which one can make good use of one's capability for discernment but also

one will have the ability to help fellow human beings. However, to the extent one misuses one's capability for discernment in an antithetical way to attain hidden selfish ends or to seize opportunities to benefit oneself through craftiness, and so on, one will lose one's place in society and end up being filled with unhappiness. A person who is endowed with a higher sense of purpose in being public spirited and altruistic and who is additionally gifted with a sense of discernment will be admired and looked up to with fondness by other people. It is therefore of fundamental importance that as one receives education and improves one's learning, one should, at the same time, make efforts to pay attention to bringing into play the noble, inherent goodness of a human being when using one's knowledge and skill so that one would be able to combine side by side one's knowledge and wisdom with one's sense of higher public purpose.

When one's educational achievement is good both in its external and internal aspects, not only will one benefit in one's own personal life but also one will be able to benefit the host country and the society wherever one lives, as well as one's fellow ethnic group. Thus, one will be able to be of help both to oneself privately and to others generally and one's life can become most meaningful.

Currently our task is to struggle for regaining the ownership of the Tibetan land for the Tibetan people. And when the moment of happy reunion between the Tibetans left behind in Tibet and those in exile arrives, we will have to make efforts for the progress of our own native local areas and ensure its administrative success; for all such kinds of endeavor we will need to depend on education. Should we turn out to have a horde of uneducated people, we will again find ourselves in difficulties. And it will be difficult for both individuals and the collective entities to gain lasting happiness and well being. As the world undergoes transformations, so also do our times. And an uneducated person, far from being able to undertake social constructions, won't be able to look after even himself alone. This should be clearly understood and everyone should therefore work hard in the field of education without any negligence.

We are opposing the government of China only because we are struggling for justice, and not because of our dislike of or hostility towards the Chinese people. We the people of Tibet desire happiness just as the Chinese people also do. Over a length of time in Tibet in the recent past, the extent of destructions, including of monasteries and temples, has been beyond

all limits. Extremely large numbers of people were laid to waste with death and so many more number of Tibetans had to endure unimaginable persecution and suffering. Likewise, Tibet's land resources like timber, mineral ores, as well as meat and animal skin products from Tibetan nomads, were transported away without limits. To sum up, the Tibetan territory was rendered impoverished and the Tibetan people enslaved. In addition, the core essences of everything that Tibet is endowed with are being sucked out by the Chinese. It therefore simply won't do for us who live in exile on other people's land to still remain relaxed with a show of happiness, watching the days go by in our works and engaging in playing blame games. We are in such times as to get up, take off our dunce hats, and gain a measure of our situation through careful comparisons.

The fact that truth is on our side and we have ample reasons to explain ourselves gives us a sense of pride. The Chinese people number more than one billion whereas we are only six million. Although we have, therefore, only a small voice, there are people who listen to us, respect us and who support us. Therefore if we counter China by relying on the power of truth, non-violent strategy, and reason, it is not impossible for us to defeat them. Even now the determination of the general masses of the Tibetan people, their unwavering courage, and the endurance and continuity of our struggle over a period of time gives the Chinese government much headache.

It has also been noticed, however, that there have been cases in which some of the fairly well educated and well experienced people pay attention only to the well being of their own families and so go off whenever an opportunity comes their way. Such a development is an adverse result of the failure to cultivate in their minds during their initial years of education an effective seed of understanding about the religious traditions and culture of Tibet and the related understanding of Tibet's history and so on, which, in sum, means the absence of a sense of concern for the general good of everyone. So, it is important that there should be no mistakes in the matter of providing counseling right from the years of one's schooling on the subjects of how to lead a meaningful life, what kind of thoughts one should bear in mind, how to present oneself before other people, one's behavioral conducts, and so on. During the course of imparting education, examples should be provided to explain what constitutes morally or ethically correct conduct and what constitutes immoral or unethical behavior. And by being thus made clearly aware of what sort of behaviors are morally or ethically

upright and what sort of behaviors make for immoral or unethical behavior, the children should be enabled to cultivate and imbibe positive moral habits in their thoughts, behavior, and personal character.

Again, another saddening thing is that there appears to have been some cases of unruliness among some young people today who lie, rob, swindle, brawl, steal, get drunk, rape, gamble, take banned substances, and so on. Such people are not only scoffed at and looked down on by everyone, and not given any credence, regard, respect or trust by anyone but they also bring about a permanent damage to their own personal future prospects. Thus, such a person is left with no prospect worth talking about for the latter part of his personal life. Issues such as these should not be neglected and everyone concerned must definitely give counsel and make attempts to persuade them to follow the correct path. It is extremely important that such sorts of behavior should be preempted from the very beginning. A section of such people is a result of unfulfilled hopes; they involve people who may have a bit of knowledge in reading and writing and mathematics but whose mental ability was not up to the mark. Some others are possibly a result of having been pampered to the point of being spoiled, making them lose their way. But whatever be the case, in all such situations, there is a heavy responsibility not only on the people directly related to them but also on the whole society to make attempts to veer them away from their wrong path with counseling about the merits of doing the right thing and demerits of continuing with the wrong way.

## **PERFORMING ARTS**

The field of performing arts is one of the streams of knowledge among the Five Major Sciences and Five Minor Sciences in the Tibetan cultural heritage. I am not particularly knowledgeable about the operatic field. However I have heard many operatic melodies during my childhood. So, when opera singing take place these days, I remember my times in the Norbu Lingkha when I was a little child. The Tibetan opera and the performance called Tashi Sholpa carried out with the wearing of goat skin are part of the unique Tibetan cultural performance traditions. Although the Tibetan operatic performances are staged with just beating of drums and clanking of cymbals of varying sizes, and therefore do not involve great many varieties of sweet sounding melodies, hearing the sounds of the drums and cymbals and the operatic melodies flood my mind with the

memories of those old times. In Tibet although many songs and dances are being performed by Chinese artistes by wearing Tibetan costumes and by imitating Tibetans, the Tibetan opera, the operatic dialogues and the performing styles in all their different aspects such as the *Gyalu Jinbeb* (in which the leader of the opera troupe dance-consecrates the performance ground) and the crooning and dance steps of the fairies, it turns out, cannot be copied in unmistakable terms by the Chinese performers. This shows the uniqueness of the Tibetan performing arts culture. And I have come to learn through some foreign acquaintances that according to scholars of performing arts, among the numerous types of performing art traditions in existence throughout the world today, that of the traditional Tibetan one is among those at the higher level of standards. Not only does the Tibetan opera tradition, with its numerous schools, symbolize the uniqueness of the Tibetan culture and identity, it also conveys through their story lines religious moral teachings such as the law of karma, the uncertainty of death, the importance of being kind hearted, and about the fact that although one may face tribulations in the early part of one's life, truth will ultimately prevail and give one happiness in the later part of one's life.

Different local area in Tibet had different varieties of operatic cultures. And when a Tibetan person sings there is a genuine uniqueness about it in comparison with others with regard to such characteristics as the highness or lowness of pitch, the manner of lowering and raising the pitch, the thickness or shrillness of the sound and the facial expression. In particular, the melody is pleasant and the sound magnificent. With regard to the quality of the vocal sound, nothing can be done about it if one's vocal cord sound is hereditarily or innately bad. With regard to the performance of Tibetan dance, it is at once both majestic and elegant.

When a Chinese sings a Tibetan song, the melody is like that in the case of a Chinese song, with the sound being seemingly shrill and sung with a slippery tongue so that no pleasantness emerges from the exercise. In the case of the manner of wearing the costumes too, it is not entirely or purely Tibetan while the performances resemble the way in which the traditional Chinese opera called *Tangshi* is staged, marked by an appearance of fidgetiness and chaotic hurriedness. No matter how well it is sought to be carried out, this sort of performance, being an exercise in mishmash, still leaves much to be desired, is unsightly, and is not at all appropriate in the final outcome. Given this situation, it is important to pay heightened

attention to those aspects of one's culture which have profound historical significance and which clearly reflect one's ethnic identity.

When performing dances, the artistes should not resemble a lineup of wrathful men and women; rather, they should display a pleasant bearing, with a conversational and smiley disposition. The dressing should not seem as if the artistes have to struggle to cope with it; rather, whatever it is should be apposite and pure. The performing art of dancing is a serious matter and should never be treated with negligence and laxity.

In the case of musical instruments, we have the female deity Yangchenma who symbolically bears in her hands, as stated in the relevant religious scriptures, a *piwang* (a kind of stringed instrument), a general kind of lute, and a flute. I do wonder whether there is a need for us to pay a little bit more attention to these kinds of musical instruments. A fulsome musical band is a vital component for singing and dancing. We do not have to rely entirely on the Chinese musical instrument called *yangching*; it would be all right to also make use of whatever other instruments there are in existence in the world today.

Under conditions of paucity of resources and facilities, our performing artistes have carried on with fortitude, with all the concerned persons working with diligence in this field of Tibetan cultural heritage. What is more, I now see great progress in all aspects of this endeavor, including in terms of the different organizations and in the field of performing arts. Speaking at the fundamental level, I suggest that taking the basic training that had been imparted for ensuring the preservation and sustenance of the performing arts, efforts should be made to achieve further progress in both standard and quality. Every availability of the opportunity for making the efforts should be made use of in keeping with the existing hopes for improvement and for provision of better resources and facilities. The performing artistes have a great responsibility in the area of the preservation of Tibetan culture.

In Dharamsala we have the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts as a principal body in this field. In the Tibetan settlements elsewhere too, opera associations as well as song and dance ensembles have been set up. For the purposes of ensuring their sustenance and progress, it is important that all the concerned leaders and the public pay special attention. The recent undertaking by the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts at the centre

to collate many types of songs from all sorts of areas and regions across Tibet is a good endeavor. Efforts in this area should be strengthened even further to carry out whatever amount of research it is possible to undertake. Likewise, opportunities have been availed to travel to many countries of the world to give Tibetan cultural performances and to introduce Tibetan culture. They have been most beneficial both the ways.

The Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts is of old origin. However it appears that this institute never grows further, resembling a midget man who never grows up. If the present trend of the experienced artistes leaving it one after another continues, it will come to resemble as if the trunk of the tree, which is the principal part of the body, will keep losing its branches and leaves. The result will be that the principal body for the preservation of the performing arts culture of Tibet will face a major obstacle to its progress. It is, of course, a fact that there are many problems resulting from lack of facilities and amenities. However, we are gaining growing positive attention these days and everyone concerned should find ways with attention to gradually solve all these problems.

## **THE CENTRAL TIBETAN ADMINISTRATION**

The government in exile was set up not because we were too capable or overly imaginative. Earlier, there was a Gaden Phodrang Government of Tibet which existed since the time of His Holiness the Fifth Dalai Lama. Successive Dalai Lamas headed that government. In 1959, when we left our own land and escaped to other people's land, I was joined by some of the members of the Kashag as well as some of the main officials of the government of Tibet. And because all the elements that form the basis for the existence of the terminology of the Gaden Phodrang system of government continued to be present, we adopted that name and resumed the tradition. And so it was not something that we newly set up after some deal of thinking and coming up with something which took shape in our minds without any concrete basis in any preexisting order. However, over the years we have taken many successive steps designed to transform the political character of our system of government into a democratic one. Through that process we have now become a qualitative democracy which is both mature and in keeping with the definition of the term for this system of government.

In the case of the government in exile, the officials working in the administration have come from people across all spectrums of the Tibetan society without any distinction with regard to their provincial, religious, and gender differences. Likewise, in the case of the membership of the Tibetan Parliament in Exile, equal number of seats has been allotted to each of the three traditional provinces of Tibet irrespective of the differences in the total strength in exile of the people belonging to each of these provinces. Likewise, equal number of seats has been allotted to each of the different religious sects and traditions of Tibet without any reference in regard to the differences in the numbers of Sakya, Gelug, Kagyu, Nyingma and Bon adherents. The results we have achieved as a consequence of it are fairly substantial and obvious.

As to the question whether we should or should not have what we call the government in exile, the answer is that it is more beneficial to have it. There is significance to the attention the government of China pays and the distinction it makes in saying it wishes to meet with representatives of the Dalai Lama but not with officials of the Tibetan government in exile. It won't be good for us to act as if we attach no importance to the point on which the government of China attaches significance. It is, of course, easy to eliminate something which is already in existence; however, it is extremely difficult to bring into being something which does not exist. Because we do not have our own territorial land, the government in exile is faced with enormous difficulties in this period of time. Everyone should take good care of the one government in exile that we have. The consequence of failing to do that will be a loss to us. It is better to have a body to which we can lodge complaints about our well being, rather than not having any such recourse. If there is no firmly established government with a semblance of permanence, individual members of the public will also not be in any worthwhile condition.

Again, some people who come from Tibet say that they had a good visit and pilgrimage in India, that they were happy to have been able to receive blessings from His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and that there was otherwise no one else to repose their hopes in. Such comments betray ignorance of the whole truth and lack of proper understanding of the actual situation. Think for a moment about the diligent works that were carried out with grit and determination from the time we first arrived in India, when we were yet to emerge from the shroud of ignorance that clouded our understanding of

the outside world. Fairly substantial amounts of work have been done with regard, for examples, to schools, settlements, religious centers, economic affairs, foreign relations, and so on. We were able to accomplish works in these areas because we had an organization that we all identified ourselves with. If we did not have that organization, it would have been extremely difficult to accomplish what we have so far managed to. Today we have reached a stage where we are working and seeking ways to implement our desire to improve and transform our system into a full democracy — a system of governance that is worthwhile and true to the meaning of the term. Everyone should understand that we have these accomplishments and the further opportunities with regard to them due to the existence of the government in exile. After all, how can there be fruits without their causative seeds?

Again, we are not saying that we have been faultless during the past period. In fact I routinely make it a point to say that due to shortcomings in experience and knowledge, lack of awareness resulting from want of hearing and listening, absence of timely availability of the required conditions and facilities, and so on, there have been faults which resulted in failures to carry out initiatives. I often say it is better for us to leave it for others to say the good things about us, and for us to speak about our shortcomings among ourselves. Speaking basically, it is, of course, a necessity and also a matter of one's right to freedom of expression, to speak about both the positive and the negative things. And when speaking about the negatives, one should also suggest ways to overcome them. I certainly welcome anyone who speaks about the positive things and also suggests ways to deal with the negatives. However, it would amount to doing nothing more than raising trouble if one only talks about the negative things without having anything to suggest for the purposes of overcoming them, for this would be like churning water with the futile hope of extracting butter. I routinely say that one should always have the gut to think and to speak up. However, in such cases, it is important for one to think and see whether these will be beneficial or harmful. Irrespective of the question whether our government in exile is or is not recognized and accepted by others, it is of critical importance that our own Tibetan people have faith and uphold in recognition our own government. The governmental organization that is currently established at Dharamsala is, however, totally different from the circumstances concerning the previous Tibetan government. The government today is not a private government of His Holiness the Dalai

Lama. Neither is it a government of the officials, beginning from the Kalons at the top who carry out its affairs. Rather, it is a government of the Tibetan people as a whole. It is the duty of all the Tibetan people, rather than the responsibility of just a few individuals, to respect, secure, and nurture the government of the entire people of Tibet.

## **DEMOCRACY**

What the future will be like is not an inherently easy thing for us to predict. However, it is the duty of every being that is human to make preparations for the purposes of one's future. What we are seeking to achieve is founded on truth and this gives our struggle an inherent strength. By the blessing and power of the indubitable Three Supreme Jewels of timeless kindness, I have no doubt that there will definitely be a change for the better and that we shall not have to remain in this same situation forever.

Taking a hindsight glance at the last century, one can see that the social and political systems of Tibet, which had not changed all that much, had shortcomings as well as numerous merits. In order to chart a clear course for Tibet's future, we have adopted a Charter of Tibetans in Exile which is in line with the general practices across the democratic world. Under this Charter all Tibetans are equal without any discrimination based on any question whether they are lay people or from the clergy, on their sex, language, religion, social origin, race, or wealth, on whether they are from some central or remote region, and so on. The Charter sets out in clear terms the freedoms and rights of all Tibetans, including those of thought, expression, religion, life, electoral franchise, and expression. The Tibetan people, by using their freedom and by means of their freely chosen method, have adopted a wide and open democratic future which is innovative and which will lead to their social progress and development.

The democratic system is the system which is not only in line with the trend of the modern times but which also accords with the Buddhist doctrines. There are, of course, many types of systems in this world, but there is none which is perfect in being without any kind of demerit. However, the fact that it incorporates an optimal combination of satisfaction, steadiness, and stability and gives the people the right of say in one's national affairs makes democracy the best possible system. Our aim is that the new Tibet of the future should be a democracy in full sense of the term. With this end in view, we have accumulated experiences and still continue to gain

more experiences by implementing the democratic system in all its diverse aspects during the period we remain in exile.

However, it will never do to deliberately distort the meaning of democracy by ignoring the chain of command in the system. Democracy is never a political forum where a hierarchy of command structure does not exist and where one is totally free to do as one fancies. Democracy means a system of government by the consent of the governed, and in which the demands and wishes of the general public are supreme, save for reasons and purposes justified by exceptional circumstances.

In order to avail one's democratic rights and freedoms on an equal basis with the others, one should properly carry out with success the obligations that befall oneself on the basis of a clear understanding of what democracy is really all about. To act with arrogant avarice in claiming one's democratic dues without seeing oneself to be under any sort of obligation to do one's own bit is nothing but to make a point of showing off one's ignorance. For achieving success in the practice of democracy it is indispensable that the public should be knowledgeable. And if the public is uneducated, there is a real danger of them being easily misled, becoming gullible tools in the hands of opportunists. Those who are in leading positions should make special efforts to ensure a successful implementation of the democratic system. There are some who act only if they feel like doing it; keeping on postponing things if one is disinclined, thereby avoiding their responsibilities. If an official fails to carry out his or her responsibilities, one does not deserve the title of "official", which carries with it the meaning of a doer of action. Our democratic administrative system is based on established, morally sound practices having relevance both for now and in future. However, there is no limit to progress and we should never rest contented with what we have achieved thus far. We should look up for inspiration from models with higher levels of accomplishment; and it would be improper to compare ourselves with those that are stuck below where we are. Hence the officials should carry out their bounden duties with a sincerity of commitment and with a high level of diligence. And it is of the essence of the matter that the works should be carried out in the direction of progressive forwardness.

## **THE MIDDLE WAY APPROACH**

On the method for seeking to resolve the Sino-Tibetan problem, I have decided to follow the middle way approach. Let me explain its genesis

and how it took shape in my mind. The previous Dalai Lama assumed the temporal and spiritual leadership of Tibet when he was eighteen years old. And since I took up that leadership when I reached the age of sixteen, I have always followed the method of mutual accommodation to resolve all issues between China and Tibet. In this regard, take the case when the Drichu river became the border between China and Tibet. It was probably in the beginning of 1950 when trouble erupted in the Denkhog area. And because the Governor of Domey and his officials had already been captured by the Chinese, there was no option but to hold talks with the latter as a means to find a way out of the crisis. But if one wanted to talk, there should surely be a basis for the other side to think and agree to come to the negotiating table. Otherwise there is absolutely no way a talk could take place. Likewise, when Sino-Tibetan talks were held for the very first time in Beijing, it is a fact that we could not negotiate in a satisfactory manner in an atmosphere of freedom. Nevertheless, with a motivation and approach of exacting as much initial temporary advantages as we possibly could at a time when we were weighed down under one of the worst possible circumstances, we were compelled to sign an agreement.

In 1959, I fled from Norbulingkha and stayed in Lhokha because there were no Chinese there at that time. And from there I thought about holding talks with the Chinese leaders who were in Lhasa. Unfortunately, violent repression began in Lhasa and there was no opportunity to hold talks.

In 1973, when the Cultural Revolution was in full swing, I spoke to the Chairman of the Tibetan parliament in exile at that time, Mr Tsewang Trinley. And I told him: "Sooner or later, there will come a time when China and we will have to hold talks. From our side, there is no other way but to hold talks with a view to try to solve the problem. And even if there are other options, we still have to think whether they are feasible for us or not. And holding talks means seeking a mutually acceptable way out; after all, there is no way everything will turn out solely according to our desires. Therefore we need to think what will be the better course for us in proceeding with this matter." Apart from the Chairman of the Tibetan parliament in exile, the Kalons at that time also knew about this discussion.

We do, of course, talk about complete independence. On historical basis, this is a right we are entitled to. And this is the reason why the general Tibetan public too aspires for complete independence. However, the

Chinese side is not at all interested to listen to any demand for complete independence. Their position is that Tibet is an inseparable part of China. And so a way has to be found between these two positions. In view of this, we felt that even if we cannot get complete independence, if the three traditional provinces of Tibet are united and a high degree of genuine autonomy assured for it, not only will we be benefited but also the Chinese side will have the satisfaction of not seeing Tibet secede from it. And so we came up with a thought in an area of reasoning where there was a room for thinking.

After that, whenever I talked on the subject, I always maintained that our struggle was for the purpose of achieving happiness. Had I used the term “independence”, the Chinese side would not have liked it. On the other hand, if I had used the term “autonomy” nakedly, the Tibetan people would not have liked it. And so I kept maintaining that our fundamental cause was directed at achieving happiness. This was also true as a matter of fact. Speaking about independence and about autonomy are both directed at achieving happiness, not for the purpose of inviting sorrow, and I have been explaining so.

During the period we maintained direct contact with China until 1987, the latter only kept saying it was thinking about solving the problems of the Dalai Lama and an unspecified number of Tibetans living abroad. It never accepted that there were problems inside Tibet. However, when meeting privately with our members, Chinese officials acknowledged that there were serious problems in Tibet and expressed the view that talks should be held between the two sides in an attempt to solve them. It was during such a period that there was a surge in the democracy movement in China and the overall policy of the Chinese government became more hardline. Because of it, I, in 1987, presented a Five-Point Proposal for peace between China and Tibet while visiting the United States of America. And in the fifth point of that proposal, I suggested that the Sino-Tibetan dialogue be continued.

In 1988, I presented a proposal before the European Parliament at Strasbourg, which was based on my fundamental position that there should be genuine autonomy for a territory which unites all the three traditional provinces of Tibet, and which set out the legal basis for implementing the proposal. In that proposal I have stated it clearly that the final decision on it would have to be taken by the people of Tibet. And it was thought that before the people take the final decision, the Tibetan parliament in exile

and the Kashag should come up with some examples of the choices on which there should be internal discussions and researches so that when the whole issue becomes easy to understand and clear, a referendum should be held at an appropriate time.

In 1996 and 1997, a preliminary opinion poll was held in preparation for a referendum for the Tibetan people to decide on the best possible way to realize the fundamental cause of Tibet. More than 64% of the total opinion letters that were received expressed the view that without requiring the holding of a referendum, the Tibetan public would support the middle way approach or whatever decision I may take from time to time in line with the world situation or changing political situation in China. This position was later unanimously adopted by the Tibetan parliament in exile.

## **THE TIBETAN PARLIAMENT IN EXILE**

It touches upon the bounden duty of every living Tibetan when one talks about matters concerned with the affairs of Tibet. The members of the Tibetan parliament in Exile are all people with greater ability and who have been especially sent up through electoral choices by the Tibetan people living in exile. The people who elected them belong to all the three traditional provinces of Tibet and are the adherents of the different Tibetan religious schools and traditions. They therefore have an even greater responsibility. The Tibetan people left behind in Tibet are persistent in reposing their faith in all of us living in exile, especially those who hold titles and responsibilities. Members of the Tibetan parliament in Exile should therefore ponder deeply and in sufficient details on every aspect of matters of both current and enduring future common Tibetan concerns. They should rack their brains as much as they possibly can to examine whatever obstacles there may be on our path and to work out ways to overcome them in their efforts to ensure the progress, smooth operation, and successful outcome on issues that commonly concern the Tibetan people as a whole in much the similar way a doctor would diagnose the ailments of his patients. In doing so, they should act without any hesitation, vagueness, or ambiguity, or without any concern about making oneself appear good. If they can speak out on both the negative and the positive aspects of the matters under discussion with an undoubted sense of being of benefit to the common good of all Tibet and with the motivation of a sense of affection

to the cause, there will be ever greater hope for finding result-oriented strategies for solving problems. Such suggestions should, of course, be geared towards fulfilling objectives and achieving benefits for Tibet as a whole, the territories of Tibet, and the entirety of the Tibetan people. They should never be on matters which are of concern only to some private individuals. It would be good if one could speak whatever one had in mind at the appropriate discussion forum, explaining oneself with reasons and examples on any matter of public concern and with regard to which there have been cases of mistakes or shortcomings or lack of unfairness or want of details. It is good in the natural order of things for everyone to pay close attention and speak with each other whatever one had in mind on the question of what is the most acceptable and best possible solution on the concerned subjects and issues after thinking, consulting, talking, arguing, and reasoning.

Just as one has the right to express one's views, so also have the others the right to speak. If it occurs for one to be unable to accept a view or views expressed by a person, it will not be right to give any sort of indication that expressing that view or those views were entirely undesirable. Likewise, it should never happen that people hold a grudge against others over the occurrences of argumentative exchanges during a discussion in a meeting and sulk by refusing to talk with each other with looks of anger and hostility even after the meetings dispersal. Such a type of behavior betrays poverty of knowledge.

Again, it may happen that on hearing some information that one finds disconcerting, one may, without pausing to find out whether there was any reason or basis to the truth of it, rushes in a rash manner, like the proverbial rabbit who takes off in fright at the splashing sound of something falling in a water nearby and spreading a fear psychosis all around, and further spread the rumor with all sorts of claims about such and such people saying this and that. This manner of making everything that is being said and heard into a veritable source of suspicion, controversy, and confusion will only bring unhappiness to oneself and loss to the public. Such a failure to lead the Tibetan people with unity and along the mainstream path will be pathetic and also shameful. There is nothing remarkable about the fact that someone makes comments and thereby merely manages to throw up a controversy on the basis of one's lack of understanding or on the basis of one's likings and disliking.

Again, it is pertinent, of course, for people to argue with each other because of the differences they may have with regard to their stands on policy issues. However, without the basis of any policy issue, engaging in arguments with each other due to one likes or disliking towards each other is both a fruitless and meaningless endeavor. It is perfectly all right if one manages to thoroughly expose mistakes with presentations of substantive bases and reasons on issues related to the work at hand. Otherwise, engaging in factional schism on the basis of one's personal likings and dis likings is not at all good. The manner of examining the good and bad points about a matter at hand if carried out by keeping in view the meaning and purpose of the undertaking rather than on the basis of the identity of the people involved will be good.

When dealing with matters of public concern, there will always be all sorts of positive and negative things to be kept in mind. But the main thing is that decisions should be taken in favor of what maximizes the benefits and what minimizes the negative consequences. And there will also be the possibility of some works with regard to which one may feel uncomfortable. Nevertheless, in any such case, one should be guided by the consideration of what is most helpful and what brings the greatest amount of benefits while taking the final decisions. When holding discussions, the opportunity for exchange of views should be marked by openness, clarity, and comprehensiveness. To mechanically endorse whatever is ordered or to accept as good whatever somebody proposes while taking decisions is improper to the extreme.

Likewise, it would be a disgusting conduct on the part of a participant in a meeting to speak only what appears to be good, proper, and 'correct' without clearly presenting his or her views with frankness and then expressing disappointment behind it, commenting privately about being not satisfied with the discussions and having been left with wanting more. It would also be an act of extremism for one to obsessively focus only on finding faults and pointing out the demerits. It is inevitable that in any sort of undertaking big or small there will always be merits and demerits. And it is important that in all such cases, one should express with clarity what the facts are or not in terms of their relevance to the purpose on hand. Anyone who is at fault should have no hesitation in admitting it, for being stubbornly foolhardy about it won't vindicate him or her in any way.

Henceforth, while giving speeches or making announcements, it would be better if one stops saying things like “this is His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s wishes” or “this has been ordered by His Holiness the Dalai Lama”. Although it may benefit a bit a section of the audience to be told about His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s wishes, one has to look at it from another point of view as well. The fact is that such remarks are contradictory to the strengthening of our ongoing efforts to embark on the path of genuine democracy in both our words and deeds without any sort of compromise. If the Tibetan public are told that they were only being transmitted what has been wished for or ordered by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, then even if they have additional different kinds of views to express on the same matter or wish to point out defects and demerits on the issue, they will feel handicapped in coming forth with them. After having been told that the matter being presented were the wishes and orders of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, members from the public will feel inconvenient about offering their suggestions or they will feel a barrier against expressing their views, fearing that they may be thereby faulted for seeming to counter or criticize His Holiness the Dalai Lama or to be seen as disregarding Him in offering additional views on the matters at issue.

The members of the Tibetan parliament in exile are representatives of the general Tibetan public and they should therefore serve the general Tibetan public. For this purpose, they should mingle and interact with the general Tibetan public and lead them on the basis of understanding their concerns about their well being. It will not do for the leaders to remain aloof and cut off from the general public. And so both the leaders and the people over whom they exercise their leadership should manage to interact with each other. In this respect things will turn out good if the leaders’ thinking could come first and at the same time the interaction takes place.

## **OFFICIALS OF THE CENTRAL TIBETAN ADMINISTRATION**

It is not at all the case that we the rulers and subjects of Tibet headed in the direction of India solely for the purpose of just securing our personal lives. Likewise, it is not due to any disaster caused by elements of nature, famine, or internal conflicts in our land due to which we came to other people’s land. Rather, it is in order to be able to make efforts and find ways to regain our freedom that we came here. This is not a minor undertaking; rather, it is an extremely heavy responsibility. Because of this, everyone should think

in terms of achieving this goal through the processes of many strategic efforts and hardships, and with a long term vision. Otherwise, if we think of it as an easy task with a short-sighted thinking, there is every danger of our calculations proving to be wrong. It would be good, of course, if things turn out in keeping with such easy, convenient, and short term thinking. However, the catastrophe of our failure could turn out to be all the greater in keeping with the extent of the period of our failure to fulfill our wishes. That is the reason why I always make it a point to say that we should hope for the best but prepare for the worst.

As it is said, from the point of view of depending on and being dependent on, the officials of the Central Tibetan Administration are like the good bodied ones from amongst a community of short stature people. I consider them to be a people who are capable of thinking through the barriers of time in terms of the immediate, future, and ultimate well being. It is not enough for one to sound good and confident while speaking; one must also prove oneself to be true to one's words in terms of success in delivering thereon. We are a people with religious faith, and we are all believers in the law of karma. If there is anything regarding which one had committed an error or caused a failure, it is a wrong, whether others know about it or not. In case one tries to conceal rather than acknowledge one's mistake, which is also wrong and there is no way one will succeed in it. If in one's life one does not intentionally cheat, beguile, or conducts oneself in a hypocritical manner, then, whether one says prayers or not, one is a religious person by one's conduct.

The officials of the Central Tibetan Administration today are all mostly people who have completed their education. The days of ignorance and being in a daze due to the fact that finds oneself in a totally alien surrounding are over. What matters today are one's sense of public spirit, fortitude, attentiveness, concern, diligence, and whether one makes the efforts in terms of working out plans or not. These are what I wish to remind you about. One should make it a point to use the knowledge one possesses by pooling it into society and by making effective use of it.

Many outside people who are knowledgeable, considerate, and responsible praise the exile Tibetan establishment and say helping it has been well worth it, that nothing of it has been a waste. This can be rightly seen as an accomplishment and a fruit of labor on the part of the officials of the Central Tibetan Administration. From another point of view, however, I

perceive that with the passage of time, a slight bit of shortcomings appear to have crept in. If these could be corrected, it would be progress.

If one is inspired by a spirit of service for the common good, there is no likelihood for one to feel discouraged by a sense of the difficulty of one's work. One should at all times be dedicated to one's public duty and pay due attention to it, and derive their commitment to their work from such a spirit, irrespective of the question whether one is in the office or whether it is within one's office time schedule. If one has a sense of being merely a salaried person who works only to collect his or her pay, one will have a hard time killing one's office time; and once the office time comes to an end, he or she will go about without having a slightest bit of concern for his or her work.

In the case of an official working for an independent country, even if there was a slight shortcoming or failure in the discharge of one's duty, not a great deal of a transformative disaster will result. We are, however, refugees, with not even a palm-sized territory of our own. As regards the situation in Tibet, we are fully aware how truly tragic it is. Under such a dire circumstance, it is only to be expected that the officials among us who live in a free, independent country should work with a hundred-fold efficiency and commitment for success compared to others. There is no way not doing so would be in conformity with our actual situation. It also won't do at all for us to live in smug satisfaction by nothing that compared to the situation of others we are much better off. I wish to emphasize that we all should guard ourselves against becoming complacent and remain alert at all times. We are all aware of the tragic circumstances under which we are working. So, even if we are unable to excel others in our works, we should definitely not fall behind them. Otherwise we fail to live up to our name as humans. If we satisfy ourselves and remain contented with just about managing to ensure that no causes for questioning would arise in our discharge of our duties, or with only just about managing to avoid failures in our duties, we will never progress. The Tibetan public maintains faith in us, so if we let them down like that, would it not be wrong both religiously and from a worldly point of view?

## **NON-GOVERNMENTAL GROUPS**

Speaking from a religious point of view, all of us Tibetans, who belong to the three traditional provinces of Tibet, are one: We have all been born in the

same Bodhisattva Chenrezig's realm for liberating sentient beings. In that respect, we are also all same in being people who recite the mani mantra, who eat tsampa as their staple diet, and who share a common history in the past, the same courses of experiences through the recent times, the same current situation, and the same future goals.

Likewise, if the whole of Tibet is united as a single, integrated entity, there will be a corollary all-round success in every other sphere, including in undertakings connected with religious and cultural aspects. On the other hand, to the extent that the strength of our unity declines there will be corresponding and spontaneous all-round negative effects on the Tibetan people as a whole with regard to all the good things that otherwise come from unity, including in religious and political matters. For example, during the period of our ancient religious kings, to whom we owe much debts of gratitude, all the ethnic Tibetan people lived under a single dominion. And it was under such a situation that Tibet was a country of power and strength. Later on, however, Tibet gradually splintered apart with the result that it had to undergo many difficult periods and tribulations. At the time we first arrived in exile, we all lived under the common description of what is called 'Tibetans' in English, irrespective of any question which of the three provinces of Tibet any of us had come from. There was no one who made any such distinction at that time.

During the period of our ancient religious kings, the Tibetan term for the name 'Tibet' applied to the entirety of the territory inhabited by the Tibetan people. Internally there were the U, Kham, and Amdo provinces. Today, however, China has given new names, naming the territory in the U-Tsang region as Xizang, much of those in the Kham region as Xikang, and a significant part of the territory in the Amdo region as Qinghai. They have even named the roads in such ways as the Kham-Tibet Motor Vehicles Highway and the Qinghai-Tibet Motor Vehicles Highway. Let us stop to ponder on this matter awhile. Have they not carried out demarcations and, on such basis, separations? Historically, U, Kham and Amdo have never been separate from each other. Of the Tibetan population of six million, a little more than 1.1 million live in the U-sang province. The remaining population strength of 4.8 million Tibetans is derived from the Kham and Amdo provinces. So, without thinking with any degree of due diligence, a person belonging to the U region should never speak with a tendency to convey the wrong impression that Kham and Amdo are separate, not parts

of Tibet. Likewise, a Khampa or an Amdo person should stop referring to Tibetans inhabiting the U-Tsang region as ‘Tibetans’, as if they are a people separate from themselves. Such mental tendencies are extremely dangerous, as they play right into the hands of those who are inimical towards us and bear nefarious designs on us. If the three provinces go their own separate ways, it bears no mentioning that the loss to Tibet as a whole will be too enormous to bear imagination. And it is absolutely certain that the loss to each one of them individually will be also very great. It therefore goes to the very essence of our being that all the three provinces of Tibet remain as a united, integrated entity, with a closeness of their people’s sense of fraternity; everyone should bear this in their hearts.

That we have so far achieved a definite amount of successes for purposes of generic Tibetan concern in numerous aspects are successful accomplishments in services rendered by all of us. That we have such accomplishments to our credit is no doubt due principally to the strength of determination on the part of the general Tibetan public. If the members of the working committees of the different associations succeed in dispelling any existing negative perceptions and opinions about them on the part of the general Tibetan public and, in addition, manage to win their approval and support, they will have proved themselves worthy of their responsibilities in their respective positions. And in order to win such approval and support it is vital that they deliver timely positive results in the spheres of their entrusted responsibilities, acting without any kind of factional schism, with fairness and transparency, and without accounting controversies.

These days there are many organizations and welfare associations in our society and they carry out religious functions and extend various kinds of welfare assistance and help which benefit their members. However, in the case of some of them, they are among the very first to arrive on the scene when it comes to arguing for rights, but are untraceable and we need to go out to search for them when it comes to the question of their being required to carry out responsibilities. And there are cases in which one is too easily given to engage in arguments and distributing leaflets over petty little things within the group, motivated by factional schism. This is like the proverbial case of “missing when needed but available when not required” and is most regrettable. Those who are inimical towards us and target us with definite objectives to harm us are already carrying out as much factional rumor mongering as they can to create internal dissension

and turmoil amongst us with inflammatory remarks. If information about such a situation reaches the ears of fellow-Tibetans in Tibet, who work with the spirit of being of service for the common good of all Tibetans, there is a danger of them being saddened and discouraged. Generally speaking, of course, rumor mongering designed to create dissension and turmoil amongst us through inflammatory talks is carried out only by the wretched dregs and stupid persons within our society and no one else. Still it is important for us to remain perceptive and cautiously alert to them.

The basic issue of Tibet is linked to religiosity. Working for it has therefore implications for both this life and the lives hereafter, and is also a source of accumulating merits. And it is extremely important that everyone rise to the occasion to contribute their bit with a spirit of public service and make efforts in an all-round way. In every kind of public and private endeavor, one should have the spirit and determination to do the work with a sense of responsibility, to show one's capability, and to do justice to the job on hand. Our struggle for truth and justice is definitely not something about which we should feel embarrassed or something beneath our dignity to carry on. If on the basis of a sincere motivation and with a sense of morality borne of belief in the karmic cause and effect one takes part in the struggle in such manner as to be able to bear one's responsibilities with a sincerity of purpose for the higher realm of the common Tibetan cause, there is absolutely no doubt that one will have thereby effectively made such grand religious offerings as to gladden the Buddhas and their spiritual sons in all the ten directions.

## **THE TIBETAN YOUTH CONGRESS**

It is good that members of the Tibetan Youth Congress have with great enthusiasm come together at one place and have carried on without being deterred by paucity of facilities and difficulties of every other kind. Call it strength of will or sincerity of devotion to one's cause, the fact of the matter is, such a requirement is indispensable for the purposes on hand. Knowledge is just like a tool. How one uses that tool depends on the concerned person's sense of enthusiasm. If in addition to sincerity of purpose one is equipped with good knowledge, all will turn out good in a complete sense. Where, however, the sincerity of purpose is lacking, the result will not be that good even if one is endowed with good knowledge. Hence it is important that one should enhance one's strength of will on the basis of one's sincerity of purpose.

Because they have not experienced numerous kinds of hardships and tragedies in life, the youths of today can be susceptible to being given to easily change their minds or to suffer from lack of steadfastness. You all have the sincerity of purpose and sense of enthusiasm and determination. So, you should remain mentally prepared to deal with any and every kind of problems that may come your way. No matter how unfortunate a situation you may come to face, it is important that you maintain your steadfastness, maintaining an enthusiasm as firmly attached to the ground as a mountain.

Our struggle is founded on a noble objective; it is a struggle for our rights and for justice and is therefore well worth the efforts we put into it. However, it is hard to figure out what difficulties we will come to face. This being the case we should adopt the approach of hoping for something which may turn out to be easy, the best, and the noblest, but, at the same time, be mentally prepared for things not turning out good. This way one will not retreat when one comes face-to-face with difficulties and problems.

In any kind of endeavor there are consultative discussions, drawing up of plans, compilation of suggestions, and the ordering of them in one's mind. However, whether one then succeeds or not after initiating the work depends on a number of factors which may come into play. Talk is easy, but it is not as easy as it sounds when one puts it into practice. Nevertheless, if one works hard over months and years through the passage of a prolonged period of time, there will be results, irrespective of the question whether they are big or small. On the other hand, if one keeps remaining disheartened, there will be a danger of everything seeming to have come to an abrupt end.

The situation of our generation of Tibetans is one of extreme backwardness compared to the material progress of the world in general. In fact, we are a generation of people who are backward by many generations and who have to confront the challenges of having to make a giant leap into this highly vibrant century in which we find ourselves. And we have to make that leap on a land alien to our own. Although it is certainly much easier from any point of view to make that leap in an atmosphere of freedom, the fact of the matter is we have lost our country to other people. A new type of leadership is in place there. Such being the criticalness of the time in which we find ourselves – and which no one could have expected possible – everyone should concentrate their thoughts on what is for the general public good,

and willingly making efforts without loss of enthusiasm. It is inherent in the natural order of things for one to meet with successes and failures of various kinds and gravity in one's endeavors. The important thing to remember is that when one's efforts end in a failure, one should not be discouraged but make further efforts to find ways and means to overcome it. One should keep trying until one finally succeeds. In this connection, it is important to keep in mind the old Tibetan saying: Keep repeating nine times the joining of a breakage.

Next, in the course of carrying on with the affairs of one's daily life, it is important for one to exercise such care and caution as to render oneself worthy for any kind of scrutiny. Whether what one had done is acceptable or not in some other society, the important thing to keep in mind for one as a Tibetan is that one should come to be looked up with respect as a person of repute and therefore held up as worthy of emulation within one's own Tibetan society. If in such a state of affair one speaks, the other people will listen with a sense of faith, welcome, and deference. If, on the contrary, one's personal conduct, character, and attitude are such as to be marked with fraudulent, guile, hypocrisy, self-centeredness, sycophancy towards one's superiors, jealousy and sarcasm towards one's equals, bullying towards the humble, and exaggerations marked by mountain-sized lies in the hope that at least a yak-sized amount of it would be believed, one may momentarily succeed in deceiving some witless and uninformed persons. However, to those who are in the know of it all, such a person will become someone to be looked down as an object of pity. If during one's routine courses of conduct one had not behaved in such manner as to win respect as a credible and reliable person and then suddenly, as if having woken up from sleep, one begins speaking what is truly in one's mind, it will be an exercise in futility, succeeding only in exercising one's mouth to the point of aching it but not in gaining acceptance from others.

So, in all the duties that have been entrusted to you, carry them out successfully in such manner as to vindicate oneself with regard to one's sense of karmic cause and effect and without any cause for regret. Otherwise, being grandiose while talking before the public, making a lot of noises on some big issues as if one is free to do whatever one likes in regard to them, and then being negligent about the actual fulfillment and the procedural steps for carrying out the works will make one an object of ridicule. One should act to ensure that this sort of thing does not happen.

## **THE TIBETAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION**

A Tibetan women's association was set up for the first time in 1959. None of the women who pioneered its establishment are now alive. We must remember with a sense of indebtedness the gratitude we owe to these women of accomplishments, keeping in mind our duty not to forget them.

Today, there is a new surge in enthusiasm among the women in the Tibetan community, riding on a crest of a new understanding, new responsibility, and new experience. They are scoring accomplishments in all spheres of public causes with the result that across the world the name 'women of Tibet' reverberates. This brings a new sense of well being and happiness in me. That your organization has thus far not only not slid into a decline but has also gained greater strength to achieve commendable successes is the result of your having endured hardship and addressed difficulties with much diligence over a prolonged period of time. What the situation will be like in future, whether good or bad, is also in your hands and so it is important that you continue your efforts without any sort of letdown.

Whoever in this world is a person with a sense of concern for the immediate and long term interests of humanity is bound to be please with and to lend appreciative support to those who work for truth and justice, for the benefit of others, and for the general good of everyone. This is the reason why the Tibetan women have, through their positive accomplishments, attained a position of shoulder-to-shoulder respectability with other peoples and need not remain with their heads hanged low for want of self-confidence before the people of this world. This has definitely raised the stature of the Tibetan people in general and especially that of the women of Tibet. It is of vital important that further efforts should be made for even greater successes on the foundation of these achievements.

I have noticed that in our society many types of undertakings are being started with great fanfare and gusto. Later on, however, the enthusiasm keeps waning with the passage of years. The Tibetan Women's Association of today should guard itself from going that way; rather, it should improve itself further, strengthen its stainability and expand itself even more and on that basis carry out more initiatives related to the general Tibetan cause.

One thing we need to pay close attention to is that while in some cases even major objectives could be achieved with ease, there are others regarding

which we have to make painstaking efforts over a prolonged period of time, like collecting drops of water for the purpose of accumulating an ocean. Again, there are cases in which one considers the job that is already on hand and which one has the capability to carry out successfully as too small a matter and so neglect it and instead wonder whether there might not be something grander to be carried out. It later turns out when one actually go for the grander objective, however, that one lacks both the relevant facilities and the capability. You should pay attention to these types of situations too.

The issue of nuns is especially related to the Tibetan Women's Association. In order to ensure quality nuns who are both knowledgeable and efficient, blame games should be done away with and everyone should work in a cooperative manner. Likewise, you must reach out to the Tibetan Muslim women living in Kashmir, learn about their well being, their perceptions and views, and determine what the areas are in which the Tibetan Women's Association can contribute to provide relief to them. With regard to problems beyond the capability of the Tibetan Women's Association to try to address, efforts should be made by making appeals and requests to the relevant competent sources. By such means, efforts should be made to bring them too into our campaign for truth and justice. And so you must think about working to bring out your capability by such means as establishing new lines of mutual contacts in multi fold areas of interest through cooperative endeavors.

A cause for concern in recent times has been that among those who have just finished their schools, there appear to be a few who feel loss of face in doing petty jobs, or who are lazy, or who fall short in their capability in wring and maths for the purpose of being hired for relatively higher level jobs, or who lack capital for doing business. Such people often fall into bad company and take to consuming drugs, or engaging in gambling, or wasting their time in night clubs, or take to excessive drinking of liquor, and then drift into vagrancy. Such people are a source of frustration to their parents and a shame to their Tibetan identity. They are a result of the failure of the teachers and the other staff in the schools, with the religious teachers as the main, as well as parents and relatives and so on who did not pay enough serious attention and failed to give sufficient guidance and advice. It is therefore important that all the Tibetan organizations and welfare associations equally pay sufficient attention to this problem without being

evasive about who really is responsible for addressing it or risk the problem spreading and becoming pervasive like a drop of oil on a sheet of paper.

Women are a symbol of kindness and affection. She carries her child in her womb for nine months and ten days, provides the warmth of physical contact at the moment of its birth, nurtures it with her milk, and so on and brings it up with a great cause for gratitude. It is from the mother that a child receives its kindness and affection from a very young age on account of a unique bond of closeness between them. And it is from the mother that from the very moment of its birth a child receives its first introduction to the good things about life in terms of the virtues or strengths and so on about affection and also about the negative things about life through nothing else but experiences by making use of signs and gesticulations. The mother's affection is unique and incomparable with affections of every other kind and the only source of this is women. However, these days it appears that some women, instead of breast feeding their own child, make other women to do it. However, such women should understand that while such a practice may make them appear clean and not lose their physical shapeliness to a slight bit of an extent, such a practice invites upon them the danger of being hit by breast cancer.

To sum up, if a mother, in an affectionate manner, keeps speaking to her child about the differences between being moral and being immoral in one's behavior, between being educated and uneducated, and about Tibetan customs, habits, and traditions, about Tibet's current situation and history, and so on, he or she will internalize it all in his or her psyche. This, in turn, will make a big difference in that such a child will not bear a vile personal character and he or she will not be a disgrace to fellow Tibetans.

Again, there are also some women who thoughtlessly and stupidly take to prostitution or take off after other people and engage in shameless behaviors; these are utterly pathetic pursuits even as they are devoid of both prestige and wealth. With regard to such people, the Tibetan Women's Association should pay special attention and in an approach of making no mistake which might become a cause for regret, take every available opportunity to provide whatever amount of counsel in whatever way it could provide.

## **NEW ARRIVALS FROM TIBET**

We left Tibet and fled into exile in 1959. Our thought on the day we left Lhasa was not to take care of ourselves as best as we possibly could but with a sense of the general interest of Tibet; that is what underlies our reason for becoming refugees. Even when generational changes have been taking place in exile, nothing has changed as far as our initial aim is concerned. And so the sincere sense of purpose and strength of will with which we carry on our struggle on the issue of the just cause of Tibet will never be forgotten; rather, it will remain entrenched in our hearts and we will continue to persevere until the very end, when the just cause of Tibet finally prevails.

During the period as critical as the one that you had to live through, you have endured a series of hardships. Nevertheless, you have acted with great fortitude in the general interest of Tibet because you could not bear to be indifferent to the existing circumstances of our situation. During the intervening period you have suffered numerous kinds of persecution, irrespective of the lengths of time of your imprisonments. Finally you have reached the land of freedom. However, even after that you have not forgotten your initial enthusiasm and determination to endure hardship for the sake of the general Tibetan cause and continued your efforts with a sincerity of purpose. The general Tibetan purpose is the common bounden and contemporary responsibility of all Tibetans. I am appreciative of the fact that you have kept in mind the general common interests, paid close attention to it, and acted on it without requiring any prompting, driven by your recognition of your duty for the collective good of all.

It is awe-inspiring that despite the fact that unimaginable sufferings of various kinds had to be endured in Tibet, the courage and fortitude of the general Tibetan populace could remain as unrivalled as it did. This is a glorious achievement of the Tibetan people, exemplifying to the world the quality of the Tibetan people. It has enabled the world to know how indomitable and indefatigable the people called Tibetans really are. I wish to express my thanks to everyone for all that.

A section of you are going back to Tibet over times not short from now. However, even though you are returning to your own land, you will have to live under leaders who are alien to you. You all feel concerned and have fears, of course, that from the Nepal-Tibet border onwards, until you reach your own respective homes, and even after arriving at home, you could be bothered with all sorts of questioning and remarks, while those with jobs

may be in anxiety about the prospects of losing their employments. You are also all too aware that one could get punished merely for what one says and how one says things, or just for one's personal demeanor.

To say it with brevity, and to sum it up, to whatever extent the Chinese persecute and ill-treat them viciously, and however much they repress and treat them with contempt and debasement, to that extent the mental bearing of the Tibetan people will get fortified and the consciousness of the differentness between the Tibetan people and the Chinese people will become ever more explicit and obvious. It is for this reason that during the past many years, the Tibetan character has remained intact, rather than disappearing; so also has the Tibetan people's sense of fellow-feeling amongst themselves and their loyalty to their ethnic identity. They never wavered in their sense of fortitude, or compromised on their courage of conviction. By thus keeping on facing their hardships, the Tibetan people have epitomized the indefatigable character and spirit of their ethnicity.

I have noticed a danger, however, that there is in the Tibetan character a tendency for everyone to act with unity of purpose and strength of spirit when their problems are enormous but then lapse into laxity and negligence when the situation eases a bit and there is progress. We have to be mindful and guard against such a tendency. The overweening mistake one makes in such cases is that when the laxity and negligence occurs on a small scale in the early stages, they tend to be overlooked. Later on, however, when the problem grows in magnitude and scale and draws one's attention, one is overcome with regret. One should learn from one's past experiences to ensure that problems of such kind are not repeated.

Recently, however, there have been cases which show that a section of the Tibetans who had arrived from Tibet were disgraceful scoundrels who did not respect rules while in Tibet, who did not observe the laws, who went for the hilts of their swords over every small bits of matters, who had committed murders, who had used brazen force and threats to have their ways, and who had used whichever of the needle or awl, so to say, served their despicable purposes. Whichever organization or welfare association they may be members of, or whichever religious or provincial areas or localities they may belong to, it is important that the concerned members in them should provide advice and counsel to them, guiding them away from their wrong ways. The disgraceful acts are being carried out by few individuals among the new arrivals; however, their ill-repute gets applied

to the new refugees in general. If from the larger perspective we are able to live with the pains of seeing our entire land being occupied and ruled by China, but engage in squabbling within ourselves with you-and-me kind of fights, would not the people in the outside world laugh at us?

Likewise, it appears that in recent times there have been in Tibet many Tibetan youths to whom thinking about what one is doing now and what its adverse consequences will be in the long term future, or about what is beneficial and what is harmful to oneself, does not occur. Such youths have taken to stealing; brawling to the point of killing people; drinking alcoholic stuffs without limit; smoking tobacco endlessly; and visiting brothels, gambling dens, dance halls with prostitution services, and nightclubs as means to spend their time and money. These are extremely saddening developments. Such kinds of behaviors benefit the Chinese government and helps serve it with regard to its policy on Tibet. Likewise, there have been cases of caretakers of monasteries and temples colluding with unscrupulous persons to engage in black-marketing of religious objects of all types. And there are those who for the sake of a bit of money kill or capture wild lives that dwell in the forests of Tibet. Besides, there have also been cases in which nomadic Tibetan communities have fought against each other in internecine conflicts over petty matters concerned with pasture land and water facilities for animal herds. All these kinds of behaviors are extremely unfortunate and a big disgrace.

With regard to issues related to Tibet in recent times, many mistakes had been made during the previous generations; they resulted in the loss of many opportunities and occurrences of major hindrances on our path. Because of them, there are only few people in this world who have a real, firsthand understanding about Tibet. The very mention of ‘Tibet’ brings to their minds an image of pitiful conditions and of ‘Tibetans’ as a backward people. Tibet and China are, at the fundamental level, two totally different peoples, with their own separate identities. China is China, and Tibet is Tibet; the Chinese are Chinese, while the Tibetans are Tibetans; likewise, the Chinese language is Chinese, and the Tibetan language Tibetan. All the people inhabiting the region from Dhartsedo in the east to Ladakh in the west, and from the borders of Mongolia in the north to Mon in the south are same in being mani-prayer reciting subjects of the Bodhisattva Chenrezig’s realm for spiritual deliverance.

Our struggle is not concerned with the interests of just one generation. Nor

is it for the purposes of His Holiness the Dalai Lama or the governmental organization led by him. Rather, we are struggling for the well being of a religiously defined people who are the historical inhabitants of Tibet. And our struggle is for truth and founded on a just cause. Whatever may or may not have been the situation in the past, at the present moment I am not struggling with a demand for independence. Rather, my efforts are driven by an objective to resolve the issue of Tibet by means of the middle way approach. Problems are something that neither the Chinese people nor the Tibetan people wish to vie with. We are not demanding that Tibet win and China lose. However, just as the Chinese people wish for happiness, so also do the people of Tibet. Our position has already been made clear on successive occasions. What the further development should be is in China's hand.

## **MEDIA PERSONS**

I always support the issue of the journalistic independence of the news media. The reporting of only one side of the story can in no way be fair. Such kind of news reporting can just succeed in deceiving only the thoughtlessly stupid people. It will be extremely rare for such practice to earn respect and credibility from the educated, knowledgeable people. The people in the media should therefore report truthfully the actual occurrences of the news without being swayed by any kind of bias. It is very important for them to understand that they have a heavy responsibility of trust to serve the interests of the society and people.

It happens sometimes that when journalists cannot find a newsworthy story, they pick up street rumors, quoting snippets from here and there, and weave reports based on them. Such a practice can only create turbulence in society without serving any useful purpose. I certainly welcome any news story that is a truthful report of the actual occurrence of an event, well supported by an irrefutable course of reasoning.

Again, it also happens sometimes that a media person, lacking any sense of responsibility, exaggerates to blow up a small issue into a big one while in order to suit his or her personal wishes, belittle a critically important one. At some other times they ignore actual occurrences of incidents or even cover them up. Yet some other times it happens that they end up creating damaging issues as a result of their suspicions and imaginations.

If a media person acts as a tool misused for political purposes and reports on society the shortcomings, mistakes, and so on in it in an unfair manner, bullies the humble, tarnishes the image of accomplished persons and the like, and thereby acts in a judgmental manner without a full understanding of the issues involved, he or she fails to live up to his or her professional reputation as a journalist. Likewise, if a media person fails to expose the failings of the high and mighty in society or the mistakes of people and groups associated with oneself but instead cover them up, that will also amount to a failure to carry out his or her professional reputation as a journalist. It is the duty of a media professional to expose without any kind of hesitation the shortcomings and mistakes of both the high and low and the good and bad, whomsoever was at fault.

## **ETHNIC PURITY**

We are a race of people called Tibetans; think carefully about that. We are a race of people with a great historicity behind us. We are never a weak race of people incapable of taking up any challenge or who do not dare to do anything. History shows that we are not just a hundred or two hundred years old. Rather, it shows that we are a race of people called Tibetans with substantial amounts of accomplishments over many thousands of years within the milieu of the progress of the human society. We are therefore never a race of people who can be taken for granted just like that.

It is extremely important that the Tibetan people take special interest in and bear a special responsibility to maintain the purity of the continuity of their ethnic heritage. Some boys and girls, without pondering about the long term consequences of their actions, allow themselves to be carried away by the evils extant in their temporary, current circumstances and indulge in the improper conduct of indiscriminate sexual promiscuity. If this leads to a proliferation of numerous children with racially different fathers or mothers, there will be a large-scale multiplication in the number of different types of off-springs who while outwardly dressed alike bear different types of mental characteristics and there will be a big danger of the Tibetan racial heritage becoming extinct.

So, we should have an appreciative understanding of this issue of fundamental importance after pondering over it with care. The reason why I am saying this is that earlier, the Manchu race of people who ruled the whole of China for close to three hundred years, had their own language,

script and so on and which were separate and distinct from those of the Han Chinese people. However, following the spread of their assimilation with the Han Chinese people through marriages, the Manchu people have now become like water absorbed by the sand of Han Chinese people. If within Manchuria itself one is to ask those who are of Manchu ethnicity to raise their hands, it is doubtful whether even one percent of the people would be in a position to do it.

Likewise, today, there are a growing number of intermarriages between Tibetans and Chinese peoples and also between Tibetans and Hu'u Chinese. If this increasing trend continues on a larger scale, there is a real big danger that eventually the Tibetan race of people will become extinct. Again, today, Tibetans who have recently arrived from Tibet aim to be able to make it to some foreign country by going after foreign women in the case of men and after foreign men in the case of women. However, due to their differences in attitude, religion, habits, and so on, they eventually separate. On the other hand, they had already bidden adieu to the bridge after having crossed the river as they separated from their society, leaving behind all sorts of unpleasant talks about their actions. Such acts of exposing such a fur color of the Tibetan people is most unfortunate. Everyone should bear in mind as of fundamental importance the need to make efforts to maintain the purity of the ethnic lineage of the spiritually imbued Tibetan people who have a long history behind them.

Long in the past, after the Buddha had long passed away from this world, there came a period when the situation of the Mahayana tradition of Buddhism had become extremely fragile in India. A woman who had already taken a layperson's Buddhist ordination could not bear to see the Buddhist faith disappearing through degeneration but found herself helpless to do anything to save it. But her earnest prayers for the revival and regeneration of the Buddhist faith came to fruition when as a result of partnering with a person of a superior, kingly lineage she gave birth to the great prince Asangga and as a result of partnering with a Brahmin, gave birth to Vasubandhu – two of the great Indian masters that make up the famed "Six Ornaments and Two Excellences". The two sons became renowned as a scholar and a tantric master and accomplished stupendous deeds for the Buddhist faith. We should take inspiration from that example, marry within the Tibetan people, and thereby contribute to efforts to perpetuate the Tibetan ethnic heritage. This is especially important and timely in a period as turbulent

and critical to us as today. Hence, we should pay attention to the need for efforts to ensure the continuation of a pure race of people who would complete the process of the development of a new Tibet from beginning to end and who would be of service to the Buddhist faith.

There is no certainty that the just cause of Tibet will prevail during the lifetime of the current generation of the Tibetan children. It is therefore important and vital for us to have a long term vision, rather than thinking in short term objectives, and contribute to the efforts to perpetuate a pure lineage of ethnic Tibetans and nurture them well.

## **SELF-RELIANCE**

One thing we need to think over is with regard to the fact that we are known by the sweet-sounding name of ‘refugees’. However, what this term actually means is that we are just a group of people who have been exiled from our own land and who therefore live in deprivation on foreign soil. The sweet-sounding term ‘relief’, likewise, means and implies that those who are affluent and compassionate are giving alms to the poor, and not at all because we have any right to it or because it is something that we are entitled to demand and press for with conceitedness. This being the case, we should strive hard to regain our lost land and thereby rid ourselves of the label of ‘refugees’. Likewise, we should make it a point to be able to meet our own livelihood needs through our own efforts by striving to make progress from year to year in the settlements that have been especially set up so that with self-reliance we can free ourselves from being described as recipients of relief.

Even otherwise, we should make whatever efforts it takes to become self-reliant so that we won’t have to depend on others on a permanent basis. If we fail in this effort, there is no knowing what more problems will befall us. It is therefore imperative that everyone, both collectively and individually, should strengthen their livelihood efforts to achieve self-reliance in this field and to be able to stand on one’s own feet. If we, the entire Tibetan people, cannot adequately fulfill our own livelihood needs and fail to set up bases for sustainable economic security for ourselves, it will be difficult for us to think about other things that demand our attention. Such being the case, everyone should strengthen his or her determination and make whatever efforts it takes to make a success of our self-reliance objective.

The schools providing homes to the Tibetan children, the monasteries, the cooperatives, and so on should economize, using only whatever amounts they need for their purposes from the accumulated funds received after having made every possible efforts to garner them or received as aid funds from others and save and secure the rest. If they do not make a bit of such an effort, there may come a time when sources for seeking funding assistance will no longer be available like today or when others are no longer paying attention to our needs, resulting in stoppage of funding. When such a moment comes and one does not have a little bit of fund to take out from one's own pocket, it is not impossible that the undertaking in question could no longer be carried on and so will have to be inevitably closed down. And so, one should think and act with a long term perspective and not spend to the last coin today whatever fund one has at one's disposal. Beware that if you act with lavishness when you are flush with funds today, there may come a time when it will be embarrassing for you to have to extend your hands begging for help. In case, however, the situation continues to remain as good as it may be today, the funds being in one's own name, one will be free to do as one would like with them. I wonder whether all concerned persons and entities could think in that way on such matters. Those who are young of age should not be lazy, always looking for the easy and the convenient way out; rather, they should join proper vocational training courses of various types with a long term perspective. If they can do that, then they will be doubly beneficial: for their own livelihood currently and for the reconstruction efforts in a future, new Tibet. However, if one contends and preoccupies oneself with just sundry kinds of odd jobs for the mere purpose of keeping oneself occupied and to while away time from moment to moment, there is a danger of one turning out to have been responsible for bringing about one's own ruination. There is nothing wrong if one makes the effort to examine whether this is true or not by thinking things out from a wider angle.

Again, there is in the Tibetan character a tendency to extend one's hands for help from others even though one's situation may be just about all right. This is an indication of an immoral behavior having become a habit. Although the manner in which those who extend their hands for help out of poverty and desperation and those who do so as if it is their right due to lack of contentment with their economically satisfactory situation is the same, there is a big difference in the meanings behind them. Even though those who hold out their hands to beg for help have no sense of shame in

taking that help, what would happen if a time eventually comes when a concerned help giver gets overcome by dismay?

When I see the Tibetan people in an economic situation of stability and security, I also feel proud and cheerful. However, if despite the availability of opportunities of every kind, they still do not make the required efforts and, instead, keep their mouths gaping in hunger as if they are handicapped by broken legs and amputated arms, I feel frustrated and get overcome by a sense of grief. On occasions, when I meet with Indian bank officials and Tibetan traders, I am told that previously when Tibetans took loans from banks to buy their trade stocks, they always repaid their loans in full with only a slight delay in few cases, if at all, irrespective of any question how good or bad their businesses were. They say that even though they lacked formal education and knowledge or awareness about the wider outside world, they were a characteristically honest and totally sincere and reliable people. However, in the case of some among the youngsters in more recent times, there have been cases of lying, deceiving, and defrauding. These are shameful and very unfortunate. Do they not reveal behaviors which lack a sense of gratitude? On the other hand, they show that the quality of the Tibetan people is degenerating. As a result of the reprehensible conduct and behavior of a handful of bad, thoughtless persons with no sense of karmic cause and effect, the livelihood prospects of a whole category of the Tibetan people is in danger of being destroyed. It is therefore vital that everyone pay close attention to this development.

## **LONG-LIFE OFFERING**

When I reflect on how I have spent my life thus far, I notice that it has been practically without any cause for any regret. As a person born in this degenerate period in such a critical situation, I have never sought to distinguish people on the basis of their differences in their race, heritage, tradition, and custom; religion and ethnicity; rank and status; and so on. Rather, I have sought to be of help and benefit for the good of everyone alike without any reason for remorse. In this connection, I also not only refrain from harming animals, including even an insect as small as an ant, but also try to be of as much benefit as possible to them.

Whenever I write my signature I sign my name as ‘Shakya Gelong’. That is because what is closest to my mind is the thought that I am a Gelong (Buddhist monk). And I feel proud that I am fortunate in having been born

to become a disciple of the Buddha, the embodiment of kindness, a Shakya Gelong. On the basis of having found my faith in the Buddha of kindness through understanding him, I make efforts to put into practice as best as I can his teachings on The Three Trainings (*l'abpa sum*).

However, it is a fact that due to my hectic roles as the Dalai Lama, I am not always able to scrupulously stick to my spiritual routines. There are so many different kinds of religious traditions in this world and they are all beneficial to humanity, irrespective of their differences. I, as a follower of the Buddha, maintain a close and faithful relationship with other religious traditions. And acting on the basis of recognizing and respecting each other, I make a fair measure of efforts to bring out the common potential in all of them in seeking to be of benefit to humanity as a whole. I believe that I have been a fair bit of service and also had a fair bit of success in using the name of the Dalai Lama to build interfaith friendship and in exchanging information about practices in the different faiths.

I can deduce from logical reasoning that I have accumulated many karmic deeds and merits over many successive past births and that my prayers had obviously been ones of great potency and accuracy. It is for these reasons that at the beginning of a period as critical as today, I was born and came to occupy a place among the line of His Holiness the Dalai Lamas. The Tibetan people believe in me and have hopes from me. Historically too, I am entrusted with a special responsibility. And it is by appointment of my fate that I have to bear my concern for the Tibetan people. Because of it there naturally comes upon me a sense of loyalty and bias towards the people of my own ethnicity without the involvement of any issue of the dichotomy between love and hatred. Although lacking in capability, I have successfully managed to be of a fair amount of service in the efforts to enable the people of the Land of Snows to stand up from where they had fallen to the ground through the strength of the sincerity of my sense of purpose to do good. Whatever be the case, during the period of such critical dangers to the religious and political situations in Tibet as today, I, through appointments of fate and the fruition of the power of my prayers, am born as a Tibetan; and I believe that my birth has been well worth it, that it has served a purpose without my life having been spent in fruitless endeavors.

I have no wisdom borne of understanding. Of the freedom to take birth or to die as I wish, what of it do I have? Nevertheless, the power of your faith

and devotion is sure to become a contributory factor to the lengthening of my lifespan. You all should say your prayers. I too will assuredly carry out my life-enhancing practices and say my prayers. I should surely be able to spend the last years of my life in Tibet, the Land of Snows, witness the reuniting of the Tibetans left behind in Tibet and those in exile, and enjoy amid such a happy circumstance the fruits of the fairly substantial amounts of hard work that I have carried out for this purpose. Otherwise it just won't be right that I make the causative efforts and someone else enjoys the resultant fruits. If one is not able to enjoy even a little bit of the fruits of one's efforts, the doctrine of karmic cause and effect will be rendered a delusion. And so, I have a firm conviction that our just cause will definitely prevail and the sunshine of auspiciousness marked by the reuniting of the Tibetans in Tibet and in exile will be upon us.

## **INDIAN BUDDHISTS**

India is a spiritually rich nation, being not only the original source of Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism, and Buddhism, but also where a number of other religions such as Islam, Christianity, and Zoroastrianism are also seen in practice. There is complete freedom and right of religious belief for all the numerous religions, including the right to preach and to receive teachings within their own respective faiths, respect among the different religions, and a harmonious coexistence among the followers of the different religions. There is also a great degree of tolerance among the different religions. It is a great nation and an exemplar to everyone.

Many people in the Western countries have a notion by which they appear to perceive India as a country of much internal turmoil, with great and intense contradictions and conflicts among its many different kinds of people and within its social structure systems. I am of the view, however, that this sort of perception is not based on the ground reality and is a biased one. One can say with almost absolute certainty that there is no region in this world where in any country there is a total absence of any kind of internal differences among different groups of people. India is a country with a vast territory, a large population, and has a multitude of different ethnic groups and religious traditions. Looking at the social situation in India in this context, I do not think that the country is in any major kind of internal problems.

However, there are people who do not have any understanding of the teachings of their religion but carry the name of their religion on their lips and use it to seek petty selfish benefits for themselves by playing politics and engaging in interreligious turmoil. Likewise, there are those who make opportunistic use of religion to create trouble without in any way trying to determine the truth and pondering to think about reasons. Following such types of people, one can only end in darkness, like the blind being led by the blind. Likewise, one should be cautious about those types of religiously associated people who misuse the name of their religion as a means to try to fulfill their selfish purposes after they had failed or were dissatisfied in their attempts to fulfill their ambitions for wealth and fame or in carrying out their thoughts and so on by other means.

Whether one believes in any religion or not, all human beings are alike in desiring happiness and seeking to avoid sorrow. So, everyone should be able to figure out the root causes of sorrow, act on them, and try to be beneficial towards one another. The Shakyamuni Buddha had given successive instructions in his attempts to eliminate the evil systems of segregating people on the basis of their race and caste. You should study about them through research activities. Likewise, Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Ambedkar, and others too have striven hard to eliminate the caste discrimination system. We all must work towards transforming the outdated system of discriminating people on the basis of their position in some caste hierarchy. Although a fairly substantial number of years have passed since India won its national independence, it is very saddening that the country has still not succeeded in freeing itself from the shackles of the evil practices of caste system. Assigning different levels of social status to people on the basis of their caste and practicing discrimination based on it is nothing but a product of an evil system founded on mental exaggeration. Whether a person is of the white race, or is poor, or is of superior caste, or of low caste, they are all alike in being human beings. All can feel hunger and thirst, scorched when exposed to the beat of the hot sun, and cold when coming in contact with a cold object. All are subject to the life's inevitable experiences of birth, old age, illness, and death. Absolutely no one enjoys a special status or exemption. In addition, there is no way to determine by any scientific technique the highness or lowness of a person's social status based on his or her race or caste. Besides, there is no case whatsoever of any accomplished Indian of meritorious repute who had practiced discrimination based on a person's caste status. Today we notice in India

the existence of the evil practice of discrimination based on a person's caste status, the sati system by which the widow is burned in the funeral pyre of her deceased husband, the requirement for the family of the bride to pay a large sum of money and other gifts in kind, or dowry, to the family of her husband, the show of disliking at the birth of a daughter for this reason, eliminating a child from the womb in case it is learnt to be a female, and abandoning her in case she is born alive, or concealing the birth and so on. That there are now well-informed and conscientious people who have taken it upon themselves to carry out campaigns in attempts to eliminate such practices which can never be justified either on religious or worldly grounds is a welcome new development. Outdated systems and practices such as these should be opposed with utmost vehemence.

Most importantly, one should banish from one's thought all vestiges of any sense of inferiority, armed with the knowledge that all of us human beings are born alike and equal, and derive strength of will from such understanding. Success also depends, of course, on one's ability to join with the others in every kind of endeavor and display equal capability. One will definitely manage to free oneself from the fetters of one's current problems if one makes the efforts and works out the means to routinely succeed in competing in progressive endeavors, dares to avail opportunities, successfully manages to complete initiatives that one embarks on.

Likewise, one should not be negligent, lax and indifferent about one's studies. One should make such efforts as to leave no room for regret later on about not having done as much as one could have. One will triumph over all difficulties if one commits oneself sincerely to one's work, irrespective of any question whether that work is 'good' or 'bad'. Take the case of the situation in the developed foreign countries. Even educated people accept cleaning toilets and streets; and working in factories, restaurants, and farms as jobs and join these occupations without any hesitation. The general populace also does not have any prejudiced attitude towards such kinds of jobs.

One should carry out one's duties with efficiency and qualitatively, as well as successfully and without any kind of financial irregularity and so on, thereby not leaving behind all sorts of uncomfortable questions. Likewise, one should not be hasty and rash but examine everything with sufficient care and diligence. If one makes remarks that criticize, express protest, or otherwise satirizes or denigrates other peoples and religions, there will

surely be an instant reprisal against oneself like the inevitability of the echo effect. And, likewise, it is in the natural order of things that if one shows a hostile demeanor towards others, then, like looking in a mirror, one will get a similarly hostile demeanor from the other side.

## **RELATIONS WITH HOST COMMUNITIES**

We owe extremely great debts of gratitude to the government and people of India. Earlier, during the periods of our ancient religious kings, there was never any border dispute between India and Tibet. Because of it there never was any sort of stone pillars, or inscribed stone gates, or stupas that marked the borders between the two countries and obviously such structures could never be seen today. On the other hand, because there were persistent disputes over the borders between China and Tibet, stone pillars, stone inscribed gates, and stupas, and so on were especially set up at various places to mark the borders between these two countries and these could still be seen today.

At the time we fled into exile, the government of India, unlike governments of other countries which were our equal neighbors, paid special attention to us, being attentive to our situation, taking care of us, nurturing us and so on, extending great help. Harking back to our past history, we used to refer to India as the Land of Aryas (spiritual noble beings). If the Buddha had not taken birth in India, the Land of Aryas, Tibet would have remained a realm of darkness and there would most likely be no occasion for us to hold our head high like we are in a position to do today.

In view of this historicity, we should take utmost care to establish friendly relationship with the people of our host communities. If we happen to have a bit of resources and the people of our community approaches us with a request proposal, we should extend whatever assistance and benefit we can with joy and alacrity. And in case any slight bit of hostility with members of the Indian host community occurs and develops into an argument, our side should definitely act with large-heartedness and take the blame and loss. If we do that, there will be only a slight loss in a word duel but there will be nothing incurred in terms of defeat.

Speaking from another perspective, it is possible that there are some individual Indians who look down on the Tibetan people and deride us. If some slight argument occurs with such a type of people, it should be

ensured that the dispute is resolved with finality when the issue is still small. If this is not done, a big disgrace will occur in case the confrontation grows in size with more and more people joining in to support each side.

And when such a skirmish occurs, anyone who really has a sense of ethnic loyalty should intervene to give sincerely motivated advises about the need to exercise restraint and to overlook any provocation there might be. To succeed in separating the two sides in such a manner is to prove oneself a worthy human person. Otherwise, if one fails to take the right action and instead ends up adding fuel to the fire, it bears no mention that ultimately it will not only be the persons directly involved in the dispute but also the whole Tibetan community within which they live who will suffer on account of the differences in the numerical strengths between the two sides and due to our own situation. A government has to go by the opinion of its people. So when a conflict occurs within the community, the government will have to act with tactfulness; otherwise the government both at the local level and at the centre will also find themselves in difficult positions.

Again, there are in some local areas of India restrictions on beef. And it will be very risky if one buys, sells, uses, and so on the meat of animals viewed with a godly consideration by the people of one's host community. This does not concern just a few people. Rather, it is related, at the fundamental level, to the religion and culture of a whole community of people and therefore involves the risk of becoming an issue against the general Indian population. If despite the availability of numerous other proper and legal occupational options, one still insists on continuing to do business in buying and selling beef, eventually one small incident could result in a loss not only to oneself but also to the whole community of people connected with oneself. Therefore one should act with caution at all times, understanding the need to respect the laws of the land whose water one drinks and, likewise, being considerate towards the customs, habits, and traditions of the local people.

**[END]**