

# TIBET, CHINA AND THE WORLD

A Compilation of Interviews

THE DALAI LAMA

NARTHANG PUBLICATIONS

Published by Narthang Publications,  
Gangchen Kyishong, Dharamsala - 176215  
Printed by Indraprastha Press (CBT),  
New Delhi - 110 002

## CONTENTS

Publisher's Note

Institution of the Dalai Lama

The Dalai Lama, the Child

Tibet: Today and Tomorrow

Tibetans in Exile

Relations with China

Relations with India

Relations with the World

Five-Point Peace Proposal

Violence and Non-Violence

Reincarnations

Religion and Philosophy

Teaching Compassion

Messages

## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

We are pleased to bring out this compilation of interviews granted by His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, during 1987–88. In order to provide for quicker and easier access to interested individuals the interviews have been grouped under different topic heads.

This compilation has been made possible with the kind cooperation of the staff members of office of H.H. the Dalai Lama, Dharamsala, and Ms. Whitney Stewart, editor of *Tibet Today*, from USA.

November, 1989  
Dharamsala

Narthang Publications

The interviews contained in this book have been compiled from those granted by His Holiness the Dalai Lama to the following individuals and organisations or journals.

<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Interviewer</b>	<b>Date</b>
1. Michael Alexander	23.05.87	23. Alexander Norman	
2. Rukshan Krishan	26.06.87	<i>The Spectator</i>	24.03.88
3. Kutu Chatterjee	10.06.87	24. Marte I. Franceschini	28.03.88
4. Dennis Paulson	22.08.87	25. Jonathan Mirsky	
5. <i>New York Times</i>	27.09.87	<i>The Observer</i>	29.03.88
6. Press Meet	07.10.87	26. Gabriel Tavernese	
7. Ranjan Gupta <i>New Zealand Radio</i>	10.10.87	<i>L'Unita</i>	29.03.88
8. Peter Dienemann <i>Die Welt</i>	10.10.87	27. Jackie Sam Ah Chee	
9. Valerio Pellizzari <i>Il Messagero</i>	11.10.87	<i>Hong Kong Standard</i>	30.03.88
10. Masamichi Fijitsuka <i>Kyodo</i>	13.10.87	28. John Elliot	
11. Brahma Chellaney <i>Christian Science Monitor</i>	27.10.87	<i>The Financial Times</i>	30.03.88
12. Josi Kattoppo	29.10.87	29. Michael Hamlyn	
13. Onkar Singh <i>Indian Post</i>	19.11.87	<i>The Times</i>	01.04.88
14. Vanya Kewley	04.12.87	30. Ulrich Stewen	12.05.88
15. French TV <i>Antennae 2</i>	07.12.87	31. Elina Grundstrom	17.05.88
16. Claude Levenson	Dec. '87	32. Claude Levenson	21.06.88
17. Christia Martin	06.01.88	33. Heiner Hanggi	
18. Shailendra Verma	12.02.88	34. Steve Teummler <i>U.P.I.</i>	05.07.88
19. Pico Iyer <i>Time Magazine</i>	22.02.88	35. Whitney Stewart	08.07.88
20. Piero Verni	11.03.88	36. Kushwant Singh	09.07.88
21. Jesus Juanotena	14.03.88	37. Astri Ghosh	
22. Kersten Rutnik	21.03.88	<i>Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation</i>	
		38. Jari Lindholm	18.08.88
		39. Bishwajit Chaudhary <i>Trenta Giorni</i>	18.08.88
		40. Isabelle Dillman	
		<i>Paris Match</i>	28.08.88
		41. Jesper Ravn	24.08.88
		42. Nils Thorsen	
		<i>Politiken</i>	25.08.88

## INSTITUTION OF THE DALAI LAMA

*Can you explain briefly the correlation of your being the reincarnation of the previous Dalai Lamas and the Bodhisattva of Compassion, Avalokiteshvara?*

Firstly, Buddhists believe in the theory of rebirth. Then, within rebirth we believe that every sentient being has gone through previous lives and will also go through future lives. Those people who deliberately choose a certain time and place of rebirth are called reincarnated persons. Now, in the Dalai Lama's case, we believe that they were specially blessed by Avalokiteshvara, therefore, we regard these people as the reincarnations of Avalokiteshvara. This does not mean that all the previous Dalai Lamas have had one continuous consciousness. There are many people who have had blessings from Avalokiteshvara, the Bodhisattva of Compassion. In other words, you may say that those people who have extraordinary compassion are blessed by the Bodhisattva of Compassion.

*How do you personally feel about being the reincarnation of Avalokiteshvara? Is it something you have an unequivocal view of one way or another?*

It is difficult to say. Unless I am engaged in a meditative effort, such as following my life back breath to breath, I couldn't say exactly. We believe that there are four types of rebirth. The most common type is a being who is helpless to determine his or her rebirth. His or her incarnation depends solely on the nature of past actions. The opposite of this is an entirely enlightened Buddha, who manifests a physical form simply to help others. The third type is one who, due to past spiritual attainment, can choose, or at least influence the place and situation of rebirth. The fourth is called a blessed manifestation. This person is blessed beyond the normal capacity to perform helpful functions, such as teaching religion. Such a person's wish to help others must have been very strong in previous lives. They then obtain such empowerment. Though some seem more unlikely than others, I cannot definitely say which one I am.

*From the viewpoint then of the realistic role you play as Avalokiteshvara, how do you feel about it? Only a few people in history have been considered in one way or the other, divine. Is this role a burden or a delight?*

It is very helpful. Through this role I can be of great benefit to people. For this reason I like it; I'm at home with it. It's clear that it is helpful to people, and that I have the karmic relationship to be in this role. Also, it is clear that there is a karmic relationship with the Tibetan people in particular. Now you see, you may consider that under the circumstances, I am very lucky. However, behind the word luck, there are actual causes or reasons. There is the karmic force of my ability to assume this role as well as the force of my wish to do so. Regarding this, there is a statement in the great Shantideva's *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds* that says "As long as space exists, and as long as there are migrators in cyclic existence, may I remain—removing their suffering". I have this wish in this lifetime, and I know I had this wish in past lifetimes.

*Do you see yourself primarily as a religious leader or a temporal ruler?*

I always consider myself as a Buddhist monk first. I feel that that is the real me. As for the Dalai Lama as a temporal ruler, I feel the Dalai Lama is a man-made institution. As long as the people accept the Dalai Lama, then they will accept me. But being a monk is something which belongs to me; no one can change that. Deep down inside, I always consider myself a monk, even in my dreams. So naturally, I feel myself as more of a religious person. Even in my daily life, I can say that I spend 80% of my time on spiritual activities and 20% on Tibet as a whole. The spiritual or religious life is something I know and have great interest in. I have some kind of confidence in it, and thus, I want to study it more. Regarding politics, I have no modern education except for a little experience. It is a big responsibility for someone not so well equipped. This is not voluntary work, but something that I am compelled to do because of the people's hope and trust.

*What do you think of the separation of the temporal and spiritual aspect of the Dalai Lama?*

I think after my lifetime, or even during my lifetime, I may not participate in the government if we achieve our political goal. I have always been attracted to Gandhi's way. Until India's independence was achieved, he remained the key figure in the struggle. As soon as independence was achieved, he remained aloof from politics. That is a very proper way.

*What role will the institution of the Dalai Lama play in the "middle way" or compromise with the Chinese and the Tibetans?*

None. I publicly told the Tibetans and the Chinese that I never mentioned at all the status of the Dalai Lama. In the future also, if negotiations take place with the Chinese, I will never raise one single point regarding the Dalai Lama's institution. My future is very simple. I am a monk and I can manage by myself very easily. As long as the Tibetan people respect the Dalai Lama, the institution will remain and work. This institution was not made by God or the Chinese people, but by the Tibetan people. So, as long as the Tibetan people find this institution useful, it will remain.

*Do you feel as if you had a lonely life?*

No, I have many friends. Also, as a practitioner of Tibetan Buddhism, it is very important to be alone for a few hours.

*Do you ever dream of becoming a simple monk?*

Yes, sometimes I have that feeling. But I think the most important thing is the usefulness of one's life. At the moment, as a practitioner of Tibetan Buddhism, I always pray that as long as sentient beings experience suffering, I will be there to serve them as much as I can. If one's present life is of benefit to others, that is a source of satisfaction.

*Do you ever become angry?*

Sometimes, but generally as times goes by, the irritable side of my nature has subsided and changed. These days it is difficult to arouse my anger. If the anger were constantly there, then my anger towards the Chinese would also be there. But now that the anger has lessened in me, there is less anger to show to the Chinese. The main cause of one's suffering is based on one's "karma", so we cannot blame everything on the Chinese. That would not be right.

*Will you be the last Dalai Lama?*

Whether the institution of the Dalai Lama remains or not depends entirely on the wishes of the Tibetan people. I made this clear in the late 1960s. At the moment, the Dalai Lama's institution is useful to the Tibetan culture and the Tibetan people. In the future, if the Dalai Lama's institution is no longer useful, and the situation changes, then the Dalai Lama will cease to exist. This does not matter. I am not concerned about this. This is why I sometimes say that I may be the last Dalai Lama. This is another reason why I make this statement. The Chinese are trying to present Tibet as having no problem and that the only problem is the Dalai Lama who wants to re-impose the old system and who is mainly concerned with his own position. In order to clarify things, I made this statement. In 1963, after four years in exile, we made a draft constitution for a future Tibet which is based on the democratic system. The constitution clearly mentions that the power of the Dalai Lama can be removed by a two-thirds majority vote of the members of the Assembly. Even when we were in Tibet in 1951, we had already set up a reform committee and carried out some reforms. Actually, the world was rapidly changing and we Tibetans remained foolishly backward, not seeing or taking any notice of what changes were going on in the outside world.

*What are your comments on your being reincarnated in occupied Tibet?*

If the Tibetans need another Dalai Lama for more or less the same circumstances, his reincarnation will be for the Tibetan people and culture. So definitely, the reincarnation will appear in a free country, not in the Chinese hands. That is definite. The very reason that the next Dalai Lama should appear is to help the Tibetan people and culture. Thus he will definitely appear among Tibetans who have freedom and who are not in the Chinese hands.

*How will you select the next Dalai Lama?*

Until now, the selection was on the basis of the reincarnation theory. I think that the Dalai Lama should be selected on the basis of seniority. There is another possibility. The Papal institution. After the Pope passes away his successor is chosen. That is also possible.

*You often talk about changing traditions and choosing the next Dalai Lama yourself. Do you still feel the same way?*

I was thinking of holding a formal meeting about this problem. For many years, I have informally expressed that the institution of the Dalai Lama can change. The time has come for a formal discussion and to let the Tibetan people think about it and be prepared for it. It is quite complicated and there might be some problems.

## THE DALAI LAMA, THE CHILD

*When you were a boy, what was your relationship with your mother and your father?*

I was closer to my mother. My father had quite a short temper. We had small father and son quarrels.

*What type of quarrels?*

I remember one day quite well. He had a moustache. He loved to have a moustache. He used to grease his moustache with mutton fat as was the custom in Amdo. One day, I simply touched his moustache and he somehow went into a temper (laughs).

*Just because you touched it?*

Perhaps I pulled it a little. May be it hurt him (laughs). He had such a short temper, so I was much closer to my mother.

*Why?*

I never saw my mother's temper. She was always very calm, always very gentle.

*Did she do special things for you?*

Oh yes. (Smiling broadly) In the Tibetan tradition, a child is often prohibited from eating eggs and pork during his school years. This is some kind of tradition. Some people believe that these foods are harmful to the development of the intelligence. The Dalai Lama's cook, then, would not make eggs, so sometimes my mother would bring them to me.

*What about your relationship with your brothers and sisters?*

When I was in Tibet, I was often with my eldest sister. As soon as I was born, she was the one who held, fed and washed me. Keeping with Amdo tradition, she fed me a special liquid of water and a sweet plant.

*Was this for health or good luck?*

I don't know. This is a tradition in my area. At birth, one of my eyes was open and the other was half-shut. My sister opened it all the way with her fingers (laughs). She also used to take me on her back. We were very close.

*What about your brothers who were already in Kumbum monastery?*

My immediate brother, Lobsang Samten, actually, he was the closest of all my brothers and sisters.

*But you fought with him?*

Oh yes! I bullied him.

*Why did you bully him?*

Probably because he took it. (Laughs loudly)

*Were you talkative as a boy? Were you bold or shy?*

I don't know. Most probably not bold. But, whenever there were fights between children, dogs, small animals or even insects, I always joined the loser's side. In this respect, I was bold.

*Why was a crow nesting on your house when you were born?*

It wasn't nesting. Before I was born, there was no crow. At my birth, a pair of crows came and remained on our rooftops.

*Why?*

That, I don't know. According to the biographies of the past Dalai Lamas, the story of crows is clearly mentioned. Actually, the story goes like this.

The very day that the first Dalai Lama was born, there was a robbery. The mother and father ran away and left their little boy there at the home. Then after sunset, the parents returned home. The mother was very worried about her boy. They tried to find the child, there was one big crow cawing. The mother thought that something very bad had happened, that the crow had done something to the child. When they searched, they found the child untouched. The big crow had remained as a protector, fighting off all the other crows.

This story was not understood then. Later, that child, the Dalai Lama himself, grew up to become a good monk and an experienced practitioner. At that point, he had a vision of the protector Mahakala. Mahakala then told him that, at the very day of the Dalai Lama's birth, Mahakala came as a protector. Mahakala said that he had remained by the Dalai Lama's side ever since. In my case, I don't know. Nobody knows.

*What were your favourite foods when you were a boy?*

Thukpa. (A Tibetan noodle soup) I think Thukpa. When I was a boy, because tsampa was not available, we ate bread in the mornings. And we had a special tea with milk and thick hard cream. You could take the bread and wipe the cream around the edges of your cup. (Pantomimes eating this) Oh! That's something good! (Smacks his lips loudly). You can't get this anymore, not even in Lhasa. The Dalai Lama's cook never prepared these things. Occasionally, when I visited my mother's place, she prepared that. Still, it was not as delicious as that of my home region.

*Your mother is reputed to have made very good pastries.*

Oh yes. Good bread. Mother was an expert at making perhaps 15–20 different types of bread. Some big, some small.

*Did she bring them to you in the Potala?*

Oh yes. (Chuckles)

Also, I remember once being beaten by my maternal uncle. He was the guardian of my eldest brother at Kumbum Monastery. He had pock marks on his face and a moustache. He usually read many pages from his scriptures. I remember very clearly, one day, crawling over his book of scriptures and mixing up the pages. Uncle gave me a beating on the back side. (Laughs) I remember this very clearly. From then on, I didn't like him. I avoided him.

*Is it true that you and your brother, Lobsang Samten, used to hide in Kumbum? Wasn't your uncle nervous if he couldn't find you?*

That's right. Lobsang Samten had already started to learn scriptures. He had to spend a few hours daily studying with his master and other students. At that time I was free. I was very happy. My brother had to sit there while I was a free man. I played around him and then ran away to hide in the monastery.

*Who explained to you that you were the Dalai Lama, the incarnation of the XIII Dalai Lama? Did you understand what that meant?*

One early morning in Kumbum Monastery, I was put on a very high throne. The search party sat in front of me. It was very early in the morning. That I remember. I can still remember the face of one member of the party who was a very serious person. That morning, he was there. I don't remember who explained anything to me.

*How did you know what to do?*

I don't remember. My mother later told me that I managed very well. I don't remember anything else. I know that as soon as I was on my way to Lhasa, I was very happy.

*Were you afraid of anything when you were a boy?*

I was very scared of the dark.

*Was it scary living in the Potala?*

Oh yes. There are many dark places there. I used to have a burning sensation of fear. I was also afraid of caterpillars. I didn't mind holding scorpions, but I didn't like caterpillars.

*Why not?*

I don't know. That's my previous life's connection. I may have been a caterpillar. I am still uneasy around caterpillars.

*Did you like animals?*

Yes, I used to play with dogs and fish.

*What was your room like in the Potala Palace?*

Very simple. In the early years, I spent time on one side of the Potala. The bedroom was quite dark. It was so old—at least three or four centuries old. Because of the butter lamps, the walls were blackened by smoke. There were so many rats in the room.

*Were you afraid of the rats?*

No. You could smell them in the bedroom. Behind the curtains on the walls, there were rats and dirt and dust.

*That didn't bother you?*

No. Later, I shifted to another part of the Potala which was much cleaner. The bedroom was much cleaner—may be just in preparation for the Chinese. (Laughs).

Norbulingka was much cleaner, much lighter, but the furniture and the structure were similar. Very simple. A big bed in a box. Later in the day, I would sit there doing things. Studies were done in a separate room.

*What was your daily schedule?*

I studied one hour in the morning and one in the evening. I also spent one hour in the morning writing. In Lhasa, I would write at 6:00 am or 7:00 am. In the winter, my tutor would come for reading and explanation at 9:30 am until 10:30 am or 11:00 am. In the evening, I had a recitation session from 3:00pm until 4:30 pm—for learning my scriptures.

*Did you ever get bored or tired?*

Yes. Very much.

*What would you do?*

Cry. (Laughs) My tutor later told me that if he remained serious when I cried, then I would stop crying. If he showed some kind of concern, then I would cry even more. (Laughs)

*One last question about your childhood—Heinrich Harrer wrote that you once made a film. How did you know how to make a film?*

That was much later—in 1947 or 1948. There were two projectors which had belonged to the XIII Dalai Lama. I used to watch movies shown by one old Chinese monk.

*Movies of what?*

Movies from France. Fictional, there was also one documentary of the coronation of King George V.

*Who gave you these films?*

They were left over from the XIII Dalai Lama.

*But you made a film, right?*

Yes, I was quite used to seeing films, so later, I managed to make a film by myself. When the equipment was damaged, I tried to dismantle things. Through curiosity, I learned about wiring.

*Nobody showed you and you had no book of instruction?*

No. I had a movie camera. I asked a trade delegation which was going to the United States to bring back a 16mm movie camera. That was in 1948. Then, I got a 16mm projector from the British delegation. We also had an old Indian generator—a very old one. I tried to fix it and so I learned about pistons and valves and different things. I would work on repairing things and then forget my scriptures—and even forgot to eat. I loved to spend my holidays on this.

*Do you still spend time fixing things?*

No. Now, much has changed.

## TIBET: TODAY AND TOMORROW

*How do you receive information from within Tibet?*

We receive information mainly through foreigners and also Tibetans who return from Tibet. In October 1987, the foreign tourists and journalists gave good publicity to our cause. I myself was a bit touched because the foreigners have no special obligation to us, yet as human beings with human feelings (when they saw the actual situation) their hearts jumped out toward the poor, helpless Tibetans. They acted almost as if they were Tibetan supporters. I think it greatly helped to publicise the Tibetan issue more widely. The very nature of the Tibetan struggle seems to have become clearer.

*How close are the Tibetans to losing their culture permanently?*

If the present trend in Tibet continues for another ten years, I think things will become very dangerous. For example, in some places, like my birth area, the Chinese population is already 2.5 million compared to the Tibetan native population of 700,000.

*Talking of inside Tibet, has there been any change in the social relationship between the Chinese and the Tibetans?*

As far as we know, the relationship has become worse. When the Chinese first came to Tibet, when we were there, there was no clear feeling of racial discrimination. Today, as a result of events, wherever there are Tibetans and Chinese, in schools, offices, prisons there is some kind of barrier. The Chinese believe the Tibetans are not trustworthy. The Tibetans believe the Chinese are different from them.

*Are things getting better or worse right now?*

Things are improving. That is a good sign. The Tibetan problem is very complicated. It involves history, culture, Buddhism, human rights and many other factors.

*It sounds as if things are getting worse, not better?*

That is right. That is why I said it is very complicated. In the previous years, the open destruction of the Tibetan culture took place, people were restricted from travelling, and due to this, thousands died of starvation. Comparing this with the present situation, today, there is no starvation; there are more cultural activities, more freedom of movement and more freedom in the economic field. These things have improved. In the meantime, new and different dangers are arising. They are becoming more serious.

*So the Tibetans are facing a racial problem in their own homeland?*

Yes, that is right. The official Chinese documents are very beautiful but not so beautiful in real life (laughter).

*What are the conditions in Tibet today which require you to make more political activities than in previous years?*

One is that Tibet is being used more for military purposes. Previously, it was a land of peace that provided a feeling of security for neighbouring states. Now, the picture has changed completely. This is a serious matter. There is also a link between the peace in that region and world peace in general. Another serious matter is that more and more Chinese are settling in Tibet. Within a short period, there is every danger that Tibet will be a country where the majority of the people are Chinese. It is like the Manchurians who lived in the early part of this century. They had their own culture, but it has completely disappeared now. This could occur in our country too. I feel that the protection of one of the world's most ancient culture is not only the responsibility of the Tibetans alone, but also the responsibility of the world community. Unfortunately, in the political sphere, there is not much place for moral issues. Basically, the Tibetan issue is a moral issue. Another issue is the human rights violations in Tibet as well as in China proper. There are many cases of human rights violations taking place. Yet, unfortunately, the Western world remains silent. If a small case of human rights violation occurs in a country like the Soviet Union, the Western world would immediately voice its concern. If we look carefully at past experiences, world opinion makes a great impact on those people who are working for human rights as well as for freedom of thought and speech, such as Sakharov, dissidents, victims of human rights. Now in the Chinese case, if there were more concern or public opinion, it would help to encourage these people in their activities and their fight for more freedom and human rights. It would find it more difficult to suppress well-known persons. Gorbachov's new policy of *glasnost* or openness is interdependent on this. World opinion makes a difference and eventually is very helpful for the community in that country. The more public opinion there is, the more it will help China as a country.

*Is there more religious freedom for Tibetans in Tibet today?*

Superficially, yes. The people are making prostrations, going around the temples and reciting prayers. At a deeper level, the opportunity to carry out proper Buddhist study does not exist because the Chinese are putting all types of restrictions on it. Regarding the Buddhist religious life, we feel Buddhism is endangered. Buddhism is actually quite sophisticated and rich, and the Chinese are shaping it into a blind faith.

*What about the monks who preach religion in the monasteries in Tibet? Are they entirely free in spite of the Chinese occupation?*

No. It seems the Chinese themselves do not understand Buddhism. They might feel that the religion is just making prostrations, taking the prayer wheel and rosary and just reciting *Om Mani Padme Hum*. Actually, from a Buddhist point of view, these are just minor things. The main aim is to make one's mind into a new shape or try to change the basic mental attitude towards objects, especially towards our fellow human beings. Now, in order to do this, you need a great deal of mental practice and study. Without knowing the deeper philosophical explanations, it is rather difficult to change one's attitude. Secondly, their basic aim is to eliminate all kinds of faith except Marxism. There are many restrictions on the propagation of religion. Therefore, there are only a few who can really teach. All

the learned teachers have more or less disappeared. The few left learned teachers fear or do not know what will happen if they explain Buddhism at this moment. The learning process is inadequate right now. This is a pity. If the present situation remains, there is every danger that the religion of Buddhism will become a religion of blind faith. Fortunately, outside of Tibet, not only Tibetans, but quite a number of Westerns know about Buddhism. I think that they are much better informed than those inside the monasteries in Tibet (laughter). Some Tibetans and even some foreigners, without understanding the actual Buddhist practice and significance, simply use Buddhist rituals as a method to make money. They read or perform some rituals and, their main motivation is not sincere, but simply to try to get donations or other things. It is a pity. In some cases, it seems there are people who aim for their own benefit and use the Dharma. This, I think, we have to take seriously.

*Is Beijing making any effort to restore and rebuild the destroyed monasteries and temples?*

Yes, the Chinese are doing repair work that was actually initiated by the local Tibetan people. When these people took the initiative and started the work, then the Chinese government came to help them. No substantial help, but only some material help. Mainly, I think the Chinese want to have some credit. The number of monasteries destroyed in Tibet according to our information is more than 6,000. Now, here you must understand the differences. When we say Tibet, it includes the entire three provinces of Tibet. The population of Tibet is about six million and there are about six thousand monasteries. When the Chinese say Tibet, they only mean the Central and parts of Western Tibet which is the so-called Tibetan Autonomous Region. Here the population of Tibet is about two million and the number of monasteries destroyed is about 1,500. The Chinese have divided Tibet into six parts: the Autonomous Region, then a few autonomous districts and autonomous counties. So, when we say Tibet, we mean the entire three provinces of Tibet.

*We know of some prison camps and forced labour camps in Tibet, especially in Amdo. Are Tibetans still sent to these camps and how many Tibetans do you think are prisoners at the moment?*

That is difficult to say. These are top secrets of the Chinese. So nobody knows. There are indications that there are political prisoners. Even in the last few years and last few months, there are cases where people were charged on the pretext of being criminals, but actually (the arrests) are aimed at politically-minded people, for example, the late Lobsang Wangchuk, an old learned monk. I personally appealed to the Chinese Government to release him. He was an old and learned person and if the Chinese did not want him, they should expel him. They said that he was a criminal. The only criminal offence of these people is that they love the Tibetan culture, the people and the country. That is their only crime. It is very sad.

*Do you think the institutions like UNESCO and the Red Cross, if present in Tibet, would be able to work on a long term basis for the return of a free Tibet?*

Yes, I think so. The people who are working on the spot can make big differences. In some cases, it takes courageous people what is right and what is wrong.

*Beijing claims to have given Tibetan people modernisation, guarantee of food supply, education and health service. Is this claim correct? Is the Chinese programme really in the interest of the Tibetan people or do they suppress your people by enforcing the change in the culture?*

This is a very complicated question. Communications, housing and many facilities are improving. Also, education and health care are improving. Now, the problem lies between the Central Government plan and the actual implementation. There is a big gap between the two. Even at the Central Government level, there is a big gap between their statements and their motivation. Things are improving according to their documents which are very beautiful and nice. But in reality, things are not as they seem. Recently, I met an American who visited Tibet several times. His conclusion was that in Tibet there was economic development, yet that economic development benefited the Chinese and not the Tibetans. I think this is very true. Today, there is more housing, more factories and many other facilities, but there are mainly occupied or being used by the Chinese. Even in Lhasa, most of the new houses or buildings are occupied by the Chinese, and the Tibetans remain in the old part of Lhasa which the Chinese say is dirty and smelly (laughter). The Chinese government spends some money on subsidised goods which they send to Lhasa. When these things reach Lhasa, the best of these goods are first sold to the Chinese. Some Chinese, in order to buy these goods, purposely come to Lhasa and then they bring the items to their own houses. This is the reality. The Tibetans remain poor. Regarding education, the Chinese government have on paper a special allocation for higher studies at the University level in China for a certain number of Tibetan students. In reality, the Chinese officers who remain in Tibet send their own children to these universities and thus, the allocation goes to the Chinese instead of the Tibetans. In some cases, young Chinese who cannot go to University come to Tibet and then, they are selected because of their relatives who are stationed in Tibet. Hence, their name is put on the list. These kinds of things are happening. It is very complicated.

*Are there Tibetans who can join Tibetan universities or English language courses? Or, do they separate them?*

Now, this is quite complicated. On paper, the Chinese lay emphasis on learning more about Tibetans and having respect for the Tibetan culture. All of the educational institutions and facilities are supposed to be open to the Tibetans. In reality, it seems that in many cases, this is not what happens. One Tibetan who was actually involved in educational planning in Lhasa wrote a clear account from which you can see that these grievances are no simply fabricated by our government but are complaints from Tibetans working with the Chinese in Tibet.

*China has opened Tibet to tourists. They earn enormous amounts from tourism and this money goes to Beijing. Do you and the Tibetan people feel betrayed by this? And the second question, do foreign tourists endanger your own culture?*

To answer the first question, yes. Naturally, Tibetans feel sad. Regarding the second question in a sense, more Western tourists are very helpful for publicity and telling the outside world what the real situation is in Tibet. Take for example, the 1987 disturbances. If there had not been any foreign tourists, the Chinese would have kept quiet. Since there were foreigners and since they had already

sent out messages, the Chinese Government was compelled to speak out. Otherwise, they would have simply hidden the disturbances.

*So is that the advantage of having foreigners there?*

Yes. In many European countries as well as in America, many people are taking interest in Tibet and showing sympathy towards the Tibetans. One factor was due to the recent increase in tourists who visited Tibet and who saw the actual situation. Before, when we said something negative about the Chinese, people might have been sceptical. Now foreigners have visited Tibet and seen the destruction, the ruined monasteries and the state of unhappiness of the Tibetans. This has had a great impact on people. So in this way it is useful. Then of course, there is Western fashion and Western disco which may be introduced eventually in Tibet, but that is alright. (Laughter).

*What is your opinion of tourism in Tibet?*

It is useful in the present situation because through tourists, particularly those who have travelled to many places in Tibet, we get a much better picture of Tibet. I also think that Tibetans who live inside Tibet feel happy when they see foreigners, especially foreigners who take a keen interest in Tibetan culture and Tibetan people.

*So it would be more useful if individual tourists would go to Tibet without groups led by the Chinese?*

Even if they go in groups, if they are acquainted with the Tibetan situation, it would be a different question. Before going to Tibet, if they have some sort of information and knowledge, it would benefit them individually because with some knowledge, they gain deeper understanding and knowledge when they see different things.

*This is true about the big towns like Lhasa, Shigatse and Gyantse, but what about the smaller villages where foreign tourists do not go?*

There are some tourists who somehow manage to reach these villages. It is very important to see those places which are officially not prepared. Unfortunately, the Chinese are experts in making artificial preparations. Comparing the condition of the countryside with that of the bigger towns, there are a lot of differences. The tourists who go to Tibet do not want to see the Chinese, but want to see the Tibetans. The Chinese use the Tibetan culture, Tibetan temples, arts and also monks as show-pieces and tourists attractions. Now, under this situation, because of superficial development under superficial progress, a large number of Chinese settlers, disguised as technicians or labourers, come and settle in Tibet. In some places in Tibet, the fertile lands are occupied by Chinese farmers. Previously, there were no such things as Chinese nomads with yaks, but today some places have Chinese nomads. Now, already in Tibet, the Chinese population is increasing in number; they are becoming a majority. I strongly feel that the preservation of the Tibetan culture is not only the Tibetan people's responsibility, but that of the world community too. We all have a responsibility to preserve a rich and ancient world culture.

*What are your terms for visiting Tibet or even returning to it?*

In early 1983, I expressed my desire to visit Tibet in response to the Chinese invitation. At that time, I made clear the sort of conditions for my visit. I want complete freedom of movement, freedom of speech and also freedom of meeting whoever I wanted. Another important condition was that after my departure, the people with whom I had met should not get into any kind of trouble.

*And that was not accepted by Beijing?*

No. At that time in September, 1983, on the pretext of criminal charges, many people, including politically-minded people, were arrested and many were publicly executed and so, my visit was postponed. At the moment, I do not see any necessity to go to Tibet. In the future, the atmosphere must be very positive. At the moment, there is no such atmosphere. It will take time. I always prefer freedom. I feel that the human creative nature is the most important thing. Without freedom, this human quality cannot function properly. India may be poor and there might be many difficulties and silly complications, but after all, there is freedom here. The very purpose we left Tibet and spent our time outside of Tibet is for this very basic right of the Tibetan people. Until now, despite some positive changes in the recent years in Tibet, the basic situation has still remained very grave and complicated. As long as this situation remains, there is no question of my return. I can serve Tibet much more effectively from outside Tibet. Except for a few people in Tibet who want to see me before they die, the rest of the people who think more deeply and politically do not want me to return to Tibet at this moment. They believe that I should instead remain outside Tibet and carry on the Tibetan struggle. The Chinese want to show that all the people are happy in Tibet since the Chinese arrival. The Chinese think that I am the only problem left.

*What type of government are you willing to establish in Tibet if you are allowed to go back?*

No doubt a democratic government. Since 1963, we have had a draft constitution for Tibet. Since then, even as refugees, we have tried to practise the essence of democracy. In the future, we will have the choice. Even in the constitution, I have mentioned that the democratic idea is very similar to the Buddhist idea. Especially in the system of monkhood which is very democratic. In this system, every action of the monk should be one led by collective leadership. There should not be any single monk with authority. But we Tibetans due to reincarnations and lamas, have been spoiled a bit with our own rules and systems (laughter). Actually, that is not good. After we came to this country as refugees, I have tried to tell the people, especially the monks, that this tradition is very important.

*If and when you go back to Tibet what happens to the Chinese who are born in Tibet?*

Just as those Russians who have settled down in Estonia and have fully integrated themselves to the Estonian way of life, the Chinese who were born in Tibet, have settled in Tibet should respect the Tibetan way of life, including the Tibetan culture. The Chinese could very well live in Tibet. Those who are not happy may return to their own land. For centuries there were Nepalese, Muslims and even Chinese in Tibet who had lived in perfect harmony, as they were able to adapt the Tibetan way

of life. In fact some of these Muslims speak Lhasa dialect much better than I do. There was no problem in the past and I do not foresee any difficulty even in the future.

*If I am a Chinese born in Tibet and I realise that the Chinese should not have mistreated the Tibetans and should not have put people to settle there. But that is the situation and I have my own culture and do not want to go?*

It depends on the number. If there is a small population, then like any other country you can have a China town. If the Chinese outnumber the Tibetans, as in the case now, then it is going to be a difficult situation. Nevertheless, we will have to find some kind of solution.

*What is the solution?*

Through persuasion. Basically Tibetan culture is different. If the Chinese population is larger than that of the natives, then the number of Chinese will have to be reduced. In other words, some kind of new rehabilitation settlement programmes may have to be set up.

*Do you believe you will return to Lhasa one day?*

I believe so. I am not very concerned about my own return. I am more concerned about my own usefulness. The value of human life is serving other people, helping other people as much as you can, so therefore I am really concerned about my own usefulness. So from that point of view, if the situation changed inside Tibet, I would be very glad to return. But as I feel I can be of more use outside Tibet, I prefer to stay outside. As a Buddhist monk I am mentally already isolated, cut off from my village in north-eastern Tibet which has now more or less become a Chinese village.

*You say the Chinese are using Tibet for nuclear production and nuclear wastes?*

Yes, there is one factory in north-eastern Tibet, near Kokonor Lake. According to few Tibetans who happened to be in that area, a Tibetan who held a rank in the Chinese administration visited the area and mysteriously died some time later. Such things happen. The dumping of nuclear waste is only our suspicion. There are reasons for our suspicions. The Chinese have to take their own nuclear waste but they also take some other countries' waste. Naturally these wastes will not be dumped in Shanghai or Peking or other places that are heavily populated. The ideal locales are those remote places between East Turkestan and Tibet, the Lop Nor area where the Chinese have already conducted nuclear experiments. That is our guess. Now some sheep in that area are giving birth to malformed babies, may be due to radiation.

*Do you think the death of the Panchen Lama will bring a change in the Chinese attitude towards the Tibetans, or your leadership?*

I don't think so. The Panchen Lama, during the last ten years of his life acted according to the Chinese wishes. The most important point is that there was no other choice for him but to obey the Chinese. The Chinese are still there, so there is not much change. But for us, of course, we lost a freedom fighter, a fine freedom fighter. It is very sad. Even under such difficult circumstances, the Panchen Lama's last statement said that if you compare the benefits the Tibetans have gained from

the Chinese in the last 30 years with damage and harm it has brought, there has been much more destruction and harm.

## TIBETANS IN EXILE

*What prompted the Tibetan people to seek exile in India?*

We have a special relation with India. Generally speaking, I think our relation with this country is much stronger than our relation with China. So India has more reason to claim that Tibet belongs to India. Culturally, we are much closer to India. In 1959, when we escaped from Tibet, there was no other place for us to reach. At that time, India not only gave us help in providing shelter, but also gave us tremendous help in preserving our culture. When we compare ourselves to other refugees, we are quite well established in this country and have become quite successful over the last three decades.

*You have now been in exile for almost three decades. In what way has being in exile affected you, and have you reconciled yourself to being exiled for your own lifetime?*

I am a very happy man. I enjoy my way of life these days. It is very fine. In general, I think of myself as belonging everywhere. I try to contribute wherever I can and to use my time as meaningfully as possible.

*What do you feel is the correct balance between majority decision and your particular right as the Dalai Lama to choose what is best for your people?*

They work together. Though there are some complaints, it is all right. Criticism is a healthy sign. Without complaints, like the Chinese—no criticism from the mouth, but criticism in the heart—it is no good. Open, outspoken criticism is very good. Generally, in the past we have managed quite well. There are deputies who are elected by the people. The final approval of them is mine. The People's Deputies, who are elected in exile, only have authority from those in exile. The Dalai Lama, however, is somebody who can represent all six million Tibetans. So you see, my approval of them is beneficial. It gives weight or authority to them. Also, the overall situation is so that we are living in our own country. It is a very peculiar circumstance. Under these conditions, we must take every precaution. Now in most cases, if there are several candidates, I approve those who have the highest votes. Suppose, however, there is a person who I feel cannot correctly handle the responsibility, I then have the authority to choose someone else. So far, I think this system has worked very well. It, itself, has gone through several changes. Now, besides, the actual participation of the People's Deputies in the working of the government, the process of electing them—voting itself—is training for our people. How to select; how to vote. Sometimes the people become very confused (laughter). This is important though. In the future, we must head this way. Because this is new to the Tibetans, they mark the wrong name; they don't know who to choose (laughter), and so on, but it is very important to learn.

*Do you think it is better for the Tibetan people to live with freedom in Nepal and India or to live in Tibet with Chinese and out of Tibetan culture?*

I think that as far as the Tibetan culture is concerned, it is unfortunate that the true Tibetan culture is now available only outside Tibet and not inside Tibet. About the question of freedom. I think for every human being the most precious thing is freedom and liberty. With freedom, all the good qualities and abilities can be utilised. Without freedom, human beings have to remain as animals and they just have to get some food and some land for shelter and sleep (laughter). It is something like a half human being and not a full human being. The human being with his very special brain can indulge in many different activities. Unfortunately, sometimes these might be destructive activities, but at the same time possessing the creative nature. I think the creative nature is one of the most important good qualities of a human being. For this, freedom is inseparable.

*The Tibetan refugees, in an overpopulated and poor country like India, have been one of the few success stories in this age of displaced people. To what do you owe this success?*

We have had a very long historical link with India. More importantly the spiritual heritage has made the relationship very deep between Tibet and India. What I usually call heart to heart. Since 1959, when we arrived as refugees, the Government of India has contributed generously for our rehabilitation. And then, we have our secretariat and various organisations which form a framework for administering the refugee centres and projects which relate to the Tibetans. Wherever there are Tibetans, whether in India, Switzerland, England, America and so on, we try to maintain our identity and cultural heritage.

*The Tibetan refugees in India seem so happy when you look at them. What is their secret?*

I don't know. You can't find anything yet there is something. I believe one factor is our tradition which is based on a realisation of the importance of human life or human right. Tibetan people regard life, any life, as something very sacred, something holy and important, so even when a small insect is killed, we immediately respond with some feeling of compassion. We are usually happy and good hearted among our whole community. Of course, there is some occasional fighting and even killing. But generally, there is harmony and good feeling, mainly due to the teaching of Mahayana Buddhism which places great emphasis on the importance of kindness, tolerance, love and compassion.

*How do you think the culture of Tibet was able to be preserved so effectively in exile when almost all of it in Tibet was disappearing under the Chinese?*

I think there are a few factors to this. There has been so much destruction in Tibet, and the Chinese think of Tibetan culture as something inferior. I think the people realise that Tibetan culture is something useful for people facing problems for difficult situations. Also, more and more Westerners who have interest in Tibetan culture come to study it. This has had an impact on the Tibetan youths. The Dalai Lama's institution is also helpful; the Dalai Lama is someone who people can look to.

Do you find it difficult. We always make a distinction. One part of the culture is out of date and is no longer of use. Another part culture is something beneficial for your day to day life. It has a special significance to the Tibetan people. That second part, we can preserve. For many years, we have remained as Tibetans. The Tibetan people, especially the younger generations, have changed a great deal in some cases, they are even like Westerners. It is a way of life. At the same time, they have kept their Tibetan identity quite strong. Until now it has been like that. After a few generations, I do not know what will happen.

*Is there any effect on the Tibetans in exile on account of the majority of the Tibetan teachers of religion going to the West?*

I do not think so. Of course, regarding the individual teachers, some may spend more time in the West and thus not have enough time to be in India. I think, however, in the overall picture, the various monasteries in India and Nepal are doing quite well, so there is no indication of any harm at this time.

*How do you run your Government in Exile and what financial support do you have to run it?*

One source of money is a collection from our people in exile. It is a voluntary contribution. Another source is from individual organisations, especially in the field of education, preservation of Tibetan culture and health. Of course, there is also the Government of India, which spends a great deal of money for our rehabilitation and education. Another source is the offerings made by different people to me.

*Do you have a system for the financial donations that come in from around the world to assist the Tibetans?*

Yes, we have an organisation here in Dharamsala and each settlement has a society or association which in most cases is registered. There is generally no misuse of funds, though occasionally, some small amount might have been misused. Many long-time workers of various voluntary agencies return to India and see the different Tibetan projects and organisations and they realise that Tibetans offer the best example of refugee financial planning. The results can be seen clearly, so they feel very happy.

## RELATIONS WITH CHINA

*Why do you think the Chinese invaded your country?*

China, as our Eastern neighbour, has had relations with Tibet for almost 2,000 years. In the early days, Tibet was a very powerful nation. Many times it invaded certain parts of China. Then, when Tibet became weak, the Chinese became stronger, and position was reversed. In the spiritual field, we had strong ties. During the period that the Mongols were emperors of China, the spiritual relations were genuine. During the Manchu dynasty, again there were spiritual ties. On one occasion, the Manchu emperor genuinely wanted to receive the Dalai Lama as a high lama. But some Chinese advised the emperor not to receive him. This shows that despite some genuine spiritual feelings, there was some kind of political thinking or chauvinism. In the Chinese records, they have deliberately tried to achieve more influence. Because of this, they regard Tibet as a subject of their emperor.

The Tibetan records are different. In certain Tibetan Buddhist scriptures, there is mention of some very important sacred places of the world. In the south, we believe there is a special place of Avalokiteshvara. In the east, there is a place of Manjushri. In the west, there is a place of Ogyen. In the north, there is Shambala. Now, there is a place in China, a scared place that was regarded for centuries as a sacred place of Manjushri. There is a belief that the emperor in that place is the reincarnation of Manjushri, who showed respect to Buddhism. The Tibetans had respect for the Chinese emperor. The reason was spiritual. But there was another reason that was sad and unfortunate. Whenever a small nation experiences internal fighting one side always tries to get support from a bigger neighbour. Thus, due to internal fighting in Tibet, one Tibetan side tried to get support from the Chinese emperor.

During the Vth Dalai Lama's time, I think it was quite evident that we were a separate sovereign nation with no problems. The VIth Dalai Lama was spiritually pre-eminent, but politically, he was weak and disinterested. He could not follow the Vth Dalai Lama's path. This was a great failure. So, then the Chinese influence increased. During the time, the Tibetans showed quite a deal of respect to the Chinese. But even during these times, the Tibetans never regarded Tibet as a part of China. All the documents were very clear that China, Mongolia and Tibet were all separate countries. Because the Chinese emperor was powerful and influential, the small nations accepted the Chinese power or influence. You cannot use the previous invasion as evidence that Tibet belongs to China. In the Tibetan mind, regardless of who was in power, whether it was the Manchus, the Mongols or the Chinese, the east of Tibet was simply referred to as China. In the Tibetan mind, India and China were treated the same; two separate countries.

There is another important reason. I am not criticising them, but, if you look at the history of the Chinese, they are always expanding. That is their nature. Before the Chinese communists took power, during the Kuomintang time, it seems that the Kuomintang on some occasions attempted to invade Tibet, but they did not succeed. When the Chinese Communists came to power, the whole of China was united, and thus they had enough power to invade Tibet. If you look objectively, there is

a clear sign that the two are separate countries. In the Chinese Communists case, they had a very strong belief that the whole working class of the world should unite and destroy the imperialists or the capitalists. Therefore, when the Chinese reached Lhasa, one Chinese general explained that the liberation of Tibet was not only for Tibetans, but for the neighbouring nations as well. They also believed in the power of the gun. So Tibet was strategically important to them. I think that these are the reasons.

*In your opinion what are the most important interests of the Chinese in Tibet?—economic, strategic or both?*

I think both. Militarily, Tibet is an important place; it is strategically important, also economically. Although the Chinese profoundly say that they spend a large amount of money in Tibet in order to develop it, you can look at it from the other side. There are many places where there are different kinds of minerals and it is obvious that large areas of forest and their timber have been destroyed. I think there is a large interest in the mineral resources found in Tibet. In some cases, the Chinese keep their findings secret.

*The Chinese say that they liberated Tibet of slavery and feudalism. Is this the truth?*

The old Tibet was backward in its technological and social systems. Nobody denies this. If, however, you look at the faces of those Tibetans who were born and grew up in that society, you can easily notice their genuine smile. When compared with our communities, the Tibetans are generally quite peaceful and warm-hearted. If they were really as cruel as the Chinese claim, then I think the people who were born and who grew up under those circumstances would be different. The people living at that time were happier and calmer than the people in this new situation. At that time, unfortunately, there were people who were used by their landlords. Now, the whole Tibetan nation has become a slave. That is the main point isn't it (laughter)? The Chinese have come up with some very silly excuses, like saying that the majority of the Tibetan people were suffering from syphilis, so they came to liberate them. That is one of their reasons (laughter).

*What do you feel about the atrocities committed by the Chinese people against the Tibetans?*

It is very sad. Ultimately, the Chinese themselves have lost a great deal. If the Chinese follows a more positive, constructive path, rather than the negative, destructive path that they have been following for the last 40 years, things would be different. What the Chinese have created is mutual misery. We Tibetans suffer a great deal and face misery under the Chinese. At the same time, the Chinese themselves find it very difficult to stay there (in Tibet).

*Does the fate of Tibet have in itself a message to the world?*

I think since the tragedy of Tibet in 1959, many Tibetan Buddhist practitioners and lamas have escaped from Tibet, and as a result we have a new opportunity to have closer contacts with faiths such as Christianity, Judaism and of course different Indian religions. Through this contact, we have a good opportunity to learn different traditions. In a similar way, they have new ideas and new experiences from our religion. So there is mutual benefit. Also, as Buddhists, we consider it very

important to study facts and realities. Buddha himself said that it is important to investigate and experiment rather than to accept without reason. That is the basic Buddhist attitude. Therefore, in recent years, we have had a closer contact with scientists in different fields. In certain fields of study, there are certain relations between the two. Discussion brings mutual benefits. That is one benefit of becoming a refugee.

*Would you agree that the resettlement of a large number of Chinese in Tibet is China's "final solution" for your country?*

It seems like it. For the last forty years, they have adopted various methods. In the 1950s, they used a certain method. Then in the 60s and 70s they adopted a very cruel and harsh method. Now in the 80s, they follow another method. Yet despite all these methods, they cannot buy the Tibetan mind or heart. The Tibetans all remain Tibetans. The Chinese want to have some kind of genuine loyalty from the Tibetans, but that has never developed. I think their last alternative is to make the Tibetan people a minority in their own homeland, and thus, the Tibetan voice would be ineffective.

*Is forced sterilisation of Tibetan women and men a part of China's genocide in Tibet?*

At one time, this was quite obviously happening. Recently, documents on birth control policy stated that it was carried out only on the Chinese and not on the minorities. In reality, the same thing is happening to the minorities—the one child-one family policy. In one way, the Chinese say the Tibetans need a larger population and more man-power to develop Tibet economically. At the same time, the Chinese implement birth control for the Tibetans. This also is a clear indication that they want to bring more Chinese into Tibet. There have also been some incidents where sterilisation or abortion had been forced, but we don't have clear evidence.

*In the event that China is allowed to complete its "final solution" in Tibet, what do you see for the future of Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism? Will what is perhaps the most spiritually advanced civilisation on earth disappear completely?*

Oh yes, probably only what is found in the books will remain. That is the real danger. Once Tibet as a nation completely disappears or becomes insignificant, then the Tibetan culture, the people and the Buddhism that we practise will be in great danger, even though there are more than five thousand centres in the world teaching Tibetan Buddhism. If the Tibetan nation completely disappears, I really don't know how much we can preserve. It is a danger for one of the important Dharmas. If Tibet remains as Tibet, including the Tibetan culture and Buddha Dharma, it eventually may help the Chinese nation in the spiritual field. The Chinese destroyed their old structure and philosophy, yet they failed to introduce anything new. Marxism has its good points and yet it still does not have the full answer for human life and problems. So definitely, the Chinese community needs another different ideology or philosophy. Buddhism could perhaps become an important contribution to the Chinese mind. There is no doubt about that.

*What are your present contacts with the Chinese Government?*

Peculiar (laughter). The Chinese want to keep direct contact with us and we also feel the same. Tibet is occupied by them so we have to deal with them. Yet their understanding is very unsatisfactory. One factor is due to their ignorance of Tibetan history, and of the real desire of the Tibetan people and so on. They do not know. Leaving aside the Tibetan problem, they do not even know issues and problems. There are many Chinese who are frustrated, particularly among the younger and educated ones. This shows that they do not know what is going on in the young people's mind. Sometimes power becomes an obstacle to knowing the real situation. That is happening in China. Now, even in the Soviet Union under the leadership of Gorbachov, it seems there is more understanding about the real situation besides the nice reports on paper.

*You also mentioned that there was a certain change in Chinese policy, a more liberal approach. Hu Yaobang publicly apologised for the excesses of the Cultural Revolution and promised the Tibetans more dignity. Were these just empty words?*

I think it was in 1981 that Hu admitted these past mistakes and apologised for them. Then he decided that 85% of the Chinese should be withdrawn from Tibet. Actually, I think he then remained in office for only a few months. Then he himself was dismissed.

*In 1981, there were plans to open a Tibetan office in Peking. Why was it not opened?*

In 1981, we had more hope since we had direct contact with the Chinese and since they were receptive at the beginning. Then in 1983, I stated that I might make a short visit to Tibet in 1985. Then in the autumn of 1983, the Chinese arrested and put in prison a large number of political-minded Tibetans on the pretext of striking down on criminals. At that time, they planned to kill several of those prisoners, but fortunately because the world opinion voiced its protest to the Chinese, these public executions could not be carried out. But later, they secretly carried them out. Then, I planned to send a delegation to Tibet to prepare for my visit, but that could not materialise. Then in 1985, my visit was postponed indefinitely. We still have direct contact with the Chinese, but there is not much of a two-way channel. That is the problem.

*What is your reaction to the Chinese invitation to visit China?*

(Laughter) I have cherished liberty and considered it very important. India despite being a poor country has liberty and freedom. For the last 30 years, I have been in this country and have been a bit spoiled and a little greedy for liberty and freedom. The basic reason why we left our country and spent 30 years in this country was basically for the right of the Tibetan people and the cause of Tibet. Unfortunately, the Chinese are trying to hide the real issue and show the world that there is no problem except for the Dalai Lama. As far as the Dalai Lama is concerned, he is always welcome back. They are deliberately showing this kind of attitude. If the Tibetan people in Tibet were really satisfied and happy, then most of the Tibetan refugees, including myself would definitely return. If the basic situation remains the same, there is no question of returning.

*If you go to China for a visit, what would you discuss?*

That is the key point (laughter). My stand until now is that I want to make clear that Tibet is a separate country from China. But the future is open and there are different options. Regarding options, there is still a lot to be worked out, so I do not feel that I should reveal too much at this moment. At the moment, my position is that I do not want to break my links with the Chinese government, and at the same time I cannot discuss certain things that may discourage the Tibetan will and determination. I am thinking that eventually some sort of referendum among the Tibetans should be carried out. Then try to get some suggestions and thoughts of what the Tibetans really feel. I also want to get as many views of the Tibetans inside of Tibet. At the same time, I do not want people to blindly follow my choice. I want the people's real feelings. I do not want to be imposing my will on the people. In 1963, I made a draft Constitution and made it very clear that the power of the Dalai Lama can be changed with a two-thirds majority of the National Assembly. So now I really want to listen to the people's ideas. I prefer to make a number of options which I feel are possible, and then to present them to the Tibetan people and listening to their wishes. It is my responsibility to explain the possibilities and the difficulties. This is my plan. In the near future, I think things will become clearer.

*In the case that half the Tibetan people want independence and the other half do not want independence, then what would you say?*

I think more discussions will be useful. I think the majority of the Tibetans want complete independence, maybe about 90%. But then we also have to think of the reality. Sometimes though you want something, in reality it may not be practical. So we will see. If it is fifty, then I think a more thorough discussion will be needed.

*What is a possible solution?*

The Tibetan people want complete independence, but the Chinese will never accept that. As the free spokesman, I have every right to make suggestions. My idea is that it is worthwhile to find some middle way. One important aspect being equal rights.

*How quickly do you think you can move in some positive way?*

I think we might soon finalise some more detailed proposals and then we will see. I am not sure.

*Most of the Tibetans believe that freedom will come one of these days, but the Western world, particularly the media, thinks it is time that you enter into some sort of dialogue with the Chinese and sort out the matter once and for all. Now what is going to be your stand?*

A dialogue is very important and very necessary. It is the fifth point in my Five Point Peace Proposal.

*So if the dialogue is short of total freedom and some sort of arrangement is all the Chinese are willing to give, would you accept that?*

Yes, I think we have to work in principle. We want a dialogue. We want to discuss and see if there is a possibility or an option or a compromise.

*Do you feel that the Tibetans can eventually return to their homes with honour and dignity?*

That is difficult to say. Things are not easy. We need more patience and more determination.

*Would you like to say something about Deng Xiao-Ping's observation that China respects religion, beliefs and customs and habits of Tibetan people and that they enjoy freedom of religion?*

Generally out of ignorance they themselves feel they offer religious freedom. But Buddhism is as ancient as Indian philosophy, and one needs to study a lot in quiet settings for long periods of time to really study Buddhism. That is why even many of India's saints spend many years in the mountains. But in the eyes of the Chinese, Buddhism is a blind faith. They feel that simply reciting some mantras, making rounds of temples, making prostrations, carrying a prayer wheel and rosary are sufficient to practice religion. So superficially there is religious freedom. But the Chinese simply have no idea of the need to have a proper teacher, the need to study in depth and practice seriously in proper settings. Their basic policy regarding religion in Tibet is that since the majority of Tibetans are devout Buddhists, they will superficially allow religious freedom—which is only a stop-gap arrangement. Last year (1988) a leading Chinese leader Qiao Shi, even made a clear statement to this effect.

*Did China help Tibet in overcoming financial difficulties in the fields of education and culture?*

This is rather complicated. Yes more schools, clinics, buildings, new roads, more economic development projects, etc. have been built and there is no doubt that some progress is being made in these fields. But one must recognise who the beneficiaries are. Although there is economic development in Tibet, the chief beneficiaries are Chinese and not Tibetans. For instance, in any new factory or enterprise, the majority of the employees are Chinese, and even the manual labourers are Chinese. The schools, where Tibetan is being taught as a special language, are exclusively Tibetan students. And of those who are sent to China for higher education, most of the students selected are Chinese. In some cases some of the Chinese students supposedly selected from Tibet are from China itself but have managed to get admission through the quota allowed for students from Tibet as they have relatives in Tibet. When the Chinese bring articles like blankets, flasks, bicycles, etc. into Tibet, the Chinese are given first priority as these are sold at much higher rates in China. If this is the case these articles could be sold to the Chinese in China itself instead of unnecessarily having to pay for their transportation to Tibet.

The Chinese have opened some health clinics. However, there is widespread discrimination. These facilities exist only in the big cities like Lhasa and Shigatse. But in the remote places facilities remain as they were before 1959. Other facilities like electricity exist only in areas where Chinese are

settled. Lhasa itself is divided into two parts namely old Lhasa, where there are no basic facilities as proper drinking water, medical facilities and electricity and new Lhasa, where better facilities are provided to the Chinese or Tibetans who work for the Chinese.

*Do you think the Chinese leadership sincerely wants to solve the Tibetan problem?*

I think so. The Tibetan issue is a very sensitive one for the Chinese, and as time passes they seem to be becoming more aware of the problem. In a way they have realised the sensitivity of the issue and want to resolve it. But they are not clear how to go about it.

*What is the alternative if the Chinese say they can't talk to the Tibetan exiles, to Your Holiness?*

There are not many alternatives. Sensible Chinese have to realise there is a problem. At least they admit there is some kind of negative feeling between Chinese and Tibetans. In other words there is a big wound. Every sensible Chinese, as well as Tibetans, needs to realise this and see that it is worthwhile to heal the wound, certainly not with more bloodsheds, but by talks and friendly discussion. That is the only way.

## RELATIONS WITH INDIA

*How is your relation with India, whose stand on Tibet has been clear since 1959?*

Very good, except in political matters where India regards Tibet as being a part of China. We have had very good relations with India and in fact, we will always feel very grateful to India. Despite Indian Government's own difficulties, they look after the Tibetans very well. With India's help and sympathy, we were able to establish a refugee community with our own rich culture and religion. We were able to keep our Tibetan identity intact. These things have been kept quite well for the past 30 years.

*India granted you political asylum in 1959 on the condition that you would not indulge in any political activities during your stay in India. What are your views on that?*

Yes, since 1959, we have had a sort clear understanding about that. Here in India, the Tibetans are refugees, myself included. On top of that, we were guests of the Indian Government and they do not want us to create any embarrassments. Now, for the last 30 years we have followed this policy. Of course, on some special occasions or some important or desperate situations, the Indian Government did not want us to bring up the Tibetan issue in the United Nations. Despite the Indian Government's rejection, we finally raised the Tibetan issue. We were able to find some sponsors and the issue was discussed in the United Nations which was then followed by the passing of three resolutions in the United Nations. After the resolutions were passed in the United Nations, I was keen to see what Nehru's reaction would be to what we had done. When we did meet, he was absolutely normal and his friendly attitude and sympathetic understanding remained the same. This was another experience of the running of democracy in India. I realised that this was freedom. It was very nice.

*Most of the Tibetans see the Indian stand on Tibet being a part of China as an extension of what Nehru said in 1959 or later. Do you agree with this view?*

Privately, many Indian officials and leaders admit this as their past mistake. But the formal Indian Government policy is very complicated. This is a mistake of many Indians, including the higher officials.

*Did you point out this mistake and feelings of the Tibetans to Nehru when he took the stand in 1959 or later?*

Yes. My first meeting with Prime Minister Nehru was in 1954 at Beijing. That is when he took the stand of Tibet being a part of China.

*He took the stand in 1954?*

Yes. The trade agreement was the official document that accepted this. So officially, they accepted this when they signed the trade agreement with China. There was even some talk at that time that the Indian Government wanted to put the words "autonomous region" of China rather than the

words “part” of China, but that did not materialise. So when we met Nehru, it had already been done.

*Did you protest?*

Actually, when the Chinese army started to march into Tibet, we sent a delegation. I was in Yatung at the time in 1951. We appealed to the Indian Government. The appeal was to Sardar Patel. He made certain statements that were very far-sighted.

*Do you think it was a mistake on your part to accept a conditional political asylum in India?*

Yes. At that time there was only India where we could seek political asylum. I also feel that this country is very unique and a most important country for us.

*In what sense?*

In the past, the Tibetan civilisation was very much based on Buddhism. On account of this, Tibetan culture was influenced by Indian culture. Culturally speaking, we regard ourselves as sons of this country. We regard the Indian nation as our guru. Despite many difficulties, the Tibetans visited India and its many sacred lands. At the same time, Indians visited many sacred places in Tibet like Manasarovar and Mount Kailash. There were very close links between the two countries, not because of political or economic reasons, but because of spiritual reasons. Another example is the Tibetan language. The Tibetan alphabet is derived from the Indian script of Sanskrit. Some of the letters on the Ashoka pillar we can also read. Of course, when you look at the two scripts, they are completely different from each other, but we copied and learned everything from this country. This was the past situation. In the present situation, we Tibetans remain as the largest refugee community in this country. Regarding the preservation of our culture and our education, I think it is quite clear that no other country could have given us as much as India has. Then looking at the future, Tibet has a long border with India, so this country will be very important to us and at the same time, Tibet will be important to India. The problem of Tibet is the problem of India too.

*Are you satisfied with the kind of arrangements and the progress that you have made looking after the Tibetans in India or would you like to do more?*

Under the existing circumstances, I think what we have achieved is very good.

*Would you like to do something more for the Tibetans?*

If you ask someone for his wishes or desires, then there is no limit to one's wishes or desires. I think within limitations, we did achieve the best.

*You have said that if Tibet is free, it would be beneficial for India. Can you comment on that?*

Once Tibet is a free country or as I have proposed in my peace-proposal, a zone of peace or a land of ahimsa where there are no military establishments, then India can withdraw most of her forces stationed on the whole northern border and save a lot of money. Then India can fatten the budget

of her five-year plans. It would create a very peaceful border and would help to generate peace in the region and also world peace in general. At present, the Tibetans inside of Tibet are very hostile to the Chinese there. This is beneficial to India. One day if Tibet becomes a land of the Chinese, not only would it be the end of Tibet, but it would also then be a permanent threat to India. The whole picture would change.

## RELATIONS WITH THE WORLD

*How do you feel about the Western countries and their attitude towards Tibet?*

Compared to the issues of South Africa, the Middle East and the other trouble spots of the world, Tibet is very much neglected. After the 1987 and 1988 happenings in Tibet we were quite surprised at the amount of world attention and sympathy shown to us.

*Does it surprise you that the governments of countries pay very little attention to Tibet and why?*

It is not surprising. It is understandable. Now, it has been almost 40 years since China invaded Tibet and despite the sympathy of people, it is very difficult to do something. First of all, Tibet is already occupied by China. Secondly, the issue of Tibet has become an old issue. Thirdly, China has become a very important country for economic reasons as well as geo-political reasons. Therefore, the neglect shown by other countries to Tibet is something quite understandable. Another unfortunate reason is that in business and politics, there is very little place for moral justice and moral principles. That is why we see more and more suffering in the world. It is a practical thing. We can't blame all those countries who have to make closer relationships with China, but among the people there is a clearer understanding about Tibetan history, culture, and current affairs. There are an increasing number of people who are getting to know about these things. That is also one of our moral strengths. Ultimately, the main factor will be our people's will and determination. Up until now, as far as this is concerned, it has been very strong. Even those young and old Tibetans who do not have much religious faith, have very strong nationalistic feelings. I think that I can even say that 90 to 95 percent of the Tibetans who work with the Chinese in civilian and military matters, have very strong Tibetan nationalistic feelings deep down.

*Do you think that Occidental nations are preoccupied with China and that they cannot be against China on the issue of Tibet?*

I think the more knowledge there is about the actual situation in Tibet, the more that public opinion can grow. It may not necessarily help us against the Chinese, but unreasonableness is anyway harmful to China. I feel that the Chinese did not know Tibetan history, Tibetan culture, Tibetan mentality and they were completely ignorant. Due to this, I think they sincerely felt that they came to Tibet as liberators thinking that Tibet was very backward, very cruel and very barbarous. They came to help the stupid Tibetans who never showed them gratefulness. I think the Chinese really felt this way due to their ignorance and not necessarily due to their bad motivation. I think one of the main factors was their lack of understanding. So, if there is more world opinion and expression, it can have an impact on the Chinese mind. Of course, the Chinese will never admit it. Even consciously they may not admit it, but I feel that unconsciously there is some impact on them. It is very important to express it as a right thing. Right is right, wrong is wrong. This is very important.

*How can the Tibetan people and the Occidental nations struggle against this imperialism?*

That is not easy. I feel things are getting better now. I think we will be better in the future because of the entire world situation. If you look at the Soviet Union and the other Eastern European nations and China, as time goes by, things are becoming more reasonable and open. I think this is a sign of hope, provided that the world is less tense and less hostile, and there is a genuine harmonious feeling. I think then things will improve more. In the Chinese case, many things have changed. This is encouraging. Especially, during the 13th Session of the National People's Congress. The younger people have now come up. If these younger people put more emphasis on reasoning and understanding and less emphasis on force or bullying, then things will improve. In our case, I feel things will definitely improve for us.

*Could you suggest how common citizens of the world, West and East, can best help Tibet and its people in their desperate situation?*

More public opinion and show of concern. If possible, at the governmental level there should be more awareness and also in the business field. In the long run, this will be very effective and helpful. Temporarily, the Chinese may react in a different way and may never accept or admit anything, but in the long run I think there will be a tremendous effect on their minds. In a way, this is the only thing that you can do to help Tibet, and through this, help China also (laughter).

*Have you received any crucial help for the Tibetan cause in the Western world?*

Yes, the Western media, major newspapers, some individuals and some politicians expressed their sympathy with us. We were even surprised that so much sympathy was shown towards the Tibetans after the October, 1987 protest.

*Many people worldwide now believe that the United States is the only nation with the power and courage to help China end its genocide in Tibet by withholding favoured-nation trading status, computer and military technology and multi-business partnerships. This would slow China's drive towards modernisation and their limited market economy. What are your thoughts on this non-violent approach?*

I have the firm belief that Western nations, especially the United States, highly regard human dignity and self-respect and should take more notice about basic human values and rights. I think this is very important. If a country is to have some development, the individuals who have some sort of creative ability must be utilised fully. Without this, the country cannot develop properly. Thus, for China to develop, the Chinese who have this creative ability should be let free instead of being suppressed. The outside world's moral support and concern is highly necessary for the emergence of Chinese who have this ability. In the long run it will be very helpful for the development of the Chinese.

*Have you ever considered equating the situation in Tibet with that of Afghanistan?*

Of course, there are some similarities with the Afghanistan situation as well as the Palestinian situation, but in our case it is very difficult. Our greedy Eastern neighbour is very powerful and we

are only six million people. The advantage in our case is that all six million Tibetan people remain as one. We do not fight among ourselves like the Afghans or the Palestinians. In our case, it is very clear-cut case, the Chinese and the Tibetans.

*Have the Taiwanese made you an offer of support?*

It was a strange offer. They said that they support our struggle against the Chinese Communists, but if we are for complete separation from China, then they do not support us.

*The Taiwanese also made an offer about arms?*

I think even in 1957, 1958, 1959 upto 1963 some CIA involvement through the Taiwan was there, but not at the time of Uprising (of 1959).

*Do you foresee getting a United Nations seat as the PLO have done?*

If you speak in terms of rights, I think we have every right. But then at present, I think it is very difficult and complicated.

*China is slowly and carefully opening up her society, allowing more personal freedom to her people. Do you think this process will continue or is it just a momentary development that will be stopped once Peking feels that democratisation threatens its own system?*

I think this change or this new phenomena runs through all the Communist countries; from China and to Vietnam. I think this process will go on continuously. I hope this is possible as long as the Western attitude is less hostile and the world situation is less tense. The Communist countries should be left alone to feel some kind of ease. Then, these kinds of positive changes will be possible. It is a very positive thing.

*Do you think with the recent liberalisation in China, that the Chinese might have to start opening their country and start dealing with the West?*

This is very difficult to say. Historically, the Chinese case is very unpredictable, particularly in the last few months things have become very uncertain. This is not the time to make decisions, but to watch carefully and study the situation. Frankly speaking, over the next five to ten years the situation may not become stable. Then after that, the emergence of a new generation with the more knowledge about the outside world will appear. Then things will become more stable and more predictable. All these things are related with what the Buddhists call interdependence. What happens to China will depend largely on what happens in the Soviet Union, and that itself will depend on its relation with the Western countries, especially, America. Therefore, it is extremely important that the world as a whole is less tense and more humanised. Regarding international politics and relations, more trust and less suspicion. We need more frank and forward discussions without threatening and antagonising each other.

*Mr. Gorbachov seems to be receiving criticism from the hardliners in the government because of his “glasnost” policy. Do you think he will succeed?*

As I mentioned before, the outside world must have more friendly attitude and the overall situation must be less tense. More tourist exchanges should take place. Once people realise what the economic, cultural, and educational conditions are, there is bound to be change. Every nation wants to develop. There is no doubt about that. Whether you are a Communist or a capitalist it does not matter. Everyone wants to develop more and more. Now, in order to develop rapidly, the key factor is the creative human nature must be fully utilised. If there is too much rigidity, there will be a great obstacle. Eventually, a tight system has to become less rigid. Otherwise, there will be no progress.

*In this connection, the world seems to leap a step forward towards international security. The Reagan-Gorbachov summits were a consequence. Do you have great hopes in the future? Will there be peace in the world?*

Yes, I am always optimistic. Personal contact is very necessary. I always feel this. Through personal contact, mutual trust can develop. It will help to create some kind of real peaceful atmosphere. That is important.

*South Africa is another complicated issue now facing severe criticism for its apartheid politics. What in your opinion would be the best step for South Africa to take? What are your views on apartheid politics?*

Basically, the problem should be dealt with in a human approach. That is, to recognise everyone as a member of the human family. Discrimination on colour, race, and so on is out of date. In certain periods in the past, some countries were practising this and some are even practising now. With the coming of the end of the 20th Century, the world itself is becoming one nation, one community dependent on another. That is my basic belief.

*On the other side, human rights violations are increasing worldwide, even in Buddhist countries which is contrary to the teachings of Lord Buddha. How do you comment on that?*

I do not know the direct connections. Usually I make a distinction with the so-called fanatics. If one pursues one's religion very sincerely and genuinely, then I feel that every religion has no possibility of creating fanatics. Those people who are narrow-minded utilise religion to exploit their fanatical ideas. Regarding human rights violations, the atmosphere is not healthy. The world atmosphere is very complicated and unhealthy. That is why individuals consider life valueless and destroy their own life. It is very sad.

*Do you think there is a difference in the definition of human rights violations between Western and Eastern countries? Is there any difference due to customs? When you remember Cambodia, Vietnam and what happened there and now these countries are blaming the Palestinians and South Africans of human rights violations. Do you see any difference in judging human rights violations?*

I don't know. If you divide it between Eastern and Western, then it is very difficult to say. Regarding Cambodia, it is not only Eastern, but I think it is due to very narrow-minded Communists. For example, during the British colonial rule in India, the rulers were the British who were capitalists.

Now in the Tibetan case, the colonial rule is by the Communists. One of the differences between the two was that in the British colonial rule, there was at least an independent judicial system. Though the Indians were suppressed, it was comparatively mild. Gandhi and all the other freedom fighters could argue with the aggressor and approach them through the judicial system. Now in Communist countries, it is not possible because everything is in the party's hand. So there are many differences. I think atrocities in South Africa are very bad, but because the country is organised, there is tight control. Also, in Cambodia the Khmer Rouge was organised and thus there was a massacre and it became terrible.

*What is your reaction to West German Chancellor Kohl's statement in China that Tibet is a part of China?*

(Laughter) I think if someone asks Mr. Kohl for his private or personal opinion, then there might just be a different opinion (laughter). Because Mr. Kohl and his government have to deal with China, they must be realistic. At present, Tibet may be part of China by a lie (laughter).

*Which aspect of the Western world do you think can make positive contributions to the world?*

One thing that really impresses me about the Western nature is the creative nature of its people. For example, when I give some sort of lecture or teaching, practically all the Westerners have a tape recorder and take notes. Now Easterners are personally very friendly and devoted, yet when I explain something they do not care much. They just stay for their blessings. Sometimes, I tell Westerners jokingly, that this creative nature is the secret of their development.

*What do you think Westerners who do not want to become Buddhists could learn from Buddhism and Tibetans?*

There are two categories; i) Technique of meditation from Buddhism which is very useful in sharpening one's mind; increase love, compassion and forgiveness; ii) for people who have no faith—which could be further categorised into a) people merely enjoy life, and b) non-believers, c) people who are invariably unhappy, mentally disturbed, agitated and feel insecure. By learning certain techniques from Buddhism these problems could be alleviated. Besides, by adopting Buddhist practices one can learn a lot to increase tolerance and increase friendliness. Further, scientists in the fields of nuclear physics, neuro-biology, psychology and cosmology and Western medical scientists can get new ideas from Tibetan Buddhism.

*Over the years what have you learnt from Westerners?*

One is the exchange of ideas with the various scientists but not about computers though. Secondly, I appreciate the creative nature which is very good. This is one of the reasons why the Western world is so much ahead materially.

*Do you believe the world is returning to democracy and peace?*

Yes. In the past a lot of bloodshed took place. Now there is more genuine desire for peace. At one time people believed through organisation, through tightness we can build some kind of a new society, but failed, isn't it? Now they have to accept the basic human desire, I think human right.

*Do you see the lessening of tension between the USA and the USSR as part of this?*

Right, of course, relation between the East and the West and also between the Soviet Union and China. Now you see North Korea and South Korea, everywhere. I feel there is a very positive way of thinking compelled to happen, and also ecology. Now people are concerned about the environment. These things are very positive, I think. So now the Chinese case also, compared to 15 years back they are much changed now.

## FIVE-POINT PEACE PROPOSAL

*What are your propositions for solving the Tibetan problem? What do you propose?*

I made a proposal which consist of five points. I think this is the first step and it creates a genuine positive atmosphere. I feel the immediate Chinese reaction will be very negative, but in the long run I think it will be beneficial. My basic stand is that I want to make it clear that Tibet is a separate country. For the future, my stand is open. In the last few years, the Chinese have been changing rapidly. Though not for certain, the overall picture is changing and becoming more reasonable and more humanised. Still, they have not reached where they should be.

*Do you expect something to develop out of your five-point peace proposal?*

Actually, we are trying to find some sort of a middle way. The Tibetan people have expressed already that they do not want to remain under the Chinese domination and that they want independence as it is their right. They want a separate country. At the same time, the Chinese have already occupied Tibet and it is very difficult for them to leave. Therefore, under these circumstances, it would be worthwhile to think of some middle path. Theoretically, I think it would be possible. On many occasions, I have said that the human boundary is always changing. Under certain circumstances, I explained that two nations can be combined under one nation. Under other circumstances, the same community can be divided. The essential factor is that the concerned people get the maximum benefit. So theoretically, we Tibetans who number six million may get more benefit if we join the thousand million Chinese, rather than become an independent country. It is possible. I am concerned about the real benefits for the people of Tibet. So far as a result of the Chinese domination, we have suffered. If this situation remains, the only solution for us is to separate. We Tibetans have every right to be happy just as the Chinese have every right to be happy. Since we have remained under the Chinese occupation, we have suffered a lot of destruction. So, the only logical solution is that we have to gain our own right, our own independence.

*In your five-point proposal, you mentioned the transformation of the whole of Tibet into a zone of peace. Can you elaborate on that?*

I proposed that the whole of Tibet, including the Eastern provinces of Kham and Amdo, be transformed into a zone of Ahimsa, a Hindi term used to mean a state of peace and non-violence. The establishment of such a peace zone would be in keeping with Tibet's historical role as a peaceful and neutral Buddhist nation and buffer state separating Asia's great powers. It would also be keeping with Nepal's proposal to proclaim Nepal a peace zone and with China's declared support for such a proclamation. The peace zone proposed by Nepal would have a much greater impact if it were to include Tibet and neighbouring areas.

The establishment of a peace zone in Tibet would require a withdrawal of Chinese troops and military installations from Tibet which would enable India also to withdraw troops and military installations from the Himalayan regions bordering Tibet. This would be achieved under an international agreement which would satisfy China's legitimate security needs and build trust among

the Tibetan, Indian, Chinese and other peoples of the region. This is in everyone's best interest, particularly that of China and India, as it would enhance their security, while reducing the economic burden of their maintaining high troop concentrations on the disputed Himalayan border.

Historically, relations between China and India were never strained. It was only when the Chinese army marched into Tibet, creating for the first time, a common border, that tensions arose between these two powers, ultimately leading to the 1962 war. Since then, numerous dangerous incidents have continued to occur. A restoration of good relations between the world's two most populous countries would be greatly facilitated if they were separated—as they were throughout history—by a large and friendly buffer region.

To improve relations between the Tibetan and the Chinese people, the first requirement is the creation of trust. After the holocaust of the last decades in which over one million Tibetans—one sixth of the population—lost their lives and at least as many lingered in prison camps because of their religious beliefs and love of freedom, only a withdrawal of Chinese troops could start a genuine process of reconciliation. The vast occupation force in Tibet is a daily reminder to the Tibetans of the oppression and suffering they have all experienced. A troop withdrawal would be an essential signal that in future a meaningful relationship might be established with the Chinese, based on friendship and trust.

*You have talked about the abandonment of China's population transfer policy which threatens the very existence of the Tibetans as a people. Can you comment on that?*

The population transfer of Chinese into Tibet must be stopped. The government in Peking pursues the transfer in order to force a “final solution” to the Tibet problem by reducing the Tibetan population in Tibet to an insignificant and disenfranchised minority.

The massive transfer of Chinese civilians into Tibet threatens the very existence of the Tibetans as a distinct people. In the eastern parts of our country, the Chinese now greatly outnumber the Tibetans. In Amdo province where I was born, for example, there are, according to Chinese statistics, 2.5 million Chinese and only 700,000 Tibetans. Even in the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region, Chinese Government sources now confirm that Chinese outnumber Tibetans.

The Chinese transfer policy is not new. It has been applied systematically to other areas before. Earlier in this century Manchus were a distinct race with their own culture and traditions. Today only two to three million Manchus are left in Manchuria, where 75 million Chinese have settled. In Eastern Turkestan, which the Chinese now call Sinkiang, the Chinese population has grown from 200,000 in 1949 to seven million, more than half of the total population of 13 million. In the wake of the Chinese colonisation of Inner Mongolia, Chinese number 8.56 million, Mongols 2.5 million.

Today in the whole of Tibet, 7.5 million Chinese settlers have already been sent, outnumbering the Tibetan population of six million. In central and western Tibet, now referred to by the Chinese as the Tibet Autonomous Region, Chinese sources admit the 1.9 million Tibetans already constitute a

minority of the region's population. These numbers do not take into account the estimated 300,000 to 500,000 troops in Tibet—250,000 of them in the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region.

For the Tibetans to survive as a people, it is imperative that the population transfer be stopped, and that the Chinese settlers return to China. Otherwise, the Tibetans will soon be no more than a tourist attraction and a relic of the noble past.

*Can you comment on your third point in the proposal which states respect for the Tibetan people's fundamental human rights and democratic freedoms?*

Fundamental human rights and democratic freedoms must be respected in Tibet. The Tibetan people must once again be free to develop culturally, intellectually, economically and spiritually, and to exercise basic democratic freedoms.

Human rights violations in Tibet are among the most serious in the world. Discrimination is practised in Tibet under a policy of apartheid which the Chinese call "segregation and assimilation". Tibetans are, at best, second class citizens in their own country. Deprived of all basic democratic rights and freedoms, they exist under a colonial administration in which all real power is wielded by Chinese officials of the Communist Party and the army.

Although the Chinese Government allows Tibetans to rebuild some Buddhist monasteries and to worship in them, it still forbids serious study and teaching of religion. Only a small number of people, approved by the Communist Party, are permitted to join the monasteries.

While Tibetans in exile exercise their democratic rights under a constitution promulgated by me in 1963, thousands of our countrymen suffer in prisons and labour camps in Tibet for their religious or political convictions.

*Another point you have mentioned is the restoration and protection of Tibet's natural environment and the abandonment of China's use of Tibet for the production of nuclear weapons and dumping of nuclear waste. Could you comment?*

Serious efforts must be made to restore the natural environment in Tibet. Tibet should not be used for the production of nuclear weapons and the dumping of nuclear waste.

Tibetans have a great respect for all forms of life. This inherent feeling is enhanced by the Buddhist faith, which prohibits the harming of all sentient beings, whether human or animal. Prior to the Chinese invasions, Tibet was an unspoiled wilderness sanctuary in a unique natural environment. Sadly, in the past decades the wildlife and the forests of Tibet have been almost totally destroyed by the Chinese. The effects on Tibet's delicate environment have been devastating. What little has been left in Tibet must be protected, and efforts must be made to restore the environment to its balanced state.

China uses Tibet for the production of nuclear weapons and may also have started dumping nuclear waste in Tibet. Not only does China plan to dispose of its own nuclear waste, but also that of other countries, who have already agreed to pay Peking to dispose of their toxic materials.

The dangers this present are obvious. Not only present generations, but future generations are threatened by China's lack of concern for Tibet's unique and delicate environment.

*In your last point you have mentioned negotiations on the future status of Tibet and the relationship between the Tibetan and the Chinese people should be started in earnest. Can you comment on this?*

We wish to approach this subject in a reasonable and realistic way, in a spirit of frankness and conciliation, and with the idea of finding a solution that is in the long-term interest of all: the Tibetans, the Chinese and all other peoples concerned. The Tibetans and Chinese are distinct people, each with their own country, history, culture, language and way of life. Differences among people must be recognised and respected. They need not, however, form obstacles to genuine co-operation where this is in the mutual benefit of both peoples. It is my sincere belief that if the concerned partners were to meet and discuss their future with an open mind and a sincere desire to find a satisfactory and just solution, a breakthrough could be achieved. We must all exert ourselves to be reasonable and wise, and to meet in a spirit of frankness and understanding.

*What are you hopes for your five-point peace proposal?*

This is for a long-term benefit. Right now there is no doubt that the Chinese Government will react very negatively. In the long run, it is important to make clear certain ideas for the mutual benefit of the Tibetans, the Chinese, the Indians, the Nepalese, and all the other neighbouring states. About the timing, since things have become more serious in Tibet and since I found a more favourable atmosphere on Capitol Hill, I expressed this peace plan.

## VIOLENCE AND NON-VIOLENCE

*What are your thoughts on violence?*

I think that every action has a positive and negative reaction. A person has to judge what is more effective. Some young Tibetans blame me for being too passive and mild. They say that because other refugees like the Palestinians or the Afghans follow violence, there is more sympathy and world support for their cause. But I feel that violence is not good. People might be attracted to something more because of violence, but as a basic human being, one will not admire violence deep down. People don't like situations where people are killed, beaten or tortured. The basic human instinct will disagree with violence. Therefore, it is important to pay more attention to those activities which are non-violent. They involve reason, respect for human life, human compassion and human understanding. In our case, violence will be suicidal. My suggestion or idea is that demonstrations without physical violence will be better.

*Is your philosophy of non-violence something you decided on because of Gandhi's methodology or is it something of your own evolution in the Tibetan way or is it because of the Indian Government?*

The Buddha Shakyamuni taught non-violence. Mahavir, the Jain teacher, also taught non-violence. Many other Indian masters also taught non-violence or *Ahimsa*. In the modern era, during the 20th century, Mahatma Gandhi implemented this new and noble idea in politics.

*Do you think it will be difficult for the young Tibetans, who are not properly educated in Buddhist ideology and have been educated by the Chinese, to understand the essence of religious heritage and the importance of non-violence?*

That is right. What you say is true. It is more difficult for them to understand the values of Buddhism and non-violence, while at the same time, understand the situation that is very tense and very desperate. If the Chinese use suppressive measures, the natural instinct will be to react likewise, by throwing stones or those kind of things.

*Will non-violence win back Tibet's independence?*

Now this is very delicate question. Generally, I always believe that through non-violence you will get some sort of limited result. Through violence, it may result in something, but it often creates another problem. About the question of the independence of Tibet, my basic stand is that I want to make clear that Tibet is a separate country from China culturally, geographically and historically. For the future my stand is open. Generally, as Buddhists, we believe in non-violence. Personally, I very much admire Mahatma Gandhi's way of thinking, *Ahimsa* or non-violence. In our case, violence is more or less suicidal. It is not at all practical. Through non-violence, it may take us more time, more patience and more determination and the achievement may be small, but it is real. But it may take some more time.

*What would you feel if the younger Tibetans become more radical?*

This is my main worry. The younger Tibetans in and outside of Tibet are less patient and some of the younger Tibetans outside of Tibet criticise me for being too mild. Of course that is understandable. They are very patriotic and have little patience. They want things immediately. Also, the younger Tibetans talk about the Palestinians and the Afghan resistance fighters. This is not good, it is dangerous. I always tell them that violence in our case is not good. Yet still this feeling of violent action is growing. So I will keep my own faith of non-violence.

*If the Tibetan youth took the non-violence way, all you would say is that violence is not good?*

Yes, because I have full conviction in non-violence. I have my own belief. Even if ten thousand Tibetan youths outside Tibet along with a few hundred thousand youths in Tibet take up arms, it will still be very difficult. The Chinese can easily crush us. Even guerrilla warfare is very difficult. I think since we left Tibet in 1959, things in China are always going up and down. Now things are changing and are becoming more humanised. If the Chinese use their human understanding, then a mutual understanding can develop. Then for mutual benefit, I think we can develop some sort of compromise which will be mutually beneficial. We will see.

*What would you say to the young people who view violence as the only method to get the Chinese to negotiate with you?*

There is some logic there. But I feel that violence is still not right. I told some Tibetans in a speech that if we follow the militant way, the Chinese can easily send 60 million Chinese against us six million Tibetans. If the Chinese really want to disregard the Tibetans completely, they could easily do it through violence. Their excuse would be self-defence. For every single Tibetan, there would be 10 or more Chinese. Then it would be finished. Under these circumstances, we have to consider the basic Buddhist doctrine and the motivation and the result is important. If the motivation is proper, then the result will be good. It will benefit the majority.

*If the Chinese pour more and more settlers into Tibet and it looks as though the Tibetans are going to be dissolved as a race, would there be a justification in reacting to this violently or is it so impracticable that it does not come up as a question and that it would never be able to be possible?*

If such a situation develops, then I think, because I am a monk I will resign. I would let somebody else take that decision.

*So you would resign?*

It would be better. That is the only way. Someone else should then take the final decision. I am a monk who always tells people the importance of compassion, kindness and patience, and who is already passed fifty. I always follow my own belief no matter how much people insist on the other way (laughter).

*Do the youths really come in and argue with you?*

Yes, it is a healthy sign. On a few occasions, youths who are a little militant come and argue with me, but I remain stubborn. Then they start crying (laughter). They love the Dalai Lama, but the Dalai Lama does not agree with their viewpoint, so they finally end up crying.

*What do you feel about civil disobedience?*

My main thought is that some sort of expression of civil disobedience is good. I feel that it is important for Tibetans to express their resentment against the Chinese because they Chinese are deliberately trying to ignore and hide the basic issue. They try to show the world and the Tibetans in Tibet that the main problem is the Dalai Lama and that is why they have made the five points for the Dalai Lama's return. My focus is on the six million Tibetans and their problems, their rights, their culture and so on. Therefore, I feel that the Tibetan people should show their resentment to the Chinese because the Chinese never seem to accept the problem that exists in Tibet. Expressions such as prayers, hunger strikes, and demonstrations without violence are meaningful.

*Violent resistance gets world press and non-violence usually doesn't. Does that make non-violence less effective?*

Yes, unfortunately, this seems to be true. The world attitude is taking a more serious interest in violence and ignores or neglects other ways of freedom-fighting. I think this is very wrong. It is almost like self-destruction because human beings do not like killing people, torturing people, or other things of that sort. At the same time, because of this, if someone is killed or some people are killed by terrorists, then people pay more attention. This indirectly encourages people who are involved in such activities. I told some Tibetans that it is our responsibility as world citizens to fight for our freedom through non-violence. Genuine non-violence is something like an experiment on this planet. If we succeed, it gains new meaning. Also, non-violence through human understanding and human love is something very new and very unique. If this experiment succeeds, it can be applied to other problems of the world. As Tibetans, we have to realise this special kind of responsibility. On the other hand, I think it will be worthwhile for the world community to realise this thing even if they don't have sympathy for the Tibetans. It is an experiment and a unique fight.

*Do you think there will be a time when you accept or condone violence?*

No, I don't think that I will ever accept violence. First of all, as a Buddhist monk, I think that violence is not good. Secondly, I believe firmly and strongly in the Gandhian way of non-violence. Thirdly, in our case, violence is not our strength. Our strength is truth, justice, reason and human understanding. If we Tibetans use this strength then I think we can talk with the Chinese. If not in this generation, then in the next.

*Do you think it is impossible to win through violence?*

Yes, it is impossible. In the early part of this century, even in the middle, some people believed that the ultimate decision must come through war. But now that kind of thinking is gone. Many people genuinely desire peace now. So it seems some kind of a different human experiment is taking place.

## REINCARNATIONS

*Some people are said to be able to remember their previous lives and that this goes on for a period of five or six years, and then slowly and steadily over a period of time it fades away. The question is if you remember your previous birth, why should it fade away? Is there a layer of consciousness that gets subdued or what is it?*

Within consciousness, there are many different layers of consciousness. For example, according to Buddhism there are different schools of thought. According to some, they say there are six main kinds of consciousness. For example, the eye consciousness entirely depends of the eye organ. As long as the eye organ remains perfect, then that consciousness remains and can work and exist. If the eye organ is damaged, that consciousness is no more. Some levels of consciousness entirely depend on the physical part. Now, there is another kind of consciousness level. When we are dreaming we experience a certain different level of consciousness deeper than this moment. When there is deep sleep without dreaming, that state of consciousness is still deeper. When people faint or even stop breathing, that time we are passing through another deeper level of consciousness. The deepest level of consciousness is when we are dying. All the physical functions stop completely. Then we pass through the most subtle kind of consciousness. The consciousness is deeper and more independent. Naturally, when a child is very young, the previous consciousness influences. Some force is still there in the child. Then, the consciousness which depends on the new physical growing becomes stronger. So, the previous consciousness becomes weaker. If you put some special effort to sharpen your mind and memory through meditation, then your mind becomes sharper and this faint subtle consciousness becomes stronger. Then there is a possibility to remember your past life. Consciousness is something you cannot touch and see, but it is a very special energy. Its nature is something very clear. Sometimes we call it clear light. Light means there is potential to know everything. So there is potential to see the future if the mind becomes sharp.

*Is it possible that in the future more lamas can be incarnated in the West?*

I do not think so. There will be some reincarnates born in the West, but I think the majority will come from Tibet.

*Are there difficulties for Tibetans to respect a Western lama? Do they welcome him or do they distrust him?*

I do not think so. For example, in Sera monastery in South India, there are already one or two young Western lamas who are reincarnated lamas and it seems there are no difficulties. Actually in old Tibet there were Chinese, Mongol, and also some Indian reincarnated lamas or good scholars. As long as the person remains worthy of respect, there is not much racial discrimination.

## RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

*How would you sum up Buddhism?*

I think Buddhism is a way of life. I usually sum up Buddhism into conduct and philosophy. If you can help other sentient beings, then help them. If you cannot do that, then at least refrain from harming them. That means *Ahimsa*, non-violent conduct based on compassion. Not from the fear of sin, but rather from a compassionate attitude restraining from harming other people. This is the conduct aspect. Now the philosophy aspect. As things are interdependent, the future happiness and suffering depends on the present action. It is related. This is what we call interdependence. Therefore, in your daily life you should properly follow a way of living and thinking. It will bring good results in the future. That is the essence of Buddhism. Also, because you are your own master, everything depends on yourself. There is no creator. This is the Buddhist faith.

*What is the Buddhist view of apartheid?*

Buddhism states that all sentient beings are equal. Whether human or animals, all are equal. One reason why the Buddha introduced Buddhism in India is because of the caste discrimination that was prevalent in India at that time.

*In your opinion why are Western people turning towards Buddhism to seek some spirituality?*

I think it is quite natural. Christianity is something that they are used to so they have a tendency to find a new religion. I believe that Tibetan Buddhism is something very new. Before, people regarded Tibet as a mysterious land, so the Buddhism that came from that country was something new and unknown. There are also many things to learn in Tibetan Buddhism. Therefore, certain people found more answers for their own taste. Generally speaking, Buddhism lays more emphasis on reason than on faith. That also has some attraction for the Westerners.

*Do you believe there is something special about Tibetan Buddhism which can be offered to the world?*

It might sound presumptuous on our part to say this, but I feel that Tibetan Buddhism has something to offer to the world. Besides the systematic training programmes for developing compassion, love and patience, there are quite a number of fields where Tibetan Buddhism and science can work together. For example, in the field of neurology, psychology, nuclear physics and cosmology, I feel there is ground to work together. Now, there are already some doctors studying the human brain while using Buddhist techniques in order to cure illness and carry out experiments about the relation of the human body and the human mind. Their concepts can lead us to higher understanding.

*Can you tell us something about Science and Buddhism?*

According to my own observation, the scientific fields of cosmology, psychology, neurobiology and physics, have some relation. As in the Buddhist texts, there are some explanations which are quite the same. I have been able to discuss these matters with quite a number of experts in the fields. It is

very useful and important for us to know the latest findings. For the scientists, they also feel that Buddhism can be useful for their research, especially when looking at the relationship between the object and the mind. This is the real place where Eastern philosophy and Western science can meet. Western science deals largely with matter, and Eastern philosophy in general and Buddhism in particular deals with explanations and different methods or experiments about the mind, how to control the mind, how to discipline the mind or how to shape the mind. In order to know the external world, one must have knowledge of the inner mind. Also, one must have knowledge of the external world to know this. I am not talking as a religious practitioner, but as a person who wants to know more about reality.

*What is your version of the origin of creation? Do you accept the Darwin theory of evolution, or do you believe the world was created by a super human being?*

As a Buddhist I don't accept the creator. According to Buddhist philosophy, one's own mind is the creator. So one universe or galaxy was created at a certain period of time. Now, Buddhists believe that because there are many sentient beings who are going to take different forms of life in that universe or galaxy and because of their karma, the entire galaxy is formed. In that planet, the theory by Darwin is accepted.

*You accept Darwin's theory?*

Yes, it is alright. Now as a Buddhist, according to some Buddhist scriptures, there might be certain portions of humanity that might have evolved in a different way. For example, the explanation in the Tibetan story is very interesting. Tibetans believe that their race had come into being when one monkey and one ogress came together and had children. This shows some sort of compromise between Darwin's theory and the Buddhist scriptures.

*Can you say a little about the relation between Buddhism and Communism?*

In Communism, the original idea came from the motivation that in the human community there is a great gap. There was a conflict between the more privileged community and the less privileged community. It seems that Marxism is concerned with the distribution of wealth. This idea is something very positive and noble. The idea of Marxism is something for the majority and a sacrifice for the minority, and I think this is right. Now, in Buddhism, particularly Mahayana Buddhism, there is emphasis on love and compassion—love for others. The essential part of the message is that it is absolutely worthwhile to sacrifice one's life and to work for the benefit of another person. Also, Buddhism is a kind of atheism as it does not accept a creator. It believes in self-creation. Everything depends on one's own effort or one's own hand. From these view points, you can find some common ground. Among practical reasons is that you can find a large number of people in Asia who are governed by Communist countries. Among them there are a number of people who still believe in Buddhism even though they suffer for it. So if you can find a close relation between these two it will be very useful for millions and millions of people living under Marxism. Another thing, as time goes by it becomes clear that Communism cannot solve everything. Also, Communism is based more on hatred than on compassion. As a result, the Communist

countries have destroyed mutual trust and respect for human values. In these fields, the Buddhist idea of compassion, love and even the methods of Buddhism might be complementary to the Communist methods.

*Do you see a possible society where Buddhism and Marxism can be linked together?*

Yes, I think so, especially in Asia where Marxism is predominant. Even in countries where Marxism flourishes, traces of Buddhism are still there. Under these circumstances, I think some sort of dialogue between Marxism and Buddhism, especially Mahayana Buddhism, will be very beneficial to many people of this region. I think this is so because despite Marxism's rigidity and its organisation, its failure is greater. For example, the energy spent in Marxism is mostly for the destructive side, not for the constructive side. The destruction is immense. The basic friendship and trust between wife and husband, child and parent, and friend, is destroyed. As a human being you need this trust. I think this is a great failure of Marxism. So the question arises how to create real Communism or Marxism. Real Communism is not created by force but by voluntary force in helping people to become less selfish. Communism is supposed to be for the benefit of the masses and not the minority. In order to do that, you need tremendous will and determination on the basis of altruism. Not by gun. Take China for example, there is so much effort spent of indoctrination, force and fear and every means to achieve socialism and then Communism. Yet, they are nowhere near achieving it because the moment they adopt slight liberalisation there is so much corruption that goes on. There is no development. The propaganda and indoctrination have all been a failure because these things happened by force and fear. Therefore, in order to achieve true general socialist ideas, some Mahayana Buddhist teachings such as altruism should be taught through reasoning and not through force. I feel that Mahayana Buddhism can be one of the factors that can help to achieve good socialism.

*Do you think politics has an upper hand over religion?*

I don't think so. I believe that the immediate effect of politics might be there and the immediate effect of religion might not be there, but in the long run the effect will be the same if not bigger. Now take China for example. I think the Communist ideology is a political organisation. Then on the other hand, I think the people's love for freedom, appreciativeness for mutual trust over mutual suspicion belong in the religious sense. Now the political power may be very effective in the short run, but in the long run it cannot be very effective. This is because the basic human feeling is still there whether you are in the Soviet Union, Poland or China. This is what I think, although it may be wrong.

*What do you consider the role of religion in politics?*

I feel that it has a very important role. First you have to differentiate between the religious institution and religion itself. In politics, the religious institutions should stay apart. At the same time, I feel that religion and its true ideas should be used in politics. Politics has become dirty because the politicians themselves have become dirty. True politics is an instrument to better the society. If the politicians have and use their human qualities of honesty, morality, and sincerity, then

that politics will become much cleaner. That is very good. If they lack these spiritual qualities, then politics will become dirty. Therefore, the role of religion in politics is very important. Also, politics is a very important tool for serving the society, and religious leaders are there also to serve the society. Therefore, I think various religious leaders should be more attentive in politics by making it clean.

*Could you comment on better understanding between different religious groups?*

If you look at the aim and purpose of different religious groups, then there is no point of quarrel. They are all meant for sentient beings, particularly for human beings and since there is such a variety of human beings mainly in the sense of mental disposition. One religion cannot serve all and is not sufficient. A variety of religions can be used by more people. The common aim is that one's own followers should be good human beings. This means a warm-hearted person. Practically in every religious field and teaching, despite the fundamental differences in philosophy, there is emphasis on the importance of love, compassion, forgiveness and tolerance. These are all common in every religion. If you think in a deeper way, then you can understand the various different religious values and reasons why so many different philosophies exist. If you think on these lines, then upon seeing differences, instead of feeling more apart you may get a feeling of deeper respect. Each religion is a special thing. Under these circumstances, it is extremely important for various philosophies and experiences. Not only of the similarities, but also the fundamental differences should be clear.

*Do you think there is a closer relation between different religions after meeting each other?*

Yes, definitely. I have a strong conviction that there is a closer understanding between various world religions, especially between Tibetan Buddhism and Christianity. We have a much closer relationship and understanding. Also, the general overall picture is of much more significance. I always believe that despite there being different religions, the essence of the message is on the importance of love, tolerance, kindness and forgiveness. The basic aim is to try and become a good human being. Without mental peace, world peace is very difficult to achieve. In this way, the unity of the various religions is very important for world peace.

*Do you think religious leaders and religious values can play a role in lessening the conflicts in the world?*

Yes, no doubt. A true and sincere practitioner, no matter of what religion, teaches the basics of love and compassion and forgiveness. If you belong in the human family you must show these qualities in the society, especially in times of difficulties. Now in the world there are a number of conflicts and problems. The various national leaders try their best to solve these problems, but in certain fields they fail to solve them. Thus, the people in the field of religion, philosophy and science should try and solve the problem. It is their turn now. It is a sort of a new source. The people in these fields should sincerely try to solve the problems with the feeling that we all belong to the same family. This is their responsibility.

*Can you say something about world peace?*

My belief is that world peace should come through mental peace, through inner space. Without inner peace it is very difficult to achieve genuine world peace.

*How do you achieve this genuine inner peace?*

I think inner peace largely depends on education and awareness. If we think carefully and properly, we see that if you have more friends you are always happier. If you create more enemies then you will suffer. In order to create more friends, you need human warmth, a good heart with a sincere approach, sharing other people's suffering and problems and a sense of universal responsibility. Now in the modern economic situation, you depend heavily on each other. The urban people's requirement is heavily dependent on the farmer. The farmer needs the urban people's products. Now the relation is not only from country to country, but also from continent to continent. That is the modern economic situation. Under these circumstances, the only proper way is to have a feeling of universal responsibility. To think of everyone as one. If you only think of yourself and forget about others, then ultimately you will suffer. The problem of population also tells us that we need a sense of genuine brotherhood and sisterhood and a sense of universal responsibility. Thinking about the world's natural resources, it also shows that human beings should think of themselves as one. This does not have to do with religion but something different. If we wish to have a peaceful and happy future generation for our young children, then we must start thinking of a blueprint in our mind and make every effort to achieve it. This is what I feel.

## TEACHING COMPASSION

*Can you suggest ways in which Western children could deal with their own different emotions: anger, fear, jealousy and anxiety?*

I always emphasise, when I meet children, that they are the beginning of one human life. Their future depends very much on that period, that stage. Now, whether one's future is going to be a success or not, depends on one's own knowledge, as much as one's own behaviour. Mere knowledge is something like an instrument. Whether that instrument is used in the right way or the wrong way depends entirely upon the person. The sound development of the person is crucial. The basic point of a good person, as I always mention, is compassion. Love. Kindness. So right from the beginning, it is extremely important to develop care and more concern about these qualities, and about positive thoughts. Right from the beginning it is important to realise the harmfulness of negative thoughts such as anger, jealousy, extreme greediness, and attachment. Parental affection is very relevant in this early stage. If some way the experience of parental affection, that something very living, could be used and explained to the child, it could be an example. That example can be introduced to the child's mind as a behaviour to be shown to others. How much benefit that would be to others.

*In other words, children need to understand parental affection that is coming to them, so that they know what that feeling is and the whole sense of it, so that they can then transfer it to other people. Is that what you mean?*

Yes. The other day, we had a meeting with a scientist. This scientist said that in the first few weeks after birth, up to 3 or 4 years of age, the brain develops very rapidly. During that period, affection and touching are important—the child being held, body touching from parents and other people—the senses are crucial aspects for proper development. A warm feeling is something very crucial. We humans need loving kindness in order to develop fully. In order to develop fully, we need affection.

*How do you explain that it is not just Mother or Father or Grandmother who is important as a symbol of loving kindness, but that it's loving kindness that is important?*

Loving kindness has to come from a person. That's the parents' responsibility. There are people who simply don't care about other people, including their own children. Loving kindness and compassion are important, not the person. Therefore, that good thing can come from even your enemy, or from one animal, and people will go towards that thing. I think that is a clear indication of how valuable compassion and love are. You see, even though children have parents, if compassion and love don't come from them, children will turn away. They key thing to one's life—something very essential, something very precious—is love and kindness and affection. Children who don't know compassion from their parents respond accordingly. These children will show no love back to their parents.

*What can you say to children who haven't had parental love, or any familial love or compassion—abused children—who have grown up very tight, or self absorbed, or afraid, or angry, and who don't even understand their own feelings?*

Words are not sufficient. I don't think. One person must show them love and kindness, day by day. Eventually, they could begin to feel something new—love and kindness that was missing in their childhood. Some person must show children in action. That is the only way.

*They can't develop kindness within themselves if they have no example?*

Yes. You cannot introduce what is love, what is kindness, through words alone.

These children who don't know loving kindness usually develop hatred of themselves.

That, I think, is very difficult. Something must show itself as a loving person, a compassionate person. That's the proper way. That is the only way to introduce these good qualities.

*Do you have any memories from your own childhood that could be an example for Western children?*

Even when I was young, I was always interested in helping those people who were less privileged. Human beings, animals or even insects. This is something that we should introduce to the child's mind. There should be training to develop more concern for the weaker side.

Also, we must introduce in the child's mind, while he or she plays, a sense of responsibility. Then, the whole community will be a success. Without the idea of social responsibility, we cannot survive. We'd disappear. Explain these elements through stories. Then teach how important they are in our human community. In order to survive, we need others.

*Western upbringing focuses on the individual first. We focus on getting somewhere very quickly, going very high. Can you offer us a simple lesson about social responsibility?*

I think that you need to explain the basic structure of human community of human species. You need to introduce the idea. I am saying that you need to teach the idea that as a human being you need some kind of sense of responsibility for others. Can this be introduced to children? Teach them to show kindness to insects.

It's time for elder people to listen to the child's voice. You see, in the child's mind, there is no demarcation of different nations—no demarcation of a different social system or ideology. Children know, in their mind, that all children are the same, all human beings are the same. So, from that viewpoint, their mind is more unbiased. Then when people get older they start to say "our religion, our system". That kind of thing. Once that demarcation occurs then people don't bother about what happens to others, except to "We" or "I". So anyway, you see, it's easier to introduce this responsibility into a child's mind. It is a noble idea. It's very important to introduce these right ideas, not as a religious matter, but simply as a matter of one's own future happiness, one's own future success. You could take an example from the history books—you see, those persons who use too much cruelty—too much selfishness—the self-centred person may gain certain fame—certain things

on a temporary basis. Nobody has much respect for him—for Hitler, Stalin—at one time he becomes a very powerful person, but that comes from cruelty or from his aggressive nature. That fame is not right fame, and nobody shows deep respect for that. In other cases, like Lincoln or Mahatma Gandhi, or these persons—their fame comes from a different side, a different aspect. People respect their work.

## MESSAGES

*What messages do you have for humanity?*

I always speak of the importance to cultivate and practice love, kindness, compassion, and tolerance. This is because all sentient beings including animals appreciate compassion and love. Even according to modern scientists, when a child is conceived in the mother's womb, the mother should not get angry as it will affect the child in her womb. After the child is born, the mother's touch is something very important for the child. So love and compassion play very important roles for humanity. Also we must each lead a way of life with self-awareness and compassion, to do as much as we can. Then whatever happens, we will have no regrets. We have brought ourselves into great difficulties through selfishness. We should turn this around and consider others to be more important. Being such as animals of all kinds have no chance to understand this fact, whereas we are humans who have gained this fine life where such can be understood. We have some intelligence and with that we can understand the value of cherishing ourselves. We now need to implement this, to put it into real practice, not just to leave it at understanding. We should think, "If I don't achieve this now, when could I possibly achieve it?"

*Do you have a message for Tibetans?*

As human beings, as human brothers and sisters, everyone wants happiness and not suffering. Now one of the secrets to obtain mental peace is within ourselves. The compassionate attitude, loving kindness and forgiveness are ideal things and are the real source of inner satisfaction. For this, there is no need to incur great expenses. For the Tibetans who are scattered in more than 30 different countries in the world, it is important to remember that every Tibetan is acting like an ambassador. The Tibetan nation is passing through a very difficult time, a crucial period and the important thing for every Tibetan is to realise the situation and do as much as one can.

*Do you have any message for Peking?*

I hope they will try to understand the real situation in Tibet and, based on that understanding, adopt a policy that is pragmatic and morally principled. It is my belief that in human society it is not sufficient just to satisfy the basic needs such as food, shelter and clothing. Freedom is essential and basic. For the Tibetan people, freedom is an inalienable right. It is good that the Chinese have recently been taking more interests in the history of Tibet. The history of nation is naturally based on historical records and nowhere is there a single record that states that Tibet has at any time been a part of China. There have been periods when the Mongols and the Manchus had some influence over Tibet but then, where is there a nation which has not experienced such influences be it military, religious, cultural or through the marital relations of its rulers? Such influences and acts of aggression have been used in the past, as well as in the present, by stronger powers to claim sovereignty over weaker nations. The Tibetan people have never agreed voluntarily to become a part of China. I call on unbiased and impartial scholars of international law to give their opinion on this aspect of the Sino-Tibetan relationship. China has the right to its own happiness and prosperity, but not at the expense of another nation or people.

*Do you have any message to give to the people of India?*

We Tibetans as refugees will always feel grateful to the people of India, not only for giving help and shelter to this generation, but for many generations we Tibetans have received light and wisdom from this country. So, we will always feel indebted. From a cultural viewpoint, we are the followers of the India culture. Culturally, we Tibetans belong in India rather than to China (laughter). When I first came to India for the Buddha Jayanti in 1956, things were very peaceful and calm. Even after 1959, when I came to India as a refugee, things were still as a sacred land. Now, we sometimes feel very sad that the atmosphere is becoming more tense and the land of peace, the land of such a variety of human thought and richness and human thinking, especially the non-violence theory produced by this country, is changing. If you lose these values, it is a pity.

*Do you have any other advice for the people of India?*

When I go to different places and meet different people, I am more and more convinced that India really needs some kind of movement in the rural areas. A small number of people with a good education and who are well-to-do, like those in the big cities may not be so effective. I think you need some kind of rural revolution or movement. I think there should be some changes in these rural areas.

*What kind of changes do you mean?*

It seems the people in these villages have a lack of determination and initiative. They are simply contented with their daily routine life and just remain like that. I think it remained like this for a thousand years. You should break out of this. You need more courage. One person may be very poor in the economic and educational sense, but as long as the human determination is there, if you are determined to do something, you can go forward. I think this is very important.