



Why Tibet?

Tibet, the inspiration behind the ideal of 'Shangri-la' or Paradise on Earth, has a rich and vividly unique culture of its own. Ruled by the Dalai Lamas since 1642, and for centuries before that by a succession of religious kings and other priestly rulers, it is one of the few nations in the world with such a long history of continued independence.

"For many Tibetans material life was hard, but they were not the victims of desire, and in simplicity and poverty among our mountains, perhaps there was more peace of mind than there is in most of the world." So says the Dalai Lama in his autobiography – 'My Land and My People'.

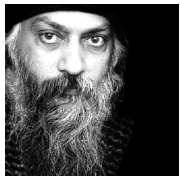
Tibet was a peaceful, independent state when, in 1949, it was invaded by China in an act of unprovoked aggression. In 1959 His Holiness the Dalai Lama was forced to seek political asylum in India, along with his entire government and tens of thousands of ordinary Tibetans. Since then Tibet has never been the same and the lives of all Tibetans has changed entirely. Faced with brutal oppression and treated as second-class citizens in their own country, many Tibetans still risk their lives to join their leader in exile. Here they are confronted with another problem – the sad predicament of refugees everywhere. To say the least, the fate of the vast majority who remain in Tibet is far worse.

Throughout the early decades of the occupation tens of thousands of Tibetans were killed and many more sent to prisons and concentration camps. During this period more than 6,000 temples and monasteries – including vast Buddhist universities and ancient libraries – were looted, burned and destroyed. Even today, despite some cosmetic changes, largely for the benefit of tourists or visiting dignitaries; Tibetan religion and culture has not recovered from the decades of suppression and continues to suffer from neglect and discrimination. Rampant and indiscriminate exploitation of Tibet's vast natural resources is also threatening the fragile ecological balance of the Roof of the World. However, the single biggest

threat to the survival of the Tibetan people is China's policy of population transfer aimed at reducing Tibetans to an insignificant minority in their own country by sending in millions of landless and jobless Chinese. The distinct cultural ties between India and Tibet – the most obvious being the spread of Buddhism from India to Tibet in the seventh century – is perhaps too well known to bear repeating here. The trade and economic ties between the two countries is perhaps even older. It is equally important to remember that India maintained independent relations with Tibet throughout our shared history. Never, until China's military occupation of Tibet after 1949, has India ever shared a common border with China. Today India spends more money to defend our northern border with Chinese occupied Tibet than we do to protect our border with Pakistan. Even in the case of our western border, much of the problem is linked to the political, economic and the military support that China gives to Pakistan.

Joined together by almost the entire length of the mighty Himalayan range – India and Tibet are also inseparably linked in a physical sense. With such an extensive common frontier, the environmental changes on one side inevitably affects the other. It is for this reason that China's destruction of Tibet's fragile environment – not only through indiscriminate deforestation and mining but also by dumping nuclear and other toxic wastes – should be a major concern to every Indian. The implications of having China as our permanent northern neighbour or even the single issue of any of the rivers flowing from Tibet to India becoming polluted by toxic waste is too serious to be left to chance.

Friends of Tibet believes that all the issues raised above are of a global nature – not only in terms of the principles involved but also in terms of their impact. It is no longer just a question of helping an oppressed people and supporting a peaceful and friendly neighbour. Today the question of Tibetan independence is inseparably linked to India's long-term future. Let us act now to make Tibet free. ■



"Tibet in Darkness" by Acharya Rajneesh (Osho)

Unfortunately, Tibet has fallen into a darkness. Its monasteries have been closed, its seekers of truth have been forced to work in labour camps. The only country in the world which was working – a one-pointed genius, all its intelligence in the search of one's own interior and its treasures has been stopped by the communist invasion of Tibet. And it is such an ugly world that nobody has objected to it. On the contrary, because China is big and powerful, even countries which are more powerful than China can ever be, like America, have accepted that Tibet belongs to China. That is sheer nonsense – just because China is powerful and everybody wants China to be on its side. Neither have the Soviets denied the claim of China aside – even India has not objected. It was such a beautiful experiment, and Tibet had no weapons to fight, they had no army to fight; they had never thought about it. Their whole thing was an introvert pilgrimage. Nowhere has such concentrated effort been made to discover man's being. Every family in Tibet used to give their eldest son to some monastery where he was to meditate and grow closer to awakening. It was a joy to every family that at least one of them was wholeheartedly, twenty-four hours a day, working on the inner being. They were also working but they could not give all their time; they had to create food and clothes and shelter, an in Tibet it is a difficult matter. The climate is not very helpful; to live in Tibet is a tremendous trouble. But still every family used to give their first-born child to the monastery.

There were hundreds of monasteries... and these monasteries should not be compared with any Catholic monasteries. These monasteries have no comparison in the whole world. These monasteries were concerned only with one thing – to make you aware of yourself. Thousands of devices have been created down the centuries so that your lotus can blossom and you can find your ultimate treasure, the diamond. These are just symbolic words, but the destruction of Tibet should be known in history, particularly man becomes a little more aware and humanity a little more humane... This is the greatest calamity of the twentieth century that Tibet has fallen into the hands of materialists who don't believe that you have anything inside you. They believe that you are only matter and your consciousness is only a by-product of matter. And all this is simply without any experience of the inner – just logical, rational philosophising. Not a single communist in the world has meditated, but it is strange – they all deny the inner. Nobody thinks about how the outer can exist if there is no inner. They exist together, they are inseparable. And the outer is only a protection for the inner, because the inner is very delicate and soft. But the outer is accepted and the inner is denied. And even if

sometimes it is accepted, the world is dominated by such dirty politicians that they use even the inner experiences for ugly ends. Just the other day, I came to know that America is now training its soldiers in meditation so that they can fight without any nervous breakdown, without going mad, without feeling any fear so they can lie down in their ditches silently, calm and cool and collected. No meditator may have ever thought that meditation can also be used for fighting wars, but in the hands of politicians everything becomes ugly – even meditation. Now the army camps in America are teaching meditation so that their soldiers can be more calm and quiet while killing people. But I want to warn America: you are playing with fire. You don't understand exactly what meditation will do. Your soldiers will become so calm and quiet that they will throw away their weapons and they will simply refuse to kill. A meditator cannot kill; a meditator cannot be destructive. So they are going to be surprised one day that their soldiers are no longer interested in fighting. War, violence, murder, massacre of millions of people – this is not possible if a man knows something of meditation. Then he knows the other whom he is killing. He is his brother. They all belong to the same oceanic existence. If humanity were a little more aware, Tibet should be made free because it is the only country which has devoted almost two thousand years to doing nothing but going deeper into meditation. And it can teach the whole world something which is immensely needed. But communist China is trying to destroy everything that has been created in two thousand years. All their devices, all their whole spiritual climate is being polluted, poisoned. But they are simple people; they cannot defend themselves. They don't have anything to defend themselves with – no tanks, no bombs, no airplanes, no army. An innocent race which lived without any war for two thousand years... It disturbs everybody – even to reach there is a difficult task. They live on the very roof of the world. The highest mountains, eternal snow, is their home. Leave them alone! China will not lose anything, but the whole world will be benefited by their experience.

Tibet should be left as an experimental lab for man's inner search. But not a single nation in the world has raised its voice against this ugly attack on Tibet. And China has not only attacked it, they have amalgamated it into their map. Now, on the modern Chinese map, Tibet is their territory. And we think the world is civilised, where innocent people who are not doing any harm to anybody are simply destroyed. And with them, something of great importance to all humanity is also destroyed. If there were something civilised in man, every nation would have stood against the invasion of Tibet by China. It is the invasion of matter against consciousness. It is invasion of materialism against spiritual heights. ■

"Osho is an enlightened master who is working with all possibilities to help humanity overcome a difficult phase in developing consciousness."

HH the XIV Dalai Lama

“What The Tibetan Issue Is”

To understand what the Tibetan issue is there is no better way than to understand Chinese history by comparing it to our own history during the British rule.

Like the British who were waiting in the wings while the Mughal rule was collapsing, the Manchus who were from Manchuria were also biding their time – when the ruling Chinese dynasty of Ming was on its last legs – outside the Great Wall, a wall built by the Chinese to keep out both the Manchus and the Mongols. Like we had our Mir Jafar, the Chinese also had their General Wu Sangui who opened the Shanhaiguan gate in the Great Wall to allow the Manchus to enter China. The British having consolidated themselves on the throne of Delhi moved into adjacent lands making some like Burma into province and some like Nepal and Bhutan into protectorates and proclaimed their possession as Indian Empire. The Manchus did likewise. They established themselves on the throne of Beijing as the Ching dynasty and after having consolidated themselves, conquered the adjacent territories of the Mongols and the Turkic people making their lands part of Manchu China and places like Tibet – a Manchu protectorate.

Here, I need to tell a little about the Manchus as many people are under the impression that the Manchus are Chinese or of Chinese stock. Concise Oxford dictionary defines the word Manchu as: “Member of Tartar people forming last Chinese imperial dynasty (1644-1912), their language now spoken in part of North-East China” and the word Tartar as: “Native of Central Asia East of Caspian Sea, member of a group of peoples including Turks, Mongols etc.” The Chinese call themselves as Han and China proper which the Chinese call “Zhongguo” ie. middle kingdom consists of only 18 provinces south of the Great Wall of China.

Manchu China ie. China that the Manchus built, besides China proper distinctly included Manchuria (now so-called North-East China), Mongolia, East Turkestan (now so-called Sinkiang), Tibet, Yunnan and Guangxi-Zhuang which are actually all minority areas constituting 60% of China’s territory. The Manchus were the paramount power ruling over the majority Hans. British India ie. India that the British built had only Burma as part but as a province, there being no Pakistan and Bangladesh as people of that generation will remember, the ruling paramount power being the British.

The only different thing that happened between Manchu China and British India was that unlike British India, there was a revolution in Manchu China in 1911-1912 and the Manchus were overthrown, one of the slogans of the revolution being “Down With The Aliens”, and whatever was Manchu China came into the hands of the majority Hans, hence modern/Republican China’s claims to whatever the Manchus built, which is the basis for their claim to Tibet and Taiwan currently and may be Korea etc in future. Here we need to pause and ask ourselves whether on that same basis modern/independent India can claim Burma. The answer is NO because

Burma’s relation was with British India and not modern/independent India. It was the British who had made Burma a part of India not the Indians. Same is the case with Tibet. It is the Manchus who had made Tibet a protectorate of Manchu China. Tibet’s relations were with Manchu China and the Manchus not with modern/Republican China and the Hans who succeeded them. On what basis is modern/Republican China claiming Tibet? Take the case of Nepal and Bhutan which were also British protectorates. Today both are independent countries, even members of the United Nations. But why is Tibet which was a Manchu protectorate not an independent country?

Here we need to see what happened in Tibet after the Manchus were overthrown. The then 13th Dalai Lama who was in exile in India returned to Tibet and proclaimed Tibet’s independence, but was able to expel all Manchus only from Outer Tibet. Inner Tibet came into the possession of warlords. The British tried to formalise this situation and McMahon Line as India-China boundary at the tripartite Simla Conference of 1913-14 between British India, China and Tibet. The Chinese did not sign the 1914 Simla Convention prompting the British to sign bilaterally with the Tibetans. Net outcome: McMahon Line is the Indo-Tibetan and not repeat not Sino-Indian boundary and no legal sanctity to division of Tibet into Inner and Outer Tibet.

Now let us examine whether the Tibetans have got anything in common with the Chinese:-

1) Language: The Tibetan language being phonetic has alphabets, its source being Brahma/Sanskrit and is written horizontally ie. left to right. Some inscriptions at Kanheri Caves in Bombay which are in Brahma, can be read by the Tibetans. The Chinese language not being phonetic has no alphabets but an ideographic script or pictograms and is written vertically ie. from top to bottom. Therefore the two languages are like chalk and cheese.

2) Race: The Tibetans belong to the Mongoloid stock. The Tibetans and the Mongols have close affinities. The IVth Dalai Lama of Tibet Yonten Gyatso was a Mongol. In the institution of the Dalai Lamas, there has been a Dalai Lama born in Mongolia, a Dalai Lama born in Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh which is in India, but no Dalai Lama in China proper. The Chinese belong to the yellow race same as the Japanese and the Koreans.

3) Religion: The Tibetans follow Buddhism, the Chinese follow Confucianism which is more a social code of behaviour and ancestor-worship and Taoism. ■

(Adapted from the speech given by CA Kallianpur, National Coordinator of Friends of Tibet (India) at the Senior Citizen’s Association, Nerul, New Bombay on June 29, 2006. He can be contacted at: ca.kallianpur@friendsoftibet.org)

Tibet At A Glance

● **Size:** 2.5 million sq km ● **Capital:** Lhasa ● **Legal Status:** Occupied ● **Population:** 6 million Tibetans ● **Language:** Tibetan. The official language now is Chinese ● **Average Altitude:** 14,000 ft ● **Highest Mountain:** Mount Everest (29,028 ft) ● **Provinces:** U-Tsang (Central Tibet), Amdo (NE Tibet), Kham (SE Tibet) ● **Bordering Countries:** India, Nepal, Bhutan, Burma and China ● **National Flag:** Snow lions with red and blue rays. Outlawed in Tibet ● **Government-in-Exile:** Parliamentary ● **Head of the State:** His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama who is in exile in India since 1959.

Tibet lies at the centre of Asia, with an area of 2.5 million square kilometers. The earth’s highest mountains, a vast arid plateau and great river valleys make up the physical homeland of 6 million Tibetans. It has an average altitude of 13,000 feet above sea level. Tibet is comprised of the three provinces of Amdo, Kham and U-Tsang. The Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) which is actually Outer Tibet was created by China in 1965 for administrative reasons. It is important to note that when Chinese officials and publications use the term ‘Tibet’ they mean only the TAR. Tibetans use the term Tibet to mean the three provinces described above, i.e., the area traditionally known as Tibet before the 1949-50 invasion.



Tibetan National Flag

“...surely, according to the principles I uphold, the last voice in regard to Tibet should be the voice of the Tibetan people and of nobody else.”

Jawaharlal Nehru



“The tragedy of Tibet is that the Tibetans put faith in us; they chose to be guided by us and we have been unable to get them out of the meshes of Chinese diplomacy or Chinese malevolence.”

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel



“The invasion of Tibet which terminated in His Holiness Dalai Lama taking refuge in Indian territory is brutal colonialism.”

C Rajagopalachari

“Instead of according recognition to China in 1949, had India accorded this recognition to Tibet, there would have been no Sino-Indian border conflict.”

Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar



“Is Tibet lost for ever? No. A thousand times no. Tibet will not die because there is no death for the human spirit.”

Jayaprakash Narayan



“Freedom has to be protected by all means – violent or non-violent. Therefore Tibet has to be liberated from the iron grip of China and handed over to the Tibetans.”

Dr Rajendra Prasad

Friends of Tibet is a people’s movement to keep alive the issue of Tibet through direct action. Our activities are aimed at ending China’s occupation of Tibet and the suffering of the Tibetan people. Friends of Tibet supports the continued struggle of the Tibetan people for independence. To know more, write to: **Friends of Tibet**, PO Box 16674, Bombay 400050. **Email:** support@friendsoftibet.org **Web:** www.friendsoftibet.org

