

Tibet is a beautiful country, bounded by highest mountain ranges of the world by all the three sides. To its west, lie the Karakoram and Ladakh mountains, Chang Tang ranges and to its north, the Himalayan mountain running almost 2500 km to its South. Tibet is called the 'Roof of the World'. These mountains, bitter wind, snow and the rugged and barren geographical set up acted as a fortress to this country. The capital was 'Lhasa' which is 1200 km away from the Chinese Frontier.

The people of this region remained so little changed for hundreds of years. Tibetans also discouraged any foreign influence. Though it was isolated from rest of the world and was called the 'Forbidden Land', it did has contributed its unique religion and culture.

A little back drop into the society of Tibet.

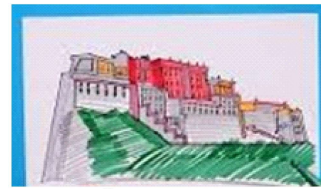
Till 1935, Tibet was essentially a feudal society. Half the population lived as wandering nomads in the north-east region of Amdo and Kham. Richest farmland was owned by the greatest monasteries and nobility. On these estates the peasants had the opportunity to own a free plot of land for

**Sushmitha B.C**

their use, but they had to farm rest of the land for their landlords with other services.

However, despite the Tibet's size, despite the division of wealth and status, it was there was the Buddhist religion and their spiritual leader Dalai Lama that has been united the peasants, nomads, monk and noble together.

Buddhism was founded by Lord Buddha in the sixth century BC. Buddhism flourished in northern India and was spread to other South Asian countries and Far East countries. In the 7th century AD, it was carried to Tibet by a number of learned scholars.



# Tibet

## An Unheard Story

**On the eve of 72nd Uprising Day  
in Tibet, a simple write-up giving  
basic information on the affairs  
of Tibet is here.**

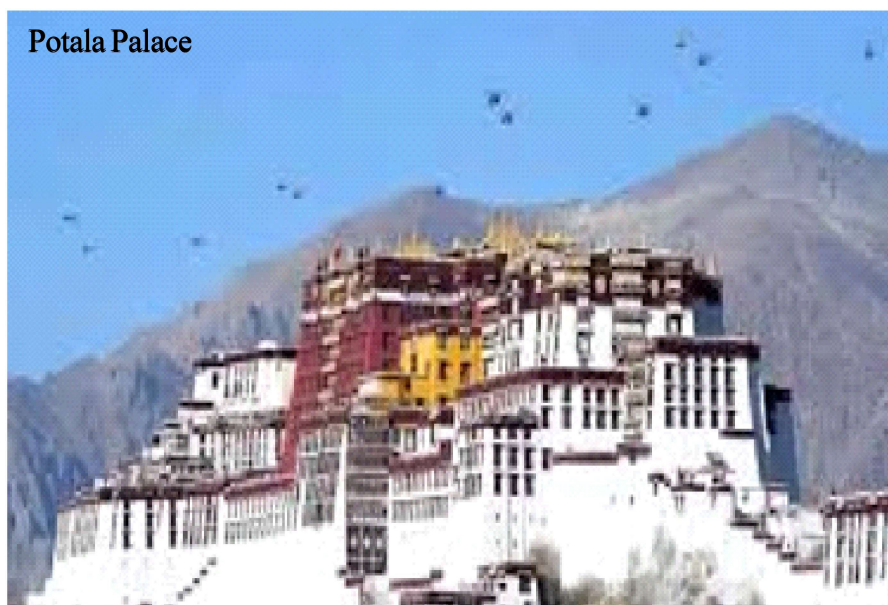
After 500 years after the death of Lord Buddha, a School emerged inside Buddhism called 'Mahayana'. It emphasized the idea of compassion. It said that those who have achieved 'enlightenment' should help those who are suffering. The enlightened one was called **Bodhisattva**.

This version was carried on by the Indian scholars to the Tibet. As a result many monasteries were established throughout Tibet. With this scheme of things in the background, the first Dalai Lama was born in 14th Century.

He was the highest Lama of the Drepung Monastery, the largest one. From that time, each succeeding Dalai Lama is considered to be the reincarnation of the previous Dalai Lama. It was from the 17th Century that Dalai Lama was considered both the political and spiritual head.

People in Tibet did not live a materialist life; they were not victims of desire. They lived a simple and nomadic life without any any interest in the technological advancement. These points are very important to understand the story further. We could see that there was a strained relationship since centuries between China and Tibet. The reason was: It was time; a special relationship was developed between The Mangol Emperor of China and Tibetans. He was the first to have been converted to Buddhism by the Tibetans. He looked at them for the guidance in religious matters and protected and supported Tibetans.

In the beginning of 18th Century, China saw the political turbulence led the Manchu dynasty to influence the Tibetans to a limited extent. Two ambassadors were



**Potala Palace**

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His Holiness the Dalai Lama  
declared themselves independent.

placed in the capital i.e. Lhasa. The Tibetans were given freedom to rule themselves.

The last spur took place in 1910, when a vicious Chinese warlord brutally invaded Tibet. In 1911 a revolution was seen across China, Tibetans relinquished the opportunity and they threw the Chinese Ambassadors away out of Tibet and

Unfortunately, the rest of the world knew nothing about the happenings in Tibet. There were no questions raised in the international forum. The Tibet was left abandoned and it had no choice but to defend itself.

While the appeals by the Tibetans to various countries did not bring any results. Chinese were forcing the Tibetan Govt to surrender. His

Holiness the Dalai

Lama had no other way, in order to further stop the bloodshed and misery, to agree for a discussion to negotiate the issue. The talk took place in Peking and ended in signing 'Seventeen Point Agreement' on May 23, 1951.

The Tibetan delegates, under duress, agreed all the points. The delegates were not even allowed to seek the suggestions from Dalai Lama. The delegation feared threats and even some of the documents were forged and duplicate seal of the Tibetan Government was affixed upon dictated documents.

Tibet was declared as the integral part of China, its foreign affairs, military and communication now came under the Peking rule. In return, China agreed to allow His Holiness the Dalai Lama to guide his people in regard to customs and traditions. Large troops were led into Tibet to see that agreement was followed.

Innumerable number of troops flowed into Tibet the following months. Dalai Lama was saddened by the worsening situations. He hoped that his presence in the China would soften the



Lobsang Sangay  
Present Prime Minister

Tibetan Government-in-Exile

Even to this date, there have been a lot of arguments whether Tibet was an independent country. In this regard, the International Commission of Jurists, in 1959, submitted a report in which it states and quotes the event from 1911-12 to mark the emergence of Tibet as a fully sovereign country.

As, in 1949, the Communists won the civil war in China. Radio Peking in its new year broad cast declared 'The next task of PLA (People's Liberation Army) is to liberate Tibet'.

By the summer 1949, the Tibetan Government started expelling the entire Chinese delegation. It took the help from the two British radio operators in Tibet to seek the help from other countries. Thus the news spread to the world.

In turn, China assured the world that nobody need to intervene in its internal matter and it claimed that Tibet has ever been its part and parcel.

Chinese infiltrated into Tibet borders from the east, as the undertrained and poorly equipped Tibetan troops did their little nervously. On October 7, 1950 was the day, the Chinese troops massively attacked the heartland of Tibet from six different sides. There were a very tiny Tibetan force which was no match to the mighty Chinese force. In a span of a week, the Chinese had moved in miles inside the Tibetan region.

When the news reached Lhasa, His Holiness the fourteenth Dalai Lama (who was both the spiritual and political head of the state) was barely fifteen years old and had a responsibility to guide the his nation. The first action, taken, was sending an appeal to the United Nations for the help. Tibetans kept great faith in United Nations. Tibet Government with the help from its friends tried its level best to inform various countries and sought help and support.



Prof. Samdhang Rinpoche  
Previous Prime Minister  
Tibetan Government-in-Exile





Present China, after having swallowed Tibet

tragic blow on his people. Thus, at the end of 1951, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, returned to Lhasa. The bitterness of the Chinese had not stopped. They had occupied all the important cities and huge army camps were set up everywhere. Worst of all, when the Chinese troops went shortage of food, they looted the same from the Tibetans.

The Chinese kept an eye on Tibetan land. Mao Tse Tung had decided to add Tibet to the family of 'Peoples Republic of China'. For this, he chose to declare that he wanted to liberate the Tibetans from the feudal system, he thought of prevailing in that part.

The practical reason for China to swallow Tibet, one can guess, was the rich minerals. Tibet had a key position geographically and a great place to test its nuclear weapons. This exploitation has continued till date.

The Chinese realized that they cannot bring in sweeping changes all at once. They slowly started using the Buddhist monks and nobles in the administration and also used His Holiness the Dalai Lama to gradually increase their influence.

They undertook the development works in the city through construction of roads. Although outwardly respecting the position of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the Chinese slowly chipped away the freedom of Tibetans to control their affairs. In 1952, they demanded for the resignation of two Prime Ministers and insisted on not appointing anyone to that position. His Holiness the Dalai Lama was also asked to take permission prior to the implementation of any reforms.

Though there were attacks on the monasteries and mounting clashes in the capital. In 1954, Dalai Lama agreed to visit Peking to meet Mao Tse Tung again.

There were number of meetings between both the leaders. After 5 months of intense talk, His Holiness the Dalai Lama left to Tibet hoping for the promises to be fulfilled.

The anger broke against the Chinese and reached its peak in the eastern region of Kham and Amdo Provinces. These regions were semi-independent from both Tibet and China. The rigorous reforms the Chinese decided to bring here did anger the people of this region. As a part of reforms, the Monasteries

were turned into Schools teaching communism. A few others were destroyed. A number of guerrilla bands sprang all over the eastern region. By 1956, there were many Tibetans fighting the Chinese.

There was little that came from Mao-Tse Tungs promises. The 'Unified Preparatory Committee for the Autonomous Region of Tibet' which was formed to give self-government to Tibet was not achieved. Those were the false promises made by the Chinese leader.

The situation in the capital was not going well. Many people who denounced the Chinese leaders were arrested.

Horrific stories of rape, torture and execution of Tibetan communities from East province started pouring. Many villages, monasteries were bombed. There was no more hope for semi independence.

Uprisings continued in 1957. The Guerillas were indirectly supported by the locals. The rising anger of his people left His Holiness the Dalai Lama in a terrible position. He tried to calm his people. He was against any violence. By 1958, Lhasa too failed in retaining the normalcy.

As the new year neared, on March 9, 1959 the city was crowded with people. Chinese officials demanded His Holiness the Dalai Lama to visit Chinese army camp without any of his bodyguards or officials. This enraged the people of Tibet. Hundreds of Tibetans assembled at the Potala Palace. They did not want the invaders to take away His Holiness the Dalai Lama as he was considered to be the symbol of Tibet itself.

By the dawn of March 10, three thousand people surrounded the residence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The moods of these people were angry and they raised anti-Chinese slogans; they demanded the Chinese to quit Tibet. Dalai Lama persuaded his people and asked them to return to their places.

Before the people listened to the words of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the Chinese troops arrived with heavy guns.

On March 17, two bombs were thrown on the grounds of the palace. The advisors and Dalai Lama took this as a sign of their failure to prevent the outbreak of Chinese. As the night fell His Holiness, with his family and close

advisors left the place. They sneaked out without the notice from the Chinese army. Later they were escorted by the Khampa guerilla. They travelled to the Sothern Tibet. On March 31, 1959 Dalai Lama left his country for exile.

There continued even greater oppression by Chinese troops. Tibet, once a land of great culture and religion, lost its beauty to the terror of the Chinese. There was genocide on the Tibetan people.

After his perilous journey, the Dalai Lama was greeted and welcomed warm heartedly by the Indian government. He made his headquarters in Dharmashala. The more concerning issue was the problem of taking care of the refugees flooding from the borders. For the next 30 years, people from Tibet continued to flow into India. They were given settlements and land by the Indian government. Once the permanent bases were adapted by the communities, the Tibetan govt in exile and Dalai Lama were able to oversee projects and retain their culture.

This remains one of the greatest tragedies, after the end of colonialism in the history of the world. There was neither support from the world organizations nor from the countries around the world. Tibetans are having hopes that someday they'll get their mother land and will be able to live their life happily.

We should remember that these are people of compassion. It's high time; we understand the happenings around the world and support the non-violent, fair, democratic and rightful struggles for liberty, equality and fraternity.