

THE INSTITUTION OF THE DALAI LAMA



THE DALAI LAMAS

1st Dalai Lama: Gendun Drub

b. 1391 – d. 1474

f. Gonpo Dorje – m. Jomo Namkyi
Birth Place: Sakya, Tsang, Tibet

2nd Dalai Lama: Gendun Gyatso

b. 1476 – d. 1542

Enthroned: 1487

f. Kunga Gyaltsen - m. Kunga Palmo
Birth Place: Tsang Tanak, Tibet

3rd Dalai Lama: Sonam Gyatso

b. 1543 – d. 1588

Enthroned: 1546

f. Namgyal Drakpa – m. Pelzom Bhuti
Birth Place: Tolung, Central Tibet

4th Dalai Lama: Yonten Gyatso

b. 1589 – d. 1617

Enthroned: 1601

f. Sumbur Secen Cugukur
m. Bighcogh Bikiji
Birth Place: Mongolia

5th Dalai Lama:

Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso

b. 1617 – d. 1682

Enthroned: 1638

f. Dudul Rapten – m. Kunga Lhadze
Birth Place: Lhoka, Central Tibet

6th Dalai Lama: Tseyang Gyatso

b. 1683 – d. 1706

Enthroned: 1697

f. Tashi Tenzin – m. Tsewang Lhamo
Birth Place: Mon Tawang, India

7th Dalai Lama: Kalsang Gyatso

b. 1708 – d. 1757

Enthroned: 1720

f. Sonam Dargye – m. Sonam Chotso
Birth Place: Lithang, Kham

8th Dalai Lama: Jampel Gyatso

b. 1758 – d. 1804 Enthroned: 1762

f. Sonam Dargye - m. Phuntsok Wangmo
Birth Place: Lhari Gang, Tsang

9th Dalai Lama: Lungtok Gyatso

b. 1805 – d. 1815

Enthroned: 1810

f. Tenzin Choekyong
m. Dhondup Dolma
Birth Place: Dan Chokhor, Kham

10th Dalai Lama: Tsultrim Gyatso

b. 1816 – d. 1837

Enthroned: 1822

f. Lobsang Drakpa – m. Namgyal Bhuti
Birth Place: Lithang, Kham

11th Dalai Lama: Khedrub Gyatso

b. 1838–d. 1855

Enthroned 1842

f. Tseten Dhondup – m. Yungdrung Bhuti
Birth Place: Gathar, Kham

12th Dalai Lama: Trinley Gyatso

b. 1856 – d. 1875

Enthroned: 1860

f. Phuntsok Tsewang – m. Tsering Yudon
Birth Place: Lhoka

13th Dalai Lama: Thupten Gyatso

b. 1876 – d. 1933

Enthroned: 1879

f. Kunga Rinchen – m. Lobsang Dolma
Birth Place: Langdun, Central Tibet

14th Dalai Lama: Tenzin Gyatso

b. 1935

Enthroned: 1940

f. Choekyong Tsering
m. Dickey Tsering
Birth Place: Taktser, Amdo

INSTITUTION OF THE DALAI LAMA: AN OVERVIEW

His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama represents a highly revered institution that provides spiritual leadership for the people of Tibet and for followers of Buddhism around the world. It is a spiritual institution that emerged and evolved through centuries of history during which the lineage of successive Dalai Lamas presided over Tibet's transition to the modern era. The 14th Dalai Lama himself has played a defining role, becoming a global symbol of human wisdom and grace for leading the Tibetan people through the political crisis of the twentieth century. It is on this global stage of moral leadership that the modern institution of the Dalai Lama now sits, and from which it will continue to provide a spiritual compass for those of faith around the world.

Tibetans first embraced Buddhism, which originated in India, under the Yarlung Dynasty between the 7th and 9th centuries. As the official religion of the nation, Buddhism continued to flourish even after different empires collapsed and disintegrated without a central

ruler during the subsequent 400 years. Throughout that time, Buddhist scholars of various orders built monasteries to spread Buddha's teachings across the Tibetan plateau and beyond.

When the Mongols expanded into Tibet in the 13th century, they facilitated a special bond between Mongol Khans and Tibetan Buddhist hierarchs, thereby elevating the prestige and power of Buddhist institutions. Over the next two centuries, even though several lay Mongol and Tibetan rulers assumed authority over the kingdom, they patronized different orders of the Tibetan Buddhism.

Tibetan Buddhists believe in the concept of Bodhisattva, a realized being who has resolved to attain the highest spiritual enlightenment or Buddhahood for the benefit of all sentient beings. Defining compassion as a state of mind that genuinely aspires to see all sentient beings finding freedom from suffering, pain and dissatisfaction, Tibetans generally extol compassion as the highest of all virtues. Concurrently, both Buddhist canons and teachings hail Lord

Avalokiteshvara, the Bodhisattva embodiment of compassion, as the sole guardian of the Tibetan kingdom, and the Dalai Lama, the manifestation of the exalted Bodhisattva.

THE FIRST DALAI LAMA

The spiritual lineage of the Dalai Lama can be traced back to 1391, with the birth of Gendun Drub,



whose parents were semi-nomadic farmers in central Tibet. On the night he was born, legend has it that bandits raided the family's camp. Before fleeing for her life, his mother wrapped the newborn in blankets and hid him inside a crevice nearby. Upon returning the next morning, the family was surprised to find the baby sleeping undisturbed amid the rocks; a large black raven perched on a

tree nearby, watching over him vigilantly to ward off attacks from wild vultures and animals.

Even though Gendun Drub was raised as a shepherd, he demonstrated an extraordinary talent for Buddhist practices at an early age. He was said to have spent hours carving sacred syllables and prayers into stones in the Tibetan tradition. At the age of seven, when he lost his father, he was sent to a monastery, where at the age of 20 he became an ordained monk.

While pursuing his Buddhist studies, Gendun Drub studied under Je Tsongkhapa, a philosopher and an eclectic Buddhist master, and the founder of the Geluk School of Buddhism in Tibet. Deeply inspired by Tsongkhapa's teachings, the young Gendun Drub became the master's last disciple, and one of the most revered masters of the Geluk School.

THE REINCARNATION OF THE DALAI LAMA

Following Gendun Drub's death, no immediate efforts were made to identify his incarnation. Then, Gendun Drub's disciples at Tashilhunpo monastery heard about a boy. Born as Sangye



Choephel in a village called Tsang Tanak, the boy repeatedly shared with adults stories of his previous life as a lama. From the age of two, he expressed his wish to return to Tashilhunpo, which he referred to as his monastery. So, the Tashilhunpo monastery dispatched a delegation to the village to investigate the claims. Upon their arrival, the boy was said to have greeted each member by name, with accuracy and extreme delight. Confronted with compelling evidence, Gendun Drub's disciples recognized that the child could indeed be the incarnation of their deceased master.

Thus, in 1485, when the boy had turned 10, he was renamed

Gendun Gyatso and installed as Gendun Drub's incarnation. Since then, a tradition was established in the Geluk tradition of Tibetan Buddhism to search and recognize the successive reincarnations of the Dalai Lamas. The practice of recognizing who is who by identifying someone's previous life occurred even when Buddha himself was alive. However, the present tradition of formally recognizing the reincarnation of masters first began in the early 13th century with the recognition of Karmapa Rangjung Dorjee as the reincarnation of Karmapa Pagshi by his disciples in accordance with his prediction.

Gendun Gyatso trained at various monasteries became a great teacher and scholar. Even before his studies were completed, he began teaching, and quickly developed a large following. In his early years, he served as abbot of Tashilhunpo and subsequently of Drepung and Sera, the two largest Tibetan monasteries in 1517. Gendun Gyatso passed away in 1542, leaving behind many volumes of verse, composition, and practice instructions.

THE TITLE OF THE DALAI LAMA

Upon Gendun Gyatso's death, high lamas at the Drepung Monastery quickly identified



a successor near the capital city of Lhasa. Even though he was only two years old, he coherently recounted to his parents and those around him how Buddhas and Bodhisattvas appeared to him on a regular basis. Meanwhile, a senior monk near his village also received a vision in which the young child was prophesied to be the reincarnation of Gendun Gyatso. After giving the boy a series of tests, the search team officially confirmed him as their future leader. Thus, the boy became Sonam Gyatso, and was enthroned the following year at

the Drepung Monastery.

In his later years, Sonam Gyatso cultivated relationships with members of ruling houses across Tibet. His greatest missionary triumph involved forging a close friendship with the Mongol leader, Altan Khan, who was a descendent of Kublai Khan.

To follow the path of his ancestors and revive Buddhism in Mongolia, Altan Khan invited Sonam Gyatso to visit Mongolia in 1577. When the two met, they agreed to enter into a traditional patron-priest relationship. For Altan Khan, the patronage of the growing Geluk (Yellow Hat) tradition was a way to re-establish his forebear's influence in Tibet. Sonam Gyatso saw the alliance as an opportunity to secure Mongol support for his missionary work, both inside and outside of Tibet.

A year later, Altan Khan bestowed upon him the title of the Dalai Lama. "Dalai" is a Mongolian term meaning "ocean" and Dalai Lama is popularly translated as "Ocean of Wisdom." His predecessors, Gendun Drub and Gendun Gyatso, were posthumously given the titles of the first and second Dalai Lama. Thus, the Dalai Lama institution was created.

In 1588, Sonam Gyatso passed away in Mongolia, and his remains were interred in a reliquary stupa there. His successor, the 4th Dalai Lama, Yonten Gyatso was born in Mongolia and was chosen according to the reincarnation tradition. It so happened that he was the great-grandson of the Mongol leader Altan Khan.

THE REINCARNATION DOCTRINE

The stories of the first four Dalai Lamas offer readers a glimpse of the complex reincarnation tradition. In the following centuries, disciples have formed and developed an elaborate set of procedures to locate and identify the successor to the Dalai Lama institution.

Before a Dalai Lama passes away, he often leaves a predictive letter that contains instructions

and indications about the next reincarnation. At the same time, a team of high lamas also seek predictions from Nechung, the state oracle of Tibet, while spending days observing visions in the sacred lake of Palden Lhamo, which yield significant clues to the location of the reincarnation. These steps help build the case for the potential candidate. However, the most crucial factor rests upon the candidate himself. Usually the child, often as young as two years old, is required to perform a series of tests, such as recounting his previous life, recognizing people who had been close to the deceased Dalai Lama and identifying personal items that belonged to the past leader. Once the tests prove that he is the true incarnation of the previous Dalai Lama, he is anointed as the holder of the throne.

RESIDENCE OF THE DALAI LAMA - POTALA PALACE



The Potala Palace in Lhasa, built on the site of an ancient fortress by Songtsen Gampo, the 33rd king of Tibet in seventh century, served as the official residence of the Dalai Lama. The Palace was named after the mountain home of the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara.

Construction of the Potala Palace began in 1645 during the reign of the 5th Dalai Lama. When he passed away in 1682, his Regent, Desi Sanggye Gyatso, continued the expansion and completed the building of the Red Palace in 1694. It took a total of 45 years to finish the entire structure, including the interior, together with its furnishings.

The Potala Palace is thirteen stories tall and is the greatest monumental structure in all of Tibet with its outstanding ancient Tibetan architecture. Covering 360,000 square meters with nearly 1,000 rooms, the palace remained both the residence of the Dalai Lama and his large staff, and the seat of Tibetan government, where all ceremonies of state were held. It was designated a UNESCO world heritage site in 1994. Reliquaries for the 5th Dalai Lama, and the 7th through 12th Dalai Lamas are held in the Red Palace. Each year, pilgrims

trekked all the way to Potala Palace to visit and worship the tombs of past Dalai Lamas.

THE SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL LEADER

The interwoven spiritual and temporal system of governance originates from ancient times when Tibetans believed that enlightened beings, such as the Bodhisattva of Compassion, manifested themselves in human forms to protect the people of Tibet. These long-held views have provided the basis of rule by religious kings and Buddhist hierarchs on the Tibetan plateau until modern times.

In all, Tibet was ruled by 42 kings for more than 1,000 years, with the most prominent being Songtsen Gampo, Trisong Detsen and Tri Ralpachen from the 7th to the 9th centuries. They were instrumental in uniting the nation of Tibet and introducing Buddhism in what later became known as the Land of Snows.

After the Tibetan empire declined, a new period of cultural renaissance and civilizational dynamism arose across Tibet. But while many of the great Tibetan saints, mystics, philosophers and historians flourished during



this period, political intrigue and bids for power perpetuated the fragmentation of the Tibetan state. It was not until 1642 that the 5th Dalai Lama emerged as the legitimate ruler of a united Tibet, exercising power over both spiritual and temporal domains.

“PRIEST-PATRON” RELATIONS WITH QING EMPIRE

In the period that followed, the geopolitics of region shifted and the institution of the Dalai Lama was caught in a complex pattern of political relations with the Manchu rulers of the Qing dynasty. The priest-patron relationship that developed gave rise to an array of political contradictions.

In 1653, at the invitation of Emperor Shunzhi of the Qing

Dynasty, the 5th Dalai Lama paid a historic visit to Beijing. Historians recount that the emperor traveled out of the capital to greet the Dalai Lama en route, bestowing upon him the highest honor as head of a sovereign state. In deference to his moral authority, the emperor solicited the Dalai Lama’s help in subduing the Mongols who were then posing a threat to China. Early on, it was clear that the institution of the Dalai Lama was accorded the status of a sovereign by the Qing emperor.

By the time the 6th Dalai Lama took over Tibet, the ruling class was embroiled in political intrigue and instability. He was deposed by Lhazang Khan, a grandson of Gushri Khan, and died prematurely at the age of 24. In 1720, Manchu imperial troops



entered Tibet for the first time on the pretext of protecting the 7th Dalai Lama, whom they escorted to Lhasa for enthronement. In the following decades, the interference by the Qing empire in Tibetan affairs continued, particularly after the 8th Dalai Lama sought military support in 1791 to expel Nepalese invaders who had invaded and occupied part of Tibet.

In 1792, the Qing emperor promulgated a 29-point decree that outlined proposed measures for the Tibetan government, led by the 8th Dalai Lama, to improve the efficiency of his governance. Historians characterize the decree as symbolic in nature. Tibetans ignored and conveniently discarded many of them, an act that could be deemed seditious or traitorous when committed by a Chinese or an imperial protectorate. For example, one of the proposals involved the selection of the Dalai Lama, which traditionally fell into the realm of spiritual practice. To exert full political control over Tibet, the Qing emperor imposed his will on the then 400-year-old succession process by mandating the use of a lottery with folded slips of paper containing the names of the

competing candidates placed in a golden urn.

Such blatant meddling in Tibetan's religious affairs was tolerated in the early days because of the existing "priest-patron" relationship with the Manchu Qing emperor. In addition, the 8th Dalai Lama would also need the Qing emperor's support to fight off future foreign and Nepalese aggressors.

However, when it came to selecting their spiritual leader's successor, Tibetans often dismissed the Qing emperor's suggestion. For example, for the 10th and 12th Dalai Lamas, senior monks secretly identified the candidates with the traditional method. To placate the Qing rulers, they simply employed the Golden Urn ceremony to confirm their choices. Only once did the Qing emperor succeed in forcing his method upon the selection of the 11th Dalai Lama.

In 1879, the 13th Dalai Lama was enthroned at the Potala Palace in Lhasa. By the time he assumed leadership at the end of his religious training in 1895, Tibet was caught in the crossfire between Russia and Great Britain, which were adversaries



at that time. When a British “expeditionary team” from India invaded and occupied Tibet in 1903 and 1904 to counter the influence of Russia in the Far East, the 13th Dalai Lama had to flee Lhasa and went into a five-year exile in Mongolia and then China. In 1910, a Chinese general attacked the country. Once again, the 13th Dalai Lama was forced to leave Lhasa for India before the Chinese army slaughtered their way through and took over the capital city.

Despite the turmoil, the 13th Dalai Lama never stopped asserting and fighting for the

legitimacy of the Dalai Lama’s rule over Tibet. In 1911, the collapse of the Qing dynasty in China provided an opportunity for the Dalai Lama to clear the last vestiges of Manchus from Tibet by ordering the withdrawal of Chinese troops. Just weeks after his return to Lhasa in early 1913, the Dalai Lama officially ended all ties with China and declared Tibet to be an independent country. In the proclamation, the 13th Dalai Lama stated that the traditional relationship between Tibet and China, governed by the historic model of patron and priest, had “faded like a rainbow in the sky.”

Having witnessed the modern changes during his exiles in Mongolia, China and India, the young leader instituted a series of major political, social and economic reforms that helped modernize Tibet. He was known as a skillful statesman who stood up for Tibet against great powers such as Britain and China, restored discipline in monastic life, and placed more lay people in the Tibetan government.



TENZIN GYATSO, THE 14TH DALAI LAMA

By the time the 13th Dalai Lama passed away in December 1933, the Priest-Patron relationship had ended, and there was no obligation on the part of the Tibetan government to use the Golden Urn method to select the next Dalai Lama. Tibetans therefore followed the traditional procedure.

Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama, was born on July 6, 1935 to a Tibetan farming family in the small village of Taktser, located in the province of Amdo. When he was two years old, a search party sent out by the Tibetan government identified and confirmed him to be the

reincarnation of the 13th Dalai Lama, and placed him at a local monastery for training. However, Ma Bufang, a local Chinese



Muslim warlord, refused to let the boy-incarnate be taken to the capital city of Lhasa unless the Tibetan government paid a large ransom. It was not until the winter of 1940 that he was officially installed as the spiritual leader of Tibet at Lhasa's Potala Palace.

In the fall of 1950, news reached Lhasa that an army of 80,000 soldiers of the Chinese People's Liberation Army was approaching the capital city to "liberate Tibet from the hands of Imperialist aggressors." As Lhasa was falling into the hands of Chinese invaders, the religious and political elite in Tibet requested that the 14th Dalai Lama be given full temporal authority. The Tibetan government consulted the State Oracle of Tibet, who walked toward His Holiness and laid a khata, a white offering scarf, on his lap with the words "the time has come." Thus, on November 17, 1950, His Holiness was officially enthroned as the temporal leader of Tibet in a ceremony held at the Norbulingka Palace.

At the age of 16, His Holiness the Dalai Lama found himself the enthroned leader of six million people of Tibet on the eve of a

full-scale conflict.

In a last bid to avoid a full-scale Chinese invasion, His Holiness sent a delegation to Beijing to open a dialogue with the Communist leaders. The delegation was forced to sign a peace agreement with the Chinese government on May 23, 1951 to save his country from the brink of destruction and further military action.

The next nine years saw His Holiness trying to evade a complete military takeover of Tibet by China. From July 1954 to June 1955, His Holiness made an historic visit to Beijing and met with Mao Zedong and other senior Communist leaders to establish a harmonious relationship between Tibetans and Chinese. However, he soon realized that the promises that Chairman Mao made in the agreement to respect the governance and social system of Tibet were systematically violated.

On March 17, 1959, the State Oracle of Tibet issued an explicit instruction for His Holiness to leave the country. Even though the odds against making a successful escape seemed terrifyingly high, the young leader decided to plunge

ahead. A few minutes before ten o'clock at night, he disguised himself as a common soldier and slipped out of the country, along with a small escort. He was soon joined by thousands of Tibetans, who proceeded towards India.

The Ganden Phodrang government of the Dalai Lama was reestablished in exile immediately upon reaching India with new elements of democratic reforms to the administration and governance.

A draft democratic constitution for Tibet was introduced in the early years of exile and an election of representatives was held to form the first Tibetan parliament. Further democratic reforms were introduced with adoption of a

new charter for Tibetans in exile in 1990, expanding the authorities of elected representatives and introducing the Supreme Justice Commission to provide proper checks and balances among the three pillars of democracy. These democratic reforms culminated in the direct election of a Tibetan political leader by Tibetans in Diaspora,

In May of 2011, the Dalai Lama rule, which began in 1642, ended, when His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama signed the document formally transferring his temporal authority to a democratically elected leader. He formally put an end to the 368-year-old Ganden Phodrang government headed by the Dalai Lamas.



THE DALAI LAMA, THE SPIRITUAL LEADER

The Dalai Lamas, who are believed to be the earthly manifestation of the Bodhisattva of Compassion, undergo rigorous religious studies and spiritual training to serve humanity. Successive Dalai Lamas have served as spiritual leaders both in Tibet and in neighboring countries.

Article One of the Tibetan Charter designates the Dalai Lama as the protector and symbol of the Tibetan nation on the basis of the history and culture that spanned for many centuries and the sovereign will of the Tibetans. He played two distinctive roles. As the spiritual leader and the voice of Tibetans, the Dalai Lama is entrusted with the right and responsibility to advocate for the protection and promotion of the cultural well-being of the Tibetan people, advise the Tibetan parliament and Tibetan Administration in matters of importance to the nation, and to meet with other world leaders. Meanwhile, the Dalai Lama sees himself as a Buddhist monk who has taken a vow to serve humanity, helping people to end their

suffering and attain happiness through the development of love and compassion. His message of peace and his advocacy of basic human values such as compassion and tolerance transcend religions, politics and cultures.

The Dalai Lama enjoys supreme authority over all spiritual matters in Tibet. He is requested to appoint abbots and recognize reincarnations of high lamas. While heads of monastic institutions of each Tibetan Buddhist tradition are appointed by their respective spiritual advisers, the abbots of all major Buddhist monastic institutions of the Geluk tradition are appointed by the Dalai Lama, including the position of Gaden Tripa – the head of the Geluk school, although these positions are filled on merit.

While ordained in the Geluk School of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, the Dalai Lama extends equal respect for all the four Tibetan Buddhist Schools— Nyingma, Kagyud, Sakya and Geluk. An eclectic master, the Dalai Lama has received teachings from masters of all the four schools and today remains the most revered ecumenical

repository of Buddhist transmission, teaching and initiation lineages of all the four schools.

The Dalai Lama presides over all national conferences of Tibetan Buddhism traditionally attended by spiritual heads and abbots of all Buddhist traditions. These conferences are periodically held to discuss policies and major issues concerning Tibetan Buddhism.

The current Dalai Lama continues to hold supreme authority over all affairs related to Tibetan Buddhism, mainly by virtue of his historic position and the trust placed upon him by his followers. In his letter to the Tibetan Parliament in March 2011, His Holiness made it clear his intention to resume the status of the first four Dalai Lamas in concerning himself only with spiritual affairs once he has abdicated his political authority. initiation lineages of all the four schools.

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THE NEXT INCARNATION OF THE DALAI LAMA

In his statement issued on September 24, 2011, the His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama emphasized that he has sole authority over where he takes rebirth and how that reincarnation is to be recognized. When that time comes, he will consult with the high lamas of the Tibetan Buddhist traditions, the Tibetan public, and other Tibetan Buddhists on his reincarnation.

Upon his passing, the responsibility of finding the reincarnation of the 14th Dalai Lama primarily will rest with

officials of the Dalai Lama Institution. They will be required to consult with leaders of various Tibetan Buddhist orders and the oath-bound Dharma Protectors who are linked to the lineage of the Dalai Lamas. Under their guidance, religious officials will follow age-old traditions to carry out the search. His Holiness has also mentioned specifically that he will leave clear written instructions relating to his reincarnation, without room for doubt or deception.

At present, since China continues its relentless campaign to sabotage and erode His Holiness's international standing, the institution and the reincarnation process could become vulnerable

to manipulation and external political control. His Holiness warned that Tibetans should not accept any candidates endorsed or recognized by those who fail to follow the legitimate Tibetan way.

THE FUTURE OF THE DALAI LAMA INSTITUTION

Buddhism is a religion followed by more than half a billion people in the world, including around 300 million believers in China following the Mahayana Buddhism lineage. Over the centuries, the Dalai Lama institution has become the center of the Tibetan Buddhist world.

After he settled in Dharamsala,



India, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama has found a fertile ground to revive centuries-old Tibetan Buddhist traditions and to continue the legacy of the Dalai Lama institution. Having discarded his political leadership in the Central Tibetan Administration, His Holiness has chosen to dedicate his life and institution to serving humanity. Through his teachings and advocacy work, His Holiness calls for the preservation of the Tibetan language and culture, and speaks up fiercely about protecting Tibet's natural environment, which is now being threatened by China's unchecked economic exploitation.

At the same time, His Holiness has tirelessly promoted harmony amongst the world's religious traditions. Despite philosophical differences, he says all faiths share the same aspiration to elevate the human spirit and improve human conditions. The idea that there is one truth and one religion is only relevant to the individual practitioner. However, with regard to the wider community, His Holiness says, there is a need for us to

recognize different faiths and respect different aspects of the truth.

Calling them secular ethics or universal values, His Holiness strongly champions the cultivation of virtues such as compassion, forgiveness, tolerance, contentment and self-discipline. He makes a point of talking about the importance of such values at every opportunity, and shares them with everyone he meets.

His Holiness's dedicated efforts to peace and international understanding has earned him universal respect. In 1989, the Norwegian Nobel Committee awarded His Holiness the Nobel Peace Prize for his leadership in the struggle for the liberation of Tibet and his advocacy of "peaceful solutions based upon tolerance and mutual respect in order to preserve the historical and cultural heritage of his people."

His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama stands not only as a symbol of the Tibetan people and nationhood, but also as a global champion of peace and compassion.



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