

### THE THIRTEENTH DALAI LAMA'S LAST TESTAMENT

During the period of his exile in India (1910–12), while the Qing dynasty was making military inroads in Kham and Central Tibet before its final collapse, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama made the acquaintance of the Tibetan-speaking British political officer in Sikkim, Charles Bell (1870–1945). The two men formed a strong friendship, which endured throughout the remainder of the Dalai Lama's life. For much of this time Bell represented British diplomacy in Tibet and on several occasions visited and resided in Lhasa, becoming a close adviser to the Dalai Lama and, indeed, to the government of Tibet, above all in matters of foreign affairs. Bell paid final tribute to the Dalai Lama in his last book, completed just before his death in 1945, *Portrait of a Dalai Lama*. There he published an important declaration that the Dalai Lama had delivered in 1932, concerning his vision of Tibet's vulnerable political situation. About the origins of this text and his own acquisition of it, Bell wrote:

During 1931 the Nechung Oracle let it be known that the Dalai Lama was ill, and likely to depart soon to the Honourable Field. Consequently he advised the Tibetan Government to offer prayers to him to remain in this life. The Cabinet did so.

The Dalai Lama made his reply to their prayers in a book of nine small pages which he wrote with his own hand, it being of so great importance. This is the only book of which it can be said with absolute certainty that it was written by a Dalai Lama. A remarkable book indeed.

The book was printed on the usual Tibetan wooden blocks. The blocks were made in Lhasa; and, later on, the Chief Minister of the subordinate Government at Tashi Lhünpo had fresh printing blocks made there.

Nine or ten months after the Dalai Lama's death the Chief Prophet of the great Samyé monastery gave me his printed copy of this testament. Himself a most devoted admirer of the Lama, he knew—as most Tibetans did—the close friendship that united the Dalai Lama and myself. When giving me the book, he said, Your mind is seen in it, referring to the advice that I gave to the Inmost One during our long conversations with each other.

In conversation, Tibetans term this little book the Precious Protector's *Kachem*; i.e., his Last Testament. In it he justifies his rule, reprimands his subjects, and instructs them how to conduct themselves. It contains a large amount of political matter, and might therefore also be termed his Political Testament. MTK

Water Monkey Year [1932]. In consequence of the prophecy of the Nechung Oracle, all the people of Tibet, the Yellow and the Grey,<sup>6</sup> offered prayers to the Precious Protector to remain for a long time in this life. The essence of that petition and the Precious Protector's reply to it are printed here together in this book. The reply, like a precious medicine, restores the fat which had become rotten, and enables all to see at once the dark places. It is the fresh nectar of the gods.

*The essence of the above petition is given here:*

We, the Prime Minister, the Members of the Cabinet, the ecclesiastical and civil officials, in consequence of the Nechung Oracle's prophecy, have jointly made earnest supplication to the Precious Protector to remain long in this life. We have done this in accordance with the discourses of the Lord Buddha. We have all made these prayers in accordance with our different ranks and duties, and we have made them to the best of our ability. Please do not be angry with us; this is the prayer of us all, the Yellow and the Grey.

*The reply of the Dalai Lama then begins thus:*

I was not identified in accordance with the previous custom of the golden urn.<sup>7</sup> It was judged unnecessary, for from the prophecies and divinations it

<sup>6</sup>I.e., the clergy and the laity.

<sup>7</sup>The custom of identifying high incarnations, especially the Dalai and Panchen lamas, by means of a lottery with lots drawn from a golden urn, was imposed on Tibet after 1792 by the Qianlong emperor. It was never well regarded by the Tibetans and remains a point of contention between the Chinese government and Tibetans.

was clear that I was the true Incarnation. And so I was enthroned. In accordance with the old custom, a regent was appointed for a time. This was the *Hutuktu*,<sup>8</sup> also the Head Lama of the Purchok monastery, a learned and saintly man. I joined the monkhood. I became a novice. I read several books, for instance *The Great Center*, and numerous books on theological disputation, and the long succession of exoteric and esoteric discourses by the Lord Buddha with meanings as vast as the ocean. I was invested by my instructors with spiritual power. I worked very hard every day without cessation, to the utmost of my powers, and thus attained a moderate amount of knowledge and ability.

When I arrived at the age of eighteen, in accordance with the former custom, I had come to the time at which I should carry on the secular and the spiritual administration of the country. Though I had not hitherto exercised the religious or secular control, and though I was lacking in skill and resource, yet the whole of Tibet, both supreme beings and human beings, requested me to take up the power. The great Manchu emperor, appointed by Heaven, gave me a similar order, which I placed on my head. I took up the spiritual and secular administration. From that time forward there was no leisure for me, no time for pleasure. Day and night I had to ponder anxiously over problems of Church and State, in order to decide how each might prosper best. I had to consider the welfare of the peasantry, how best to remove their sorrows; how to open the three doors of promptitude, impartiality, and the removal of injuries.

In the Wood-Dragon year [1904] there arrived a great army of soldiers under the British Government. Had I considered my own comfort, I could have come to an amicable settlement with them. But if our country had thereby suffered afterwards, it would have been like the rubbing out of a footprint. Formerly, the Great Fifth Dalai Lama and the Manchu emperor had made an agreement to help each other in the way that a monk and a layman help each other. So although it entailed hardship on me, I paid no attention to that, but went over northern Tibet, through China and Mongolia, to the great capital, Golden Peking. The Sovereigns, mother and son, treated me well beyond measure.<sup>9</sup> But shortly afterwards the mother and the son both died, one after the other.

<sup>8</sup> *Hutuktu*, also spelt *Khutughtu*, is the Mongolian designation for a high incarnate lama and became widely employed during the Qing dynasty. In this case, the *Hutuktu* in question was Demo Lozang Trinlé, who served as regent of Tibet beginning in 1886 and until the Thirteenth Dalai Lama attained his majority in 1895. On the "head lama of Purchok monastery," see n. 9 below.

<sup>9</sup> The reference is to the Guangxu emperor (1871-1908, reigned 1875-1908) and his mother, the dowager Cixi (1835-1908).

After this, the Emperor Shontong<sup>10</sup> was enthroned, and to him I represented fully the facts of our case. Keeping the whole case of Tibet in my mind, I returned, but the *amban* in Tibet representing matters falsely, Chinese officers and soldiers arrived in Lhasa, and seized the power over the administration of Tibet. Then I, the king, and with me my ministers and other governmental officers, came to the holy land of India, paying no attention to the hardships of the journey. We arrived in good health, and through the British Government, we represented matters fully to the Government of China.

Religious services were held on behalf of the Faith and the secular side of State affairs. These ensured the full ripening of the evil deeds of the Chinese, and in consequence, internal commotion broke out in China, and the time was changed. The Chinese troops in Tibet had none to help them; they became stagnant like a pond, and therefore, bit by bit, we were able to expel them from the country. As for myself, I came back to Tibet, the land that I have to protect, the field of religion. From that year, the year of the Water Bull [1913], to this present Water-Monkey year [1932], this land of Tibet has become completely happy and prosperous; it is like a land made new. All the people are at ease and happy.

This is clearly evident from the records in the State archives. You all, supreme beings and human beings, are aware of these facts. I have written these matters briefly, for if I were to explain them in detail, a very long letter would be required. I have been very merciful in all things. Consider this and understand it, all ye people! Do not make your desires great. Make them small! Understand that what has been done is excellent! If the work that has been performed is of advantage to Tibet, harmonize your minds with it, and know that your desires have been fulfilled. I do not say that I have performed all this. I do not recount these matters in any hope that people will say that the Dalai Lama has done this work; of that my hope is less than a single seed of sesame.

Having regard to my present age, it were better that I should lay down the ecclesiastical and temporal power, and devote the short remainder of this life to religious devotion. My future lives are many, and I would like to devote myself entirely to spiritual concerns. But by reason of the Guardian Deities inside my body and my Root Lama, people come to me to hear religion, they come to me to decide their disputes, and their hope lies deep in their hearts that I will not give up the secular administration. So far I have done my work to the best of my ability, but I am nearly fifty-eight years old, when it will become difficult to carry on the ecclesiastical and secular work any longer. This is understood by all, is it not?

<sup>10</sup> The reference is to the Xuantong emperor (known as Puyi, 1906-67, reigned 1908-11).

The Government of India is near to us and has a large army. The Government of China also has a large army. We should therefore maintain firm friendship with these two; both are powerful.

There are one or two small countries over there that show hostility towards us. In order to prevail against them, you must enlist in the army young, vigorous men, and you must give military training of such a kind as will benefit afterwards.

Besides, the present is the time of the Five Kinds of Degeneration in all countries. In the worst class is the manner of working among the red people [i.e., the Communists]. They do not allow search to be made for the new Incarnation of the Grand Lama of Urga. They have seized and taken away all the sacred objects from the monasteries. They have made monks to work as soldiers. They have broken religion, so that not even the name of it remains. Have you heard of all these things that have happened at Urga? And they are still continuing. It may happen that here in the centre of Tibet the Religion and the secular administration may be attacked both from the outside and from the inside. Unless we can guard our own country, it will now happen that the Dalai and Pañchen Lamas, the Father and the Son, the Holders of the Faith, the glorious Rebirths, will be broken down and left without a name. As regards the monasteries and the monks and nuns, their lands and other properties will be destroyed. The administrative customs of the Three Religious Kings will be weakened. The officers of the State, ecclesiastical and secular, will find their lands seized and their other property confiscated; and they themselves made to serve their enemies, or wander about the country as beggars do. All beings will be sunk in great hardship and in overpowering fear; the days and the nights will drag on slowly in suffering.

Do not be traitors to Church and State by working for another country against your own. Tibet is happy, and in comfort now; the matter rests in your own hands. All civil and military matters should be organized with knowledge; act in harmony with each other; do not pretend that you can do what you cannot do. The improvement of the secular administration depends on your ecclesiastical and secular officials. High officials, low officials, and peasants must all act in harmony to bring happiness to Tibet: one person alone cannot lift a heavy carpet; several must unite to do so.

What is to be done and what to be omitted, consider that, and do all your work without harboring doubt, in the manner desired by the Teacher, who knows everything as though it lay before his eyes. Work in that spirit and all will turn out well. Those who work zealously like that on the religious and secular side in accordance with my will, not those who show obedience before my face, but plan evil behind my back, those I will take under my protection, both in this life and the next. All will see that the Protectors of the Religion help those who walk in The Way. Those who break away from law and Custom and follow an evil road, these the Protectors will certainly punish.

Those who regard only their own interests, who help only those who please them and do not help others, those who, as at present, are untrustworthy, and do not exert themselves to work well, the aims of these will not be fulfilled, and all will see it. Then these may say, 'What ought we to do now?' and many repent of their former actions, but there will be no advantage therefrom. You will all see that, as long as I live, Tibet will remain happy and prosperous, as indeed it is at present.

Whatever troubles befall the people, I shall see, and I shall hold religious services for them in the future, as I have done in the past.

Now, I have given you clear instructions. There is no need for me to continue it further. The most important need for the welfare of the inside is that you should repent of your wrong actions in the past and ponder carefully and always on my instructions in the future.

If you are able to do this, I for my part will carry on the religious and civil administration to the best of my ability, so that good may result both now and in the future. I will keep in my mind the names and the purposes of all you ecclesiastical and secular officials. As for all the subjects, I will arrange that for the space of several hundreds of years they shall remain happy and prosperous as at present, and be free from great suffering. Be all of one mind, and work with zeal to the best of your ability, as in the olden days. That in itself will constitute a religious service; there is no need for you to perform any other religious services.

The above are my instructions in answer to your representations. It is of great importance that, day and night, in your four actions,<sup>11</sup> you should deliberate carefully on what I have written, and that without error you should reject what is evil, and follow what is good.

[Sir Charles Bell, *Portrait of a Dalai Lama: The Life and Times of the Great Thirteenth* (1946; reprint, London: Wisdom, 1987), 426-432.

The original Tibetan of the text is preserved in the anthology of "lessons" (*lapcha*) contained in the fourth volume of the *Collected Works of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama*. The traditional xylographic edition was published at the Zhöl Printery in Lhasa during the years following the Dalai Lama's death.]

## TIBETAN BUDDHISTS IN CHINA

### THE NINTH PAÑCHEN LAMA IN EXILE IN CHINA

These short passages are extracted from the collected works of the ninth Pañchen Lama, Lozang Tupten Chökyi Nyima (1883-1937). They include some of the most politically pointed remarks in this collection, all the more so because in the two tantric

<sup>11</sup>Walking, standing, sitting, sleeping.

ritual ceremonies in which they were pronounced, the Pañchen Lama was addressing large crowds (said to number in the tens of thousands) of Chinese citizens on their own terms. For this reason, he invoked the Chinese revolutionary leader Sun Yat-sen's ideology, which had been embraced by the Chinese Nationalist Government in power at that time. To indicate how closely he employed Sun's rhetoric, the Chinese phonetics of terms he used have been given. What is most remarkable about these texts is that he uses the phrase "our China" several times, which seems to indicate an acceptance of Tibet as being part of a greater China. This is less surprising when we remember that the Pañchen Lama was relying on the Chinese government to assist him in returning to his homeland. He had been exiled since 1924, when the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's government had started to imprison his followers in an effort to extract taxes (for use in building up the Tibetan army) from the Pañchen Lama's substantial estates. GT

#### 1932 KĀLACAKRA CEREMONY HELD IN THE FORBIDDEN CITY, BEIJING

In the Hall of Great Peace in the imperial palace, the pure place and home of the virtuous Mañjuṣa [emperor of the Qing dynasty] in Beijing, for the students of the venerable Kālacakra in the Buddhist community of religious people accepted by the lama, this text, *The Thousand Forms of Open Lotus Called Made-by-the-Rising-of-the-Sun*, containing the preliminary practices of the seven initiations as if for a child coming of age, was set down in brief and in a way that can be easily understood, without scriptural or detailed explanations.

At this time, I completely bestow on you the stages of the empowerment of the Bhagavat's [Lord Buddha's] Kālacakra Tantra. In general, these tantric empowerments are only taught to a few worthy vessels who practice the secret Dharma. However, the reason for the need for such a public teaching as today's is because at this time, if one says, "What is the reason that our country of *Zhongguo* [China] is unsettled and without happiness and both the state and the common people are very miserable?" then the answer is: "There is no proper adopting and abandoning of good and evil actions and their fruits." Therefore, now, although I do not have the ability to explain this Dharma, my wish is that the blessings of the jewels [of Buddhism] will give rise to the happiness of the state and the common people. Now my prayer is also thus.

You all should not be motivated only to realize your own self-interest; also be helpful to all the common people. The state and the common people really need to find a proper way to live. In that respect, if the religious and the political are not combined in numerous ways, it will be very difficult for there to be individual benefit. The way for that method to bring happiness and peace to the whole country—the way to live, for the *Zhongguo* [Chinese] state and the com-

mon people is through the Dharma, holding aloft the explanation of the evils to abandon and the virtues to practice. Moreover, you must be concerned with the importance of truly becoming of one mind with one another, as secular affairs are also your responsibility. Although I cannot now explain in detail the method for doing that, based on the advice in [Sun Yat-sen's] *Sanminzhuyi* [*The Three Principles of the People*], discard its offensive aspects and gather its good aspects and then put them into practice. If you are capable of benefiting the state, since the root of the Mahāyāna Dharma is also for the sake of others, I request that you continue to see it through to the end.

Written by the Buddhist Monk, Lozang Tupten Chökyi Nyima Gelek Namgyel Pelzangpo [the Pañchen Lama]. May all be well.

#### 1934 KĀLACAKRA CEREMONY IN HANGZHOU, CHINA

Our *Zhongguo* [China]'s races will become united in purpose. If this happens, no matter what external and internal affairs arise, large or small, they will be effortlessly resolved. As it says in our Tibetan proverb, "Having good fortune in internal affairs, external affairs will all be resolved." In the Director [Sun Yat-sen's] *Sanminzhuyi* [*The Three Principles of the People*] it also says, *ping zuo* ["made equal"], which is to say, "All races will be united in purpose and made equal [with one another]." Our *Zhongguo* officials should take care of the common people in whatever competent ways they can. The common people should also pay attention to the orders of the officials. Individually, your lands, your communities, and your businesses, whatever work you turn your hands to, make it all beneficial to the state. In actuality, through abiding in the ten virtuous [Buddhist] precepts,<sup>12</sup> this our *Zhongguo* state, whether from the religious or the worldly perspectives, will also be superior to foreign countries and remain so for a long time. Please, all of you take care to make effort and be kind, through the unified vision just discussed, so that all peoples can also have leisurely and happy lives.

[Blo bzang thub bstan chos kyi nyi ma, Pañchen Lama VI [IX], *Pañ chen thams cad mkhyen pa rje btsun blo bzang thub bstan chos kyi nyi ma dge legs rnam rgyal bzang po'i gsung 'bum* (The collected works of the ninth Pañchen Lama Blo bzang thub bstan chos kyi nyi ma) (1944; reprint, New Delhi: Reproduced from the Bkra shis lhun po blocks, 1973), vol. 1, 529, 533–535; 388–389. Trans. GT]

<sup>12</sup>The ten virtues are described as follows: the three good actions of body: 1) not destroying life; 2) not taking what has not been given; 3) refraining from improper sexual practices; the four good actions of speech: 4) not telling falsehoods; 5) not using abusive language; 6) not slandering others; 7) not indulging in irrelevant talk; and the three good actions of mind: 8) not being covetous; 9) not being malicious; 10) not holding destructive beliefs.