

**Statement from the Dalai Lama
after the death of Deng Xiaoping**

February 19, 1997

The demise of Mr. Deng Xiaoping is a great loss for China. I had known him personally when I visited China in 1954. Mr. Deng Xiaoping was a man of few words. He was a revolutionary and a great leader of China with an exceptional courage, perseverance, capability and leadership ability. Even in a large country that has a lot of problems there will certainly be some successes and some benefits. But as Mr. Deng was the leader of the Communist party's totalitarian system, even if he personally wanted to do some good, the system itself dictates what to do. So, it is inevitable that many mistakes were made. Mr. Deng endeavoured only to reform China economically and not politically and morally. This failure led to the tragedy of Tianamen Square, the absence of a democratic political system and the rule of law.

Mr. Deng Xiaoping played a more prominent role in the Tibet policy than any other leader in post-revolutionary China. Mr. Deng was personally involved in all of the major campaigns in Tibet - beginning with the occupation of Tibet in 1949/50 to the policies of the current days. Following Mr. Deng Xiaoping's statement in 1979, that apart from the question of total independence of Tibet all other issues could be discussed and resolved, I was hopeful that the issue of Tibet would be resolved during his lifetime.

Encouraged by the overall changes in China and the new pragmatic attitude towards the issue of Tibet, I have, since then, consistently and

sincerely made attempts to engage the Chinese government in earnest negotiations over the future of Tibet. Sadly, the Chinese government has not responded positively to my proposals and initiatives over the past 18 years for a negotiated resolution of our problem within the framework stated by Mr. Deng Xiaoping. On my part as soon as we receive a positive indication from Beijing I am ready to enter into negotiations anytime and anywhere without preconditions.

I very much regret that serious negotiations on the issue of Tibet could not take place during Mr. Deng's life time. The absence of Mr. Deng provides new opportunities and challenges for both the Tibetans and the Chinese. I hope the Chinese leadership will realise the wisdom of resolving the issue of Tibet through negotiations in a spirit of reconciliation and compromise. True stability must be based on mutual trust consent and benefit for all concerned, not on the use of force.

The Dalai Lama
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