

TIBETAN LAMAS IN WESTERN EYES

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The quiet competence with which many Tibetan exiles from their own land have found success in a new life in India, Europe and America is a fine example of their national resilience and initiative allied to a natural friendly charm and good manners.

That is no surprise to those who knew them in Tibet and I remember when Dr. David Snellgrove and I went in 1960 to discuss the future of the Tibetan refugees with the U.N. High Commission and were faced by a generally gloomy view that they would find it very difficult to adapt themselves to strange conditions, we vigorously maintained that, given a helping start, the Tibetans would rapidly do very well in their new surroundings.

Now among the many successful and popular figures in a variety of activities, there are many learned Lamas. Some have established teaching and meditation centres where they inspire their disciples by their dedicated sincerity and conviction. The most notable of the Lamas is, of course, the Dalai Lama.

On 17th March after two shells from Chinese batteries had fallen in the grounds of his summer palace when the hope of finding a peaceful outcome for the growing tension and hostility between Tibetans and Chinese had broken in violence, His Holiness left his capital secretly at night to seek refuge in India. A month later, after a journey full of danger and hardship, he arrived at Tezpur in Assam. Instead of the careworn exile some may have expected, the assembled pressmen saw a serene figure of great dignity and presence. He might have been a ruler secure in his throne paying a ceremonial visit; but behind the ease of manner and unfeigned friendliness many could perceive the spiritual depth which without affectation set the Dalai Lama apart from familiarity and made him effortlessly master of his surroundings.

There is beyond doubt something about a high lama that is outside the ordinary experience of our Western civilization. Even among the lesser lamas, of whom there were many, I found as well as calmness, benevolence, dignity and humour, the unfeigned certainty - so much part of the man that it would never occur to him to analyse or explain it - that he was not only the person we see but the same who had lived in the bodies of many predecessors. He is as sure of that as that he is himself. I shall not speculate

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how that comes about: but now H.H. the 14th Dalai Lama has become an international figure, the friend of religious and political leaders all over the world but also accessible with direct simplicity to many thousands of ordinary people whom he influences by his teaching of peace, mutual understanding and goodwill. I am not going to attempt the impossible task of explaining him; charisma is not something to be put into words, only to be experienced in personal contact. What I set out to do is to recall how some earlier lamas, who were never seen outside Asia, appeared to the eyes of the rare western visitors who chanced to see them in the seven centuries or so preceding this.

The first foreigners to meet Tibetans were Franciscan friars in the 13th century, braving the arduous journey to the court of the Mongol Khans who took pleasure in assembling round them representatives of every available religion whose blessings they accepted, indeed demanded, indiscriminately. They also enjoyed hearing debates between champions of the different faiths. In 1254 William of Rubruck met at that court a red-robed Tibetan priest with whom he had a long conversation - in what language it is not specified - and from whom he acquired some ill-digested information. He also saw a ten-year old child-monk said to be a reincarnation of two predecessors. He took part in a debate with the Buddhists in which he claims to have triumphed. If the Tibetans were his opponents they probably enjoyed debating then as much as they do today and, in the end, it was they who won the Khan's favour. William brought to the west the first version of the six letter prayer which he represents as Om Mani Baccam. About half a century later another Franciscan, John of Montecorvino, was at the Mongol capital in Peking where he met a red-hatted "Tibetan" pope - the Grand Trutius, (perhaps the Tisri who was at that time Sa-skya Lama Ye-shes Rin-chen) but he has nothing significant to say about him.

Then and for many years to come, foreigners who came in touch with Tibetans were mainly missionaries and so, professional critics and rivals of Buddhism. Further, lack of a common language stood in the way of mutual understanding. An exception, at least to the extent that he was a layman, was Marco Polo who was in China and Mongolia some years before Montecorvino. It is not clear whether he actually spoke to a Tibetan but he has a good deal to say about the priesthood whom he describes in general as "idolaters" and "Baksi". He never uses the word lama but mentions some idolaters as leading an ascetic life in great monasteries where the monks were of a superior kind. Marco's chief interest was in the more spectacular activities of the Bakshis who were able to control the weather and to perform miracles such as raising the Khan's drinking cup from one place to appear on the table in front of him. These persons whom he describes as generally dirty and unkempt, resembling perhaps some types of modern *ngags-pa*, were also credited with good deeds such as persuading the Khan to make charitable donations to the poor.

After the fourteenth century there was a long interval before a further meeting between foreign missionaries and Tibetans; and the scene moved from the east to the western spheres of Tibetan influence when the Jesuit Antonio d'Andrade paid a short visit in 1624 to the kingdom of Tsaparang. His mission had been sparked off by a report from a Portuguese merchant Diogo d'Almeida who claimed to have lived two years in Tibet, perhaps Ladakh, and affirmed that there were traces of Christian practices in that country, among them a bishop called Lama. That appears to be the first mention of the word in the western vocabulary. Andrade won favour with the lay ruler of Tsaparang who pressed him to return, describing him in a letter as his Lama. Andrade did go back the following year and met many lamas with whom he could communicate after a fashion through one of them who spoke Hindi. But close relations or any real study of Tibetan religion were not possible because his patron, the king, was on very bad terms with his preisthood who before long brought about his fall; and with it the Christian mission too came to an end.

A nearly simultaneous Jesuit mission reached central Tibet by way of Bhutan under fathers Cacella and Cabral. In Bhutan they saw the great reverence in which the Dharma Raja - the Zhabs-drung Rin-po-che - was held and the great state in which he lived but they were still seeking for traces of Christian practice and did not get the least idea of Tibetan religious beliefs. When they went on to Shigatse they became, like the Jesuits in Tsaparang, involved in rivalry between their protector the lay king and the lamas of differing sects, and learnt little more about Lamas and their ways except that they gradually perceived that they were not relics of past Christianity. Moreover they did not display the bigotry of another pair of Jesuits, Grueber and D'Orville, travelling from China to India who were the first foreigners to see Lhasa. They declined to seek a meeting with the Dalai Lama, describing him as "that devilish god the father who puts to death those who refuse to adore him". Doubtless he kept that ungracious thought to himself at that time for he admits that they were treated with great kindness by the Dalai Lama's own brother.

At last, in the early years of the 18th century there came to Lhasa the first foreigner to acquire a sound knowledge of Tibetan and an insight into Tibetan thought and learning. It is difficult to exaggerate the greatness of Ippolito Desideri and impossible in a few words to summarize his achievement. On his arrival at Lhasa in 1716 he was graciously received by the actual ruler, Latzang Khan. Within nine months he had learned enough Tibetan to write, in traditional verse-form, an exposition of Christian doctrine which he presented to the King and which created a great stir of interest. The King arranged for him to continue his studies first in Ramoche and later in Sera where he was allowed to celebrate mass for himself. His command of Tibetan led to many discussions with learned lamas and he was engaged on

composing a refutation of Buddhism when his studies were interrupted by the Dzungar invasion. The work, sadly now lost, was completed just before he had to leave Tibet in 1721. Later he wrote a careful account of Tibet, its people, customs, administration and, of course, its religion. In general he shows a respect for the institutions and conduct of the lamas and monks; and he found, as has been agreed many times since, that there is much in common in the moral principles and aims of both faiths; but his Christian beliefs made him denounce some aspects of Tibetan Buddhism as idolatrous and abominable. The sticking points then as later were Tibetan denial of a God and their doctrine of transmigration. Although he knew many lamas and had one special favourite who taught him Tibetan, he paints no picture of the character and personality of any of them; it is only of his patron Latsang Khan, to whom he was much indebted and whom he obviously liked, that he gives any personal description.,

He records the amazing veneration accorded to the Dalai Lama and to other lamas too: "would to God", he says "that Christian Catholics showed one-hundredth part of such sentiments to ... Religious of our Holy Church". And having seen the devotion of the common people to "Urgyen" which made them ready to sacrifice everything they had rather than give up their faith in him Desideri comments "I confess I blamed myself and was ashamed to have a heart so hard that I did not honour, love and serve Jesus, sole Master, sole and true Redeemer, as this people did a traitor and deceiver".

Desideri's view of reincarnating lamas carries Christian logic to a conclusion which modern readers may find an excess of dogma. He was impressed by the recognition of past possessions and associates and by the claims by newly discovered lamas to remember past existences and he rejects the idea that this is simply due to deceit and collusion; so, since it cannot be the work of God, it must be that of the Devil. But his careful examination of other Tibetan religious doctrines is generally impartial and acute.

The Capuchin missionaries who briefly preceded Desideri and continued after his departure until 1745, like him, enjoyed the protection and friendship especially of the lay chief administrator, Pholha Miwang, and also of the Dalai Lama and other monks. But they had no one of the calibre of Desideri among them and although several of them must have acquired the rudiments of Tibetan, only one, the gentle, devout, Orazio Della Penna is said to have been fully proficient in the language. They had many close acquaintances among the lamas with whom they held lengthy discussions; and they met the VIIth Dalai Lama on several occasions. They seem to have been more concerned with preaching their own beliefs than with attempting to understand those of the Tibetans and some of their letters show an

amusing naivety. They claim to have proved in argument with learned lamas that the Buddha was neither a deity nor a saint, that it was no sin to kill animals, and that the lamas with whom they were debating could not possibly be reincarnations. The lamas listened attentively. Orazio himself presented the Dalai Lama with a copy of his work refuting Buddhism. The Lama accepted it with interest and politely advised Orazio not to condemn the religion of other people. Nevertheless, one of the Capuchins reported that the Dalai Lama was teetering on the verge of conversion. All such optimism came to an abrupt end when a handful of lowly Tibetans whom they had converted were persuaded to disown their loyalty to the Dalai Lama. After being given every opportunity to recant, they received a comparatively mild flogging of twenty strokes and the fathers who tried to intercede were told by their patron Pholha Miwang that they should not interfere with the faith of other people, adding "we do not do so". After a short time when Pho Lha and the Dalai Lama declined to receive them, they were once more granted audience and were treated with the customary kindness but it was made clear that their actions were, in Tibetan eyes, an unworthy and discourteous return for years of tolerant hospitality. That was in effect the end for the Capuchin fathers and for a permanent Christian mission in Central Tibet. Dispirited and out of funds, the good Orazio Della Penna, who had been for twenty two years in Tibet, left Lhasa in April 1745 only to die of weariness and sorrow at the age of sixty five soon after his arrival in Nepal.

Nearly thirty years later there was a mission of quite a different sort when Warren Hastings despatched George Bogle as his envoy to Tashilhunpo with the aim of encouraging friendship and commerce between India and Tibet. Bogle, an intelligent, observant and cheerfully sociable Scot, was singularly fortunate to meet in the person of the Third Panchen Lama the most powerful and popular figure in Tibet at the time and he has left the first lively description of a great Lama as a warm human personality as well as a charismatic leader.

On his first receptions at Tashirabgye Bogle was charmed by the engaging manner of the Lama and thereafter for the best part of five months was frequently in his company and in that of his hospitable, light-hearted family. The Lama clearly enjoyed Bogle's presence and treated him with the greatest consideration, sending dress and food to make his stay more comfortable. Bogle attended the Lama on his journey to Tashilhunpo, at formal reception and at religious ceremonies; and, more important, he had about thirty private meetings when the Lama who had a fair knowledge of Hindi, received him with friendly informality, spoke freely about all aspects of the political situation and approved of Bogle's hopes of closer relations between India and Tibet. Bogle was regularly invited to religious services and, from courtesy and in the interest of occupying his time, he always attended. He has described well enough what he saw of temples, services

and so on but shows no real interest in the meaning of it all and on the one occasion when the Panchen initiated a conversation about religion Bogle seems to have absorbed little of his explanation of Buddhist doctrines and, on his part, made it clear that he was no missionary with an evangelistic axe to grind, and was politely vague and non-committal in his interpretation of Christian tenets. They came to the usual agreement that the moral aims of their faiths were similar.

His close acquaintance with his host moved Bogle to admiration, respect and affection. He wrote :

"His disposition is open, candid, and generous. He is extremely merry and entertaining in conversation and tells a pleasant story with a great deal of humour and action. I endeavoured to find out, in his character, those defects which are inseparable from humanity, but he is so universally beloved that I had no success and not a man could find in his heart to speak ill of him."

He has much more to say about his gentleness, his preference for conciliation, his diplomatic sagacity, and of the profound veneration and devotion in which he was held; and, in general he says "I never knew a man for whom on so short acquaintance I had half the heart's liking".

No foreigner has lived on terms of closer confidence and intimacy with a Great Lama; and Bogle parted from the Panchen, his family, Tibet and its people, with genuine sadness. Later, writing to his sister, he regrets the absence of his friend the "Teshu Lama" for whom I have a hearty liking and could be happy again to have his fat hand on my head".

Bogle may not have achieved any great practical success but he had paved the way for future friendly relations and Hastings determined to follow this up by another mission. Sadly the Panchen and Bogle were not to meet again; the former died in China in 1780 and Bogle a year later in Calcutta.

So, the next envoy to Tashilhunpo, in 1783, was Captain Samuel Turner, an English officer in the East India Company's army. Hastings was good at choosing men and Turner like Bogle was able, observant and intelligent, also he was patient and able to get on well with Tibetans but from the rather formal language of his account he seems to have lacked Bogle's warm spontaneity and sense of fun, and he did not have Bogle's advantage in meeting any figure comparable to the Third Panchen Lama for at his visit the new reincarnation was only eighteen months old; but he has left, in the

rather staid language of the eighteenth century, an enchanting account of his reception by the child:

"The Lama's eyes were scarcely ever turned from us and when our cups of tea were empty he appeared uneasy, throwing back his head and contracting the skin of his brow, and continued to make a noise, for he could not speak, until they were filled again. He took some sugar out of a golden cup ... and stretching out his arm made a motion to his attendants to give it to me". Turner then addressed the child briefly for "it was hinted that notwithstanding he is unable to reply, it is not to be inferred that he cannot understand". During Turner's speech "The little creature turned, looking steadfastly towards me, with the appearance of much attention while I spoke, and nodded with repeated but slow movements of his head, as though he understood and appreciated every word but could not utter a reply. His parents who stood by all the time eyed their son with a look of affection and a smile expressive of heartfelt joy at the propriety of the young Lama's conduct. His whole attention was directed toward us; he was silent and sedate, never once looking towards his parents, as if under their influence at any time; and with whatsoever pains, his manners may have been so correctly formed, I must own that his behaviour, on this occasion, appeared perfectly natural and spontaneous, and not directed by any external action, or sign of authority"

The child, Bstan-pa'i Nyi-ma, grew up to be a personage of almost equal importance to his predecessor, Bogle's friend, and lived to the age of seventy three.

The promising start to relations between India and Tibet was stultified by the closing of the country after the Gorkha invasion in 1792, and it was left to Thomas Manning, a sensitive, intellectual, English eccentric to find his own way to Lhasa in 1811, apparently without serious obstruction. Manning was a friend of Charles Lamb who was fascinated by his "incomparable genius, congenial nature, sparkling eccentricity and addiction to occasional levity"; he was also a considerable linguist who became specially attracted to China and having mastered the language and manners, wanted to travel in remote parts. He arrived at Calcutta in Chinese dress which did little to disguise his nationality, and with a Chinese servant and the help of Chinese living in Tibet, he found his way through Bhutan to Lhasa. His fragmentary diary, though containing several significant observations, is largely given up to the discomforts of the journey. At Lhasa he paid his respects to the Chinese Amban and seems to have received official hospitality from the Tibetans, apparently in his role as a foreign physician. He had no difficulty in securing audience of the Ninth Dalai Lama, Lung-rtoqs rgya-mtsho. At his reception Manning prostrated himself three times and offered a scarf and presents. His

account is another classic : "The Lama's beautiful and interesting face engrossed almost all my attention. He was at the time about seven years old (actually, he was just six); had the simple, unaffected manners of a well-educated princely child. His face was, I thought, poetically and affectingly beautiful. He was of a gay and cheerful disposition; his beautiful mouth perpetually unbending into a graceful smile, which illuminated his whole countenance. Sometimes, particularly when he had looked at me, his smile almost approached to a gentle laugh. No doubt my grim beard and spectacles somewhat excited his risibility". There was an exchange of formal questions and compliments before Manning withdrew. He says: "I was extremely affected by this interview with the Lama. I could have wept through strangeness of sensation. I was absorbed in reflections when I got home". He paid five more visits to the Lama but has left no detailed comment on those occasions.

In 1845/46 missionaries appeared once more at Lhasa. The Lazarist fathers, Evariste Huc and Joseph Gabet had set out in 1844 from the borders of China, north of Peking, on instructions from the Pope to survey the mission field in Mongolia. A long journey brought them at the end of 1845, by way of Nagchukha to Lhasa where they were received kindly by the Tibetans but with suspicious hostility by the Chinese Amban who evicted them after about three months and compelled them to return eastwards through Tibet instead of proceeding by the short journey to India. During their stay, like all missionaries before them, they received the patronage of the lay authority, in this case the senior minister, Shatra, whom they wrongly describe as the Regent. They were allowed to make a chapel and preach their faith and they had the usual anodyne discussions about religion with Shatra and a few monks. Owing to a smallpox scare they were unable to meet the Dalai Lama, Mkha's-grub rgya-mtsho, who was then about eight years old, and have little to say about him as a person. But they were much impressed by what they heard of the Panchen Lama, the same whom Turner had met in 1784, now sixty-five years old, a figure of majestic presence with a great reputation for sanctity and learning. He had also acted as Regent for eight months from September 1844 to May 1845. Petech appears to state that he remained at Lhasa until about September 1846 but this seems improbable for the missionaries evidently did not meet him but were advised to go to Tashilhunpo to do so, which they were unable to do.

After the Lazarists the age of explorers and adventurers in the competition to be first into Lhasa, set in. The arrogant bullying and not infrequent deceit by some of these travellers did nothing to enhance the reputation of foreigners in Tibetan eyes. They met few Tibetans of any standing, had no common language and were generally more interested in the topography than the people.

It was not until the mould of exclusion was broken by the rough wooing of the Younghusband expedition that a Great Lama was seen again by foreigners. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama after his enforced flight to China was met by the American diplomat W.W. Rockhill who spent a week with him at Wu-tai shan. He comments on the Lama's undoubted intelligence and ability, great natural dignity, quick temper but kindly cheerfulness; his thoughtfulness and courtesy as a host. He also describes his personal appearance in considerable detail. The Vicomte D'Ollonne also met the Dalai Lama at Wu-tai shan for a short rather formal visit from which he got an impression of the Lama as a statesman and man of action. Later, the friend of longest standing and closest intimacy was Sir Charles Bell who looked after the Dalai Lama when he took refuge in India in 1910 and was in constant contact with him when he was invited to Lhasa in 1921. Bell has written about the Dalai Lama with deep affection and respect in 'Portrait of the Dalai Lama', which I cannot attempt to summarize: enough to quote him that the Dalai Lama and he were "men of like minds". From Bell's account the powerful personality of the Lama emerges clearly but it is as a strong-minded man of action and administrative ability and political interests rather than of deep spirituality and that is the impression conveyed not only by Rockhill and D'Ollonne but also by the Japanese Kawaguchi and by Political Officers who visited Lhasa after Bell until the death of the Dalai Lama in 1933. He was nevertheless profoundly learned in Buddhist doctrine but apparently in an intellectual way and he was eager in his position as head of the church to see that the standard of teaching and achievement in religious studies was improved.

By contrast, his contemporary the Sixth Panchen Lama impressed all who met him by his gentleness and spirituality. Sir Frederick O'Connor, who was fluent in Tibetan, enjoyed a warm friendship with him beginning with visits to Tashilhunpo in 1904 and 1905; he later accompanied the Lama on his visit to India. O'Connor tells a pleasant story that on their first meeting, the Panchen Lama, referring, without the need of explanation, to the visits of Bogle and Turner to two of his predecessors, expressed his pleasure at meeting British officers "again" and recalling the happy relations he had had with them. He also showed O'Connor a number of presents - watches, china, silver and so on - received on those early occasions. O'Connor writes with affection of the gentle and saintly character of the Lama and the love and reverence of his people towards him. Unfortunately he was drawn innocently into a short-lived plan in which O'Connor, perhaps carried away by his admiration for the Lama, sought to set him up as a substitute for the absent Dalai Lama. This had tragic consequences for the Panchen Lama who was to end his life in exile, and for the peace of Tibet. Sir Charles Bell wrote of him: "Truly the Tashi Lama has a wonderful personality. Somewhat short in stature, with a fair and healthy complexion, the smile with which he regards you is touched with the quiet saintliness of one who prays and works

for all mankind, but it is at the same time the smile of a friend who takes a personal and sympathetic interest in your own concerns. It is not surprising that he should be loved by his people. It is good that there is such a man in Tibet; it is good that there are such men in the world". The great explorer Sven Hedin described him in even more enthusiastic terms: "Wonderful, never to be forgotten, incomparable Tashi Lama", and related the deep impression made by his calm, dignity and courtesy and his wide humanity: "Extraordinary, unique, incomparable !"

The participation of the Panchen Lama, whether willingly or not, in political matters beginning with the plans of Frederick O'Connor and continuing through his enmeshment in Chinese designs on Tibet since his flight from Tibet in 1926 until his death in 1937 are a sadly uncharacteristic story. And the involvement of the two Great Lamas in international politics to some extent robbed them of their remote mystery but, although there remained an aura of spirituality it made them more credible human beings.

Today the balance has changed. The present Panchen Lama is something of an enigma. In the early days of the Tibetan tragedy he appeared as the political creature and puppet of the Chinese; and contentious and offensive words were put into his mouth. But people who have met him lately emphasize that when he is able to speak for himself he is a true Tibetan and Buddhist.

The Dalai Lama - Chos-srid gnyis-ldan, Master of Religion and State - is inevitably and deeply concerned with the politics of his country and when he speaks of them, which he does mainly on special occasions and when he is specifically asked about them, he makes his views and meaning clear but in balanced and temperate language. In his daily life and in his public utterances politics are subordinated to his deep, innate feeling for religion, and the good of all beings. His radiant, generous spirituality in all he says has restored the mystique of the incarnate Lama underlying his warm humanity and approachability.

As I have said charisma is not to be described. I make no further attempt to do so and will only add my twentieth century workaday account of a child Lama to the incomparable descriptions by Turner and Manning.

On 6th October 1939 the whole population of Lhasa, so it seemed, had congregated in bright cool autumn weather on the plain below Rikya monastery some two miles from Lhasa, where a great camp had been ornamented with auspicious designs in blue, sheltered the tent proper, the roof of which was even more splendidly decorated with religious symbols in gold, red and blue and with golden peacock figures perched on the roof



DALAI LAMA, FEBRUARY, 1940

pole. The front was open showing the inner walls lined with splendid gold, red and blue brocade hangings and with bright banners hanging from the supporting poles. In the centre stood the tall throne of the Dalai Lama, covered in patterned gold and red brocade. There was a lower throne at one side for the Regent. The crowd waited in tense excitement which was heightened when the band of the Dalai Lama's bodyguard, which had gone out to meet him, was heard in the distance; and soon in a cloud of dust and of incense smoke from burners all along the route, the first banners of the procession came in sight. Long trumpets sounded from the monastery above and the crowd pressed forward eagerly. A small troop of Chinese soldiers in dusty quilted clothes came first at a quick pace and then a long line of mounted men, carriers of banners and symbols, and then the whole body of Tibetan officials in ascending importance in magnificent brocades and white or crimson topped hats. At last in the centre of the cavalcade we saw a small carrying chair draped in yellow silk, and through the glass window the face of the little Dalai Lama could be seen looking calmly but curiously at the mass of people prostrating themselves by the roadside, many weeping with joy. The procession moved at a rapid pace up the hill to the monastery where the child was to have a short rest and change his clothes. Soon he was carried down the winding path in the large gilded state palanquin with eight bearers in yellow silk and red tasselled hats. The whole official body accompanied him into the camp to the Peacock Tent where he was lifted on to the throne by his Lord Chamberlain. Everyone then took their proper places in the enclosure and we members of the British Mission and those of the Nepalese and Chinese, were led to our seats. Ours were just in front of the Dalai Lama's father, mother and family. The Regent opened proceedings by prostrating three times before the Dalai Lama and then offering him a scarf; after which the officials began to file past to offer white scarves and receive the blessing. The child, wearing yellow brocade and a yellow, peaked hat with a fur brim sat quietly and with great dignity, completely at ease in these strange surroundings, giving the proper blessing to each person, with both hands or one, or with a tassel on the end of a rod, according to their rank. He looked often in our direction, partly because we were so near to his parents but also it seemed, fascinated by our unfamiliar appearance; and when our turn came to offer our scarves he was smiling broadly and as I bent down for his blessing he took a pull at my hair. But a greater centre of amusement and interest were the rosy face and fair hair of Reginald Fox, the Mission Radio Officer; the Dalai Lama felt his hair for quite a long time. After us the stream of worshippers continued to flow for over an hour until at last tea in a golden tea-pot studded with turquoise was brought in; the tea was first tasted formally by a high official then poured into a jade cup and offered to the Dalai Lama. He was then lifted down and carried back in state up to the monastery.

Although not surprisingly he seemed a little tired at the end of the long day his behaviour through the whole ceremony was movingly impressive. He maintained a calm and interested appearance and a look of happy benevolence. The rapt devotion of the Tibetan crowd could almost be felt and all of us like Manning experienced "the strangeness of sensation".

Later, Sir Basil Gould came to Lhasa for the installation ceremony. By then I had left Lhasa but Gould has left a very full account of the story of the discovery and recognition of the child as well as of the enthronement. He tells of his receptions by the Dalai Lama, describing his steady gaze and absorption in what was going on, and using the language of Isaiah "Unto us a child is born".

When I returned to Lhasa in 1944 and on many later occasions, I was formally received by the Dalai Lama and never failed to be impressed, as he grew up, by his composure, his self-possession and his look of kindly interest. As he was a minor all my time in Tibet and state affairs were conducted by the Regent, I never had an opportunity to meet and talk to him privately. During much of that time my friend Heinrich Harrer was frequently in contact with the Dalai Lama whose curiosity about the outside world and things mechanical he was able to satisfy in many ways. Harrer has told his remarkable story in 'Seven Years in Tibet'. I was fortunate in being able to exchange, through him, messages with the Dalai Lama to whom I used to send cinema films, illustrated magazines and books, and flowers from our garden. But it was only after he had reached safety in India that I was able to meet him personally on several occasions, first at Mussoorie in 1960 and then at Dharamsala in 1961 when I was privileged to enjoy his hospitality at delightfully informal family lunch and dinner parties. At those meetings I could feel the immediate impact of his personality. Behind the simple often humorous friendliness of manner shone a transparent goodness, an inner peace devoid of hatred and a wide compassion not only for the pressing needs of his own people but for the wider troubles and cares of all humanity. That feeling perhaps developed even greater intensity in the travels he was later to undertake all over the world and in his meetings with leading religious and political figures in many countries.

For me, my experience in those meetings in India showed that "His Holiness" was not merely a title but a reality.