

Living Buddhas of Tibet

世界の屋根で起きていること

チベットは富士山頂とほぼ同じ高さ、ヒマラヤ山麓にある。山の中で特異な発達を遂げた仏教でも名高いが、遙か北、砂漠を超えたモンゴルあたりまでその仏教がひろがっているところからも、昔はインドと中国の間に一大勢力を張っていたことが知れる。そのチベットが中国に占領されたあと、活仏がインドへ逃げる事件が相つぎ、亡命政権を樹立している。中国がなぜそれほどの無理をしてまでチベットを放さないのか。それは、チベットの南にあるインドへの圧力を加えるには、核兵器配備基地としてチベット周辺がどうしても必要なのだ、と活仏は見る。

Tibet is known as “the roof of the world.” Surrounded by the Himalayas, Karakoram and Kunlun mountain ranges, Tibet is located at an average of 3,600 meters above sea level, which is almost the same level as the summit of Mt. Fuji in Japan. Before the 1950s Tibet was a mysterious country that sought isolation from the rest of the world. It had its own culture, religion and language. The large major- 5
ity of people in Tibet were farmers, nomads, and shepherds. The rest of the population was made up of traders, monks, nuns, and nobility. There was very little economic development and the people led simple lives.

All this changed in 1950 when the People’s Republic of China invaded and occupied Tibet. The Chinese tried to remake Tibetan society by taking away the property of 10
the Tibetans, making a collective system of agriculture and suppressing the practice of Buddhism.

Tibetans now live in the Tibet Autonomous Region of the People’s Republic of China. But, in actuality, only about one half of Tibetans live there and the rest live in the neighboring Qinghai and Sichuan provinces where they have lived for many gener- 15
ations.

The spiritual leader of Tibet is the Dalai Lama. Translated into English his name means “Ocean of Wisdom.” Starting in the seventh century, Tibet fought for supremacy over Central Asia with China and Muslim nations. After the country’s king was killed in the ninth century, the central government lost political power and 20
Tibet became a unique nation with only decentralized power but a common religion in its own form of Buddhism. When the Dalai Lama declared independence in 1913, it