



English 2030

The Tibetan Experience

I find hope in the darkest of days, and focus in the brightest. I do not judge the universe

-His Holiness Dalai Lama

It was evident that life was getting too monotonous for me, so I bought that train ticket to Dharamshalaⁱ hoping it would be my mental getaway. Little did I know that it would be one of the most life changing retreats I've ever taken.

I made my way to the train station with a bag filled with only 4 pairs of clothes, I was definitely backpacking. After twenty nine long hours on the train, I finally reached my destination; the hill station of Dharamshala. As I got out of the train, I noticed something. I saw posters which screamed "Free Tibet"ⁱⁱ on it and as I approached the poster, a man crept behind me and unexpectedly grabbed my shoulder. He screamed, "The Chinese have no right to take over my land, I will die for Tibet!"ⁱⁱⁱ At that moment I was stunned to see an old man with such fury in his eyes, I knew it was time to understand the situation.

I stayed at a hotel and the next morning went exploring in the lush green trails. Coming across the Dal Lake^{iv} in the middle of the forest was a wonderful experience, then I left quickly to McLeod Ganj^v. As I was climbing the hill, I saw a small shop that read "Exiles Shop"...I had to check it out. There were free Tibet posters and T-shirts, so I felt like it would be right to support the cause by funding these exiles. The man who sold me my t-shirt insisted I go with him to The Dalai Lama's monastery for his lecture, I had to take a chance.

He looked at the hundreds of people who entered his Monastery, then quickly looked back at his Holy Scroll. He sighed. “When will peace come to this world?” And when will they release my prodigy?” His advisor told him about the protests^{vi} in New Delhi as a way of calming his mind. As he took a sip of water, the words which would come out of his mouth would be for love...not hate. “Ahimsa^{vii}.” He started. “This is not hate, violence, or revenge.” “It is the simple way of getting along as brothers.” He started to talk about the Panchen Lama^{viii}, and how he deserves more than being a prisoner in China. “They are taking our resources^{ix}, but its okay...our brothers will realize what they are doing, and will stop.”

I was stunned to hear such peaceful talks, from such an affected victim. I knew he was right about what Tibet deserves.

After hearing The Dalai Lama (and shaking his hand), I went off to New Delhi to join the protesters. As I entered the rally, I noticed something. It was like a contradiction when I saw violent protests and people screaming hate chants towards China. I was dumbfounded to see people burning the Chinese flag, and hear them say death to China. I wanted to leave but as soon as I tried, a cop came and arrested me. “You Goddamn protesters are messing up everything!” He screamed. I wanted to tell him that I disapproved of their actions, but it was too late. After my parents bribed the police, I returned to my home in Gujarat changed.

I learned so much from negative and positive experiences in North India. I have no trauma in life, but I understand the people who do and to what extent they are willing to go in order to achieve bliss. I had the opportunity to meet with the psychologist Dr. Eileen Borris (through my father), and discuss the issue of the Tibetans in exile and what we could do to help. She started to explain to me about her group, “The Global Peace Initiative^x” and how they try to psychologically heal Tibetans who have faced many problems from the Chinese invaders. The fact that the Chinese have tortured and killed so many of their people gives them a chance to try and revolt.

Understanding the way of ahimsa and non-violence gave me a path in life. It showed me that we are all brothers and we tend to make mistakes, but it is our duty to help one another. His

Holiness the Dalai Lama has a plan. Similar to Gandhi, Mandela, and Dr. King...he will guide us to the right path and show us that we have no enemies.

Our prime purpose in this life is to help others. And if you can't help them, at least don't hurt them.

-Dalai Lama at the monastery in 2008

i A city in Himachal Pradesh India which is in the north. It is also the home of the Dalai Lama and his exiled government (wikipedia)

ii Free Tibet is a slogan used commonly as a way of protest against the Chinese invasion of Tibet. It is widely known to be associated with the Dalai Lama itself.

iii Tibet has maintained throughout its history a national identity distinct from that of China. On October 1, 1949, the People's Republic of China was formally proclaimed in Beijing and the following year launched an armed invasion of Tibet. When China's People's Liberation Army invaded Tibet, Tibet was an independent state.

(<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/tibet.htm>)

Also 87,000 Tibetans were killed, arrested or deported to labor camps, therefore the exile. The Tibetans lost their fundamental rights as human beings and under the Chinese rule, became just an asset in a land which attracts the Chinese for the wrong reasons. (<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/tibet.htm>)

iv A beautiful lake which is surrounded by forests and near is a small Shiva temple for worship (primary research)

v It is in the Dauladhar Range which is home to the exiles of Tibet. The Dalai Lama's government works there too and it is known for the Tibetan way of Buddhism, and preserved culture (wikipedia)

vi The protests in New Delhi during the Beijing Olympics in 2008 was widely known as the torch of shame and 15,000 policemen protected the protest. 32 exiled Tibetans occupied the streets of Rajpath where the torch was expected to pass. More than 5,000 Tibetans and Indians were gathered in Sathya Sthal for the freedom of Tibet.

(<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/The-torch-goes-to-India,-amid-protests-for-the-Tibetan-victims-and-police-protection-12040.html>)

vii Ahimsa means to do no harm. The Dalai Lama feels that violence is not a resort to lean on and people should make decisions in a peaceful manner. Some believe that it is in our blood to have violence and Darwin's theory states that survival of the fittest translates as the survival of the mightiest. The Dalai Lama wants to use Ahimsa as a tool to remove the Chinese influence out of his home country Tibet.

(http://www.lifepositive.com/Mind/Peace/The_Politics_of_Ahimsa102005.asp)

viii The Panchen Lama is supposed to be the 14th Dalai Lama but as the Chinese conquered Tibet, he became a political prisoner in China along with his family. After the death of the Dalai Lama, it is his responsibility to take his position as a spiritual leader and guide his people with the path of Ahimsa. In the November of 1995, China selected a new Panchen Lama. (<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/The-Panchen-Lama-turns-19;-13-years-spent-as->

[prisoner-of-Beijing-12107.html](#))

ix China opened a new railway in the July of 2007 which was a 4 Billion dollar project to “develop” the economy in Tibet. Resources such as copper, iron, lead, zinc and other minerals were discovered in 1999, and those resources are worth around 128 Billion dollars according to an article on a Chinese website. Tibet has 40 Million tons of copper, 40 Million tons of zinc, and more than a billion tons of iron. “Clearly China's leaders have never intended the railway to benefit Tibetans,” says Matt Whitticase at the London-based organization Free Tibet Campaign. (http://money.cnn.com/2007/02/20/magazines/fortune/lustgarten_china.fortune/index.htm)

X In the global peace initiative, Dr. Eileen Borris (psychologist) helped out many Tibetans suffering from trauma during their exile. She carried out a week long training course for 21 young Tibetan professionals. By training the professionals instead of the exiled Tibetan Government, the people in all levels of the society would be able to learn from them and start becoming more educated so that they could make a difference in a higher scale. The course included: conflict resolution, mediation, problem solving, and dialogue with Ahimsa as the main approach. Her main goal was to develop the minds of the young Tibetans so that they can teach the new generation, and old, how to approach situations. (<http://www.globalpeaceinitiatives.com/global-initiatives-tibet.html>)