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14th Dalai Lama

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14th Dalai Lama

Tenzin Gyatso

His Holiness the 14th *Dalai Lama*



Reign 17 November 1950 – present

Predecessor [Thubten Gyatso](#)

Prime Ministers *See list*

- Lukhangwa
- Lobsang Tashi
- Jangsa Tsang
- Zurkhang Ngawang Gelek
- Shenkha Gurmey Topgyal
- Garang Lobsang Rigzin
- Kunling Wooser Gyaltso
- Wangue Dorji
- Juchen Thupten Namgyal
- Kelsang Yeshi
- Gyalo Thondup
- Tenzin Tethong
- Sonam Topgyal
- [Lobsang Tenzin](#)
- Lobsang Sangay

Tibetan

Wylie bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho

Pronunciation [tʰɛ́ tsɿ càtsʰo]

Transcription (PRC) Dainzin Gyaco

THDL Tenzin Gyatso

Chinese —

Pinyin Dānzēng Jiācuò

Father Choekyong Tsering

Mother Diki Tsering

Born 6 July 1935 (age 76)

Dondrub,^[2] 6 July 1935) is the 14th and current [Dalai Lama](#). Dalai Lamas are the most influential figures in the [Gelugpa](#) lineage of [Tibetan Buddhism](#), although the 14th has consolidated control over the other lineages in recent years. He won the [Nobel Peace Prize](#) in 1989, and is also well known for his lifelong advocacy for Tibetans inside and outside Tibet. Tibetans traditionally believe him to be the [reincarnation](#) of his predecessors and a [manifestation](#) of [the Bodhisattva of Compassion](#).

The Dalai Lama was born in [Taktser, Qinghai](#) (also known to Tibetans as [Amdo](#))^[3], and was selected as the [rebirth](#) of the [13th Dalai Lama](#) two years later, although he was only formally recognized as the 14th Dalai Lama on 17 November 1950, at the age of 15. He inherited control over a government controlling an area roughly corresponding to the [Tibet Autonomous Region](#) just as the nascent [People's Republic of China](#) wished to reassert central control over it. There is a dispute over whether the respective governments reached [an agreement](#) for a joint Communist-Lamaist administration.

During the [1959 Tibetan uprising](#), which China regards as an uprising of [feudal landlords](#), the Dalai Lama, who regards the uprising as an expression of widespread discontent, fled to [India](#), where he denounced the People's Republic and established a [Tibetan government in exile](#). A charismatic speaker, he has since traveled the world, advocating for the welfare of Tibetans, teaching Tibetan Buddhism and talking about the importance of compassion as the source of a happy life. Around the world, institutions face pressure from China not to accept him. He has spoken about such topics as [abortion](#), [economics](#), firearms, and [sexuality](#), and has attracted controversy for his treatment of [Dorje Shugden](#) followers, his relationship with the [CIA](#), and other issues.

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Early life and background



The Dalai Lama as a boy

Lhamo Döndrub (or *Thondup*) was born on 6 July 1935 to a farming and horse trading family in the small hamlet of [Taktser](#),^[1] in the eastern border of the former Tibetan region of [Amdo](#), then already assimilated into the Chinese province of [Qinghai](#).^{[4][5]} He was one of seven siblings to survive childhood. The eldest was his sister Tsering Dolma, eighteen years older. His eldest brother, Thupten Jigme Norbu, had been recognised at the age of eight as the reincarnation of the high [Lama Taktser Rinpoche](#). His sister, Jetsun Pema, spent most of her adult life on the [Tibetan Children's Villages](#) project. The Dalai Lama's first language was, in his own words, "a broken [Xining](#) language which was (a dialect of) the [Chinese language](#)" as his family did not speak the local Tibetan language.^[6]

The Dalai Lama and his family spoke a dialect of Xining Chinese as their primary language prior to 1939 when they relocated to [Lhasa](#).^[7]

Tibetans traditionally believe Dalai Lamas to be the [reincarnation](#) of their predecessors, each of whom is believed to be a human emanation of the [bodhisattva Avalokitesvara](#). A search party was sent to locate the new [incarnation](#) when the boy who was to become the 14th was about two years old.^[8] It is said that, amongst other omens, the head of the embalmed body of the [thirteenth Dalai Lama](#), at first facing south-east, had mysteriously turned to face the northeast—indicating the direction in which his successor would be found. The [Regent](#), Reting Rinpoche, shortly afterwards had a vision at the sacred lake of [Lhamo La-tso](#) indicating Amdo as the region to search—specifically a one-story house with distinctive guttering and tiling. After extensive searching, the Thondup house, with its features resembling those in Reting's vision, was finally found.

Thondup was presented with various relics, including toys, some of which had belonged to the [13th Dalai Lama](#) and some of which had not. It was reported that he had correctly identified all the items owned by the previous Dalai Lama, exclaiming, "That's mine! That's mine!"^[9]



House where the 14th Dalai Lama was born

The Chinese Muslim General [Ma Bufang](#) did not want the 14th Dalai Lama to succeed his predecessor. Ma Bufang stationed his men to place the Dalai Lama under effective house arrest, saying it was needed for "protection", refusing to permit his leaving to Tibet.^[10] He did all he could to delay the transport of the Dalai Lama from Qinghai to Tibet, by demanding massive sums of money in silver.^[11] The demanded payment by Ma Bufang was 100,000 Chinese silver dollars.^[12]

Lhamo Thondup was recognised formally as the reincarnated Dalai Lama and renamed **Jetsun Jamphel Ngawang Lobsang Yeshe Tenzin Gyatso** (*Holy Lord, Gentle Glory, Compassionate, Defender of the Faith, Ocean of Wisdom*) although he was not formally enthroned as the temporal ruler of Tibet until the age of 15; instead, the [regent](#) acted as the head of the Kashag until that time. [Tibetan Buddhists](#) normally refer to him as Yishin Norbu (*Wish-Fulfilling Gem*), Kyabgon (*Saviour*), or just Kundun (*Presence*). His devotees often call him *His Holiness the Dalai Lama*, the [style](#) employed on the Dalai Lama's website.

Monastic education commenced at the age of six years, his principal teachers being Yongdzin Ling Rinpoche (senior tutor) and Yongdzin [Trijang Rinpoche](#) (junior tutor). At the age of 11 he met the [Austrian](#) mountaineer [Heinrich Harrer](#), who became his [videographer](#) and tutor about the world outside [Lhasa](#). Harrer effectively became one of the young Dalai Lama's tutors, teaching him about the outside world. The two remained friends until Harrer's death in 2006.^[13]

During 1959, at the age of 23, he took his final examination at [Lhasa's Jokhang Temple](#) during the annual Monlam or *prayer* Festival. He passed with honours and was awarded the [Lharampa degree](#), the highest-level [geshe](#) degree, roughly equivalent to a doctorate in [Buddhist philosophy](#).^{[8][14]}

Life as the Dalai Lama



Lhasa's Potala Palace, today a [UNESCO world heritage site](#),

pictured in 2006

Main article: [Dalai Lama](#)

Historically the Dalai Lamas had political and religious influence in the Western Tibetan area of [Ü-Tsang](#) around [Lhasa](#), where the [Gelug](#) school of [Tibetan Buddhism](#) was popular and the Dalai Lamas held land under their jurisdiction. In 1939, at the age of four, the present Dalai Lama was taken in a procession of lamas to Lhasa.

The Dalai Lama's childhood was spent between the [Potala Palace](#) and [Norbulingka](#), his summer residence.

China asserts that the [Kuomintang](#) government ratified the 14th Dalai Lama and that a Kuomintang representative, General Wu Zhongxin, presided over the ceremony. It cites a ratification order dated February 1940, and a documentary film of the ceremony.^[15] According to [Tsering Shakya](#), Wu Zhongxin along with other foreign representatives was present at the ceremony, but there is no evidence that he presided over it.^[16] He also wrote:

"On 8 July 1949, the Kashag [Tibetan Parliament] called Chen Xizhang, the acting director of the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission office in Lhasa. He was informed that the Tibetan Government had decided to expel all Chinese connected with the Guomindang Government. Fearing that the Chinese might organize protests in the streets of Lhasa, the Kashag imposed a curfew until all the Chinese had left. This they did on 14, 17 and 20 July 1949. At the same time the Tibetan Government sent a telegram to General Chiang Kai-shek and to President Liu Zongren informing them of the decision."^[17]



The Dalai Lama (right) and Panchen Lama (left) meet [Mao Zedong](#) in 1955.

During his reign, a border crisis erupted with the [Republic of China](#) in 1942. Under orders from the [Kuomintang](#) government of [Chiang Kai-shek](#), [Ma Bufang](#) repaired Yushu airport to prevent Tibetan separatists from seeking independence.^[18] Chiang also ordered Ma Bufang to put his Muslim soldiers on alert for an invasion of Tibet in 1942.^[19] Ma Bufang complied, and moved several thousand troops to the border with Tibet.^[20] Chiang also threatened the Tibetans with aerial bombardment if they worked with the Japanese. Ma Bufang attacked the Tibetan Buddhist Tsang monastery in 1941.^[21] He also constantly attacked the Labrang monastery.^[22]

In October 1950 the army of the [People's Republic of China](#) marched to the edge of the Dalai Lama's territory and sent a delegation after defeating a legion of the Tibetan army in [warlord](#)-controlled [Kham](#). On 17 November 1950, at the age of 15, the 14th Dalai Lama was enthroned formally as the temporal ruler of Tibet.

Cooperation and conflicts with the PRC

The Dalai Lama's formal rule was brief. He sent a delegation to Beijing, which ratified the [Seventeen Point Agreement for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet](#).^{[23][24]} He worked with the Chinese government: in September 1954, together with the 10th Panchen Lama he went to the Chinese capital to meet [Mao Zedong](#) and attend the first session of the [National People's Congress](#) as a delegate, primarily discussing [China's constitution](#).^{[25][26]} On 27 September 1954, the Dalai Lama was selected as a deputy chairman of the [Standing Committee of the National People's Congress](#).^{[27][28]} a post he officially held until 1964.^[29]

In 1956, on a trip to India to celebrate the [Buddha's Birthday](#), the Dalai Lama asked the [Prime Minister of India](#), [Jawaharlal Nehru](#), if he would allow him political asylum should he choose to stay. Nehru discouraged this as a provocation against peace, and reminded him of the Indian Government's [non-interventionist](#) stance agreed upon with its [1954 treaty with China](#).^[14] The [CIA](#), with the [Korean War](#) only recently over, offered the Dalai Lama assistance. In 1956, a large rebellion broke out in eastern [Kham](#), an ethnically Tibetan region in [Sichuan](#) province. To support the rebels, the CIA launched a covert action campaign against the Communist Chinese. A secret military training camp for the Khampa guerrillas was established in at [Camp Hale](#) near

Leadville, Colorado, in the U.S.^[30] The guerrillas attacked Communist forces in [Amdo](#) and Kham but were gradually pushed into Central Tibet.

Exile to India

At the outset of the [1959 Tibetan uprising](#), fearing for his life, the Dalai Lama and his retinue fled Tibet with the help of the CIA's [Special Activities Division](#),^[31] crossing into India on 30 March 1959, reaching [Tezpur](#) in [Assam](#) on 18 April.^[32] Some time later he set up the Government of Tibet in Exile in Dharamsala, India,^[33] which is often referred to as "[Little Lhasa](#)". After the founding of the exiled government he re-established the approximately 80,000 Tibetan refugees who followed him into exile in agricultural settlements.^[8] He created a Tibetan educational system in order to teach the Tibetan children the [language](#), [history](#), [religion](#), and [culture](#). The [Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts](#) was established^[8] in 1959 and the [Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies](#)^[8] became the primary university for Tibetans in India. He supported the refounding of 200 monasteries and nunneries in an attempt to preserve Tibetan Buddhist teachings and the Tibetan way of life.

The Dalai Lama appealed to the [United Nations](#) on the rights of Tibetans. This appeal resulted in three resolutions adopted by the [General Assembly](#) in 1959, 1961, and 1965,^[8] all before the People's Republic [was allowed representation at the United Nations](#).^[34] The resolutions called on China to respect the human rights of [Tibetans](#).^[8] During 1963, he promulgated a democratic constitution which is based upon the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), creating an elected [parliament](#) and an [administration](#) to champion his cause. During 1970, he opened the [Library of Tibetan Works and Archives](#) in [Dharamsala](#) which houses over 80,000 manuscripts and important knowledge resources related to Tibetan history, politics and culture. It is considered one of the most important institutions for [Tibetology](#) in the world.^[35]



Abandoned former quarters of the Dalai Lama at the Potala. The empty vestment placed on the throne symbolises his absence

International advocacy

At the Congressional Human Rights Caucus in 1987 in [Washington, D.C.](#), the Dalai Lama gave a speech outlining his ideas for the future status of Tibet. The plan called for Tibet to become a democratic "zone of peace" without nuclear weapons, and with support for [human rights](#), that barred the entry of [Han Chinese](#). The plan would later be called the "Strasbourg proposal", because he expanded on the plan at [Strasbourg](#) on 15 June 1988. There, he proposed the creation of a self-governing Tibet "in association with the People's Republic of China." This would have been pursued by negotiations with the PRC government, but the plan was rejected by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile during 1991. The Dalai Lama has indicated that he wishes to return to Tibet only if the People's Republic of China agrees not to make any precondition for his return.^[36] In the 1970s, the then-[Paramount leader Deng Xiaoping](#) set China's sole return requirement to the Dalai Lama as that he "must [come back] as a Chinese citizen.... that is, patriotism".^[37]

The Dalai Lama celebrated his seventieth birthday on 6 July 2005. About 10,000 Tibetan refugees, monks and foreign tourists gathered outside his home. Patriarch Alexius II of the [Russian Orthodox Church](#) affirmed positive relations with Buddhists.^[citation needed] Then President of the Republic of China (Taiwan), [Chen Shui-bian](#), attended an evening celebrating the Dalai Lama's birthday at the [Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall](#) in Taipei.^[38] In October 2008 in Japan, the Dalai Lama addressed the [2008 Tibetan violence](#) that had erupted and that the Chinese government accused him of fomenting. He responded that he had "lost faith" in efforts to negotiate with the Chinese government, and that it was "up to the Tibetan people" to decide what to do.^[39]

Teaching activities



The Dalai Lama's main teaching room at [Dharamsala](#)

The Dalai Lama has conducted numerous public initiations in the [Kalachakra](#), and is the author of a great number of books, including books on the topic of [Dzogchen](#), a practice in which he is accomplished. His teaching activities in the U.S. include the following:

In February 2007, the Dalai Lama was named *Presidential Distinguished Professor* at [Emory University](#) in [Atlanta, Georgia](#); it was the first time that he accepted a university appointment.^[40] On his April 2008 U.S. tour, he gave lectures at the [University of Michigan, Ann Arbor](#) and at [Colgate University](#) (New York)^[41] Later in July, the Dalai Lama gave a public lecture and conducted a series of teachings at [Lehigh University](#) (Pennsylvania).^[42]

Interfaith dialogue

The Dalai Lama met with [Pope Paul VI](#) at the [Vatican](#) in 1973. He met with [Pope John Paul II](#) in 1980 and also later in 1982, 1986, 1988, 1990, and 2003. In 1990, he met in Dharamsala with a delegation of Jewish teachers for an extensive interfaith dialogue.^[43] He has since visited Israel three times and met during 2006 with the Chief Rabbi of Israel. In 2006, he met privately with [Pope Benedict XVI](#). He has met with the [Archbishop of Canterbury](#), Dr. [Robert Runcie](#), and other leaders of the Anglican Church in London, [Gordon B. Hinckley](#), President of [the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints](#) (Mormons), as well as senior [Eastern Orthodox Church](#), [Muslim](#), [Hindu](#), [Jewish](#), and [Sikh](#) officials. The Dalai Lama is also currently a member of the Board of World Religious Leaders as part of The Elijah Interfaith Institute^[44] and participated in the Third Meeting of the Board of World Religious Leaders in [Amritsar](#), India, on 26 November 2007 to discuss the topic of Love and Forgiveness.^[45]

On 6 January 2009, at [Gujarat's Mahuva](#), the Dalai Lama inaugurated an [interfaith](#) "World Religions-Dialogue and Symphony" conference convened by Hindu preacher [Morari Bapu](#). This conference explored "ways and means to deal with the discord among major religions", according to [Morari Bapu](#).^{[46][47]} He has stated that modern scientific findings should take precedence where appropriate over disproven religious superstition.^[48]

On 12 May 2010, in [Bloomington, Indiana](#) (USA)^[49] the Dalai Lama, joined by a panel of select scholars, officially launched the Common Ground Project.^[50] which he and HRH Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad of Jordan had planned over the course of several years of personal conversations. The project is based on the book *[Common Ground between Islam and Buddhism](#)*.

Social stances

The Dalai Lama reminds that according to Buddhist precepts [abortion](#) is an act of killing,^[51] although he has said that there can be an exception "if the unborn child will be [retarded](#) or if the birth will create serious problems for the parent", qualifying his approval or disapproval according to each individual abortion.^[52] This position is at odds with cultural attitudes in Tibet, where abortion is unequivocally disapproved of, and where despite its free availability, women do not so avail themselves.^[53]

In Tibet, meat being the most common food, most monks have historically been [omnivores](#), including the Dalai Lamas. The Dalai Lama experimented with [vegetarianism](#) once, but after getting [jaundice](#), his doctors advised him to return to eating meat. This became controversial when he visited the White House and was offered a vegetarian menu, he rejected it and replied "I'm a Tibetan monk, not a vegetarian".^[54]

In 1993, the Dalai Lama attended the World Conference on Human Rights and made a speech titled "Human Rights and Universal Responsibility".^[55]

In 2001, the Dalai Lama told a girl in a [Seattle](#) school that it is permissible to shoot someone with a gun if the person was "trying to kill you", but added that the shot should not be fatal.^[56]

On [gender equality](#) and sexism, the Dalai Lama proclaimed at the US [National Civil Rights Museum](#) in 2009: "I call myself a feminist. Isn't that what you call someone who fights for [women's rights](#)?"^[57]

Democracy, non-violence, religious harmony and Tibet's relationship with India

The Dalai Lama says that he is active in spreading India's message of non-violence and religious harmony throughout the world. " I am the messenger of India's ancient thoughts the world over." He has said that democracy has deep roots in India. He says he considers India the master and Tibet its disciple as great scholars like [Nagarjuna](#) went from [Nalanda](#) to Tibet to preach Buddhism in the eighth century. He has noted that millions of people had lost their lives in violence and the economies of many countries were ruined due to conflicts in the 20th century. " Let the 21st century be a century of tolerance and dialogue."^[58]

Economics

"Of all the modern economic theories, the economic system of [Marxism](#) is founded on moral principles, while [capitalism](#) is concerned only with gain and profitability. Marxism is concerned with the distribution of wealth on an equal basis and the equitable utilisation of the [means of production](#). It is also concerned with the fate of the [working classes](#) — that is, the majority — as well as with the fate of those who are underprivileged and in need, and Marxism cares about the victims of minority-imposed [exploitation](#). For those reasons the system appeals to me, and it seems fair."

—Dalai Lama^[59]

The Dalai Lama calls himself Marxist and often offers criticisms of capitalism. He reports hearing of [communism](#) when he was very young, but only in the context of the destruction of [Communist Mongolia](#). It was only when he went on his trip to [Beijing](#) that he studied Marxist theory. There, he reports, "I was so attracted to Marxism, I even expressed my wish to become a Communist Party member", citing his favorite concepts of [self-sufficiency](#) and equal [distribution of wealth](#). He does not believe that China implemented "true Marxist policy",^[60] and thinks the historical [communist states](#) such as the [Soviet Union](#) "were far more concerned with their narrow national interests than with the [Workers' International](#)".^[61] Of capitalism, he said that [in China](#), "millions of people's living standards improved", but that it "is only how to make profits", whereas Marxism has "moral ethics".^[61]

Environment

He has also expressed his concern for environmental problems. He pointed out that many rivers in Asia [originate in Tibet](#), and that the [melting of Himalayan glaciers](#) could affect the countries in which the rivers flow.^[62] He acknowledged official Chinese laws against [deforestation](#) in Tibet, but is cynical because of possible [official corruption](#).^[63] He was quoted as saying "ecology should be part of our daily life";^[64] personally, he takes showers

instead of baths, and turns lights off when he leaves a room.^[62] Around 2005, he has started campaigning for wildlife conservation, including by issuing a religious ruling against wearing tiger and leopard skins as garments.^{[65][66]} The Dalai Lama supports anti-whaling partisans in the whaling controversy, but condemns their violent methods.^[67] Ahead of the [2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference](#), he urged national leaders to put aside domestic concerns and take collective action against [climate change](#).^[68]

Sexuality

In his view, oral, manual and anal sex (both homosexual and heterosexual) are not acceptable in Buddhism or for Buddhists, but society should tolerate gays and lesbians from a secular point of view.^[69] In 1997 he explained that the basis of that teaching was unknown to him and that he at least had some "willingness to consider the possibility that some of the teachings may be specific to a particular cultural and historic context" while reiterating the unacceptable nature saying, "Buddhist sexual proscriptions ban homosexual activity and heterosexual sex through orifices other than the vagina, including masturbation or other sexual activity with the hand... From a Buddhist point of view, lesbian and gay sex is generally considered sexual misconduct".^[70] In a 1994 interview with *OUT Magazine*, the Dalai Lama explained "If someone comes to me and asks whether [homosexuality](#) is okay or not, I will ask 'What is your companion's opinion?'. If you both agree, then I think I would say 'if two males or two females voluntarily agree to have mutual satisfaction without further implication of harming others, then it is okay'".^[71] However, in his 1996 book *Beyond Dogma*, he clearly states, "A sexual act is deemed proper when the couples use the organs intended for sexual intercourse and nothing else....Homosexuality, whether it is between men or between women, is not improper in itself. What is improper is the use of organs already defined as inappropriate for sexual contact."^[72] He has said that sex spelled fleeting satisfaction and trouble later, while chastity offered a better life and "more independence, more freedom".^[73] He says that problems arising from conjugal life could even lead to suicide or murder.^[74] The Dalai Lama has said that all religions have the same idea about adultery.^[75]

Controversies



At his residence in Dharamsala, 1993

The twelfth Samding Dorje Phagmo (the only prominent female [tulku](#) in Tibet) was quoted in *Xinhua* as saying that "The sins of the Dalai Lama and his followers seriously violate the basic teachings and precepts of Buddhism and seriously damage traditional Tibetan Buddhism's normal order and good reputation", adding that "Old Tibet was dark and cruel, the serfs lived worse than horses and cattle."^[76]

Dorje Shugden

Main article: [Dorje Shugden controversy](#)

During a teaching tour of the UK in May 2008, members of the [Western Shugden Society](#)^{[77][78]} came out to demonstrate against the banning of a prayer to [Dorje Shugden](#),^[77] which they call religious persecution.^[78] Similar protests occurred in Sydney when the Dalai Lama arrived in Australia in June 2008.^[79] The Dalai Lama says he had not banned the practice,^[77] but strongly discourages it as he feels it promotes a spirit as being more important than Buddha, and that it may encourage cult-like practices and sectarianism within Tibetan Buddhism.^[80] The Shugden worshipers in India protest that they are denied admission to hospitals, stores, and other social services provided by the local Tibetan community.^[81]

Recognition of the 17th Karmapa

Main article: [Karmapa controversy](#)

Another controversy associated with the Dalai Lama is the recognition of the seventeenth [Karmapa](#). Two factions of the [Kagyü](#) school of Tibetan Buddhism have chosen two different Karmapas, leading to a deep division within the Kagyü school. The Dalai Lama has given his support to Ugyen Trinley Dorje, while supporters of [Trinley Thaye Dorje](#) claim that the Dalai Lama has no authority in the matter, nor is there a historical precedent for a Dalai Lama involving himself in an internal Kagyü dispute.^[82] In his 2001 address at the International Karma Kagyü Conference, [Kunzig Shamar Rinpoche](#)—one of the four Karma Kagyü regents—accused the Dalai Lama of adopting a "divide and conquer" policy to eliminate any potential political rivalry arising from within the Kagyü school.^[83] For his side, the Dalai Lama accepted the prediction letter presented by Tai Situ Rinpoche (another Karma Kagyü regent) as authentic, and therefore Tai Situ Rinpoche's recognition of Ugyen Trinley Dorje, also as correct.^[84] Tibet observer Julian Gearing suggests that there might be political motives to the Dalai Lama's decision: "*The Dalai Lama gave his blessing to the recognition of [Urgyen] Trinley, eager to win over the formerly troublesome sect [the Kagyü school], and with the hope that the new Karmapa could play a role in a political solution of the 'Tibet Question.'* ...*If the allegations are to be believed, a simple nomad boy was turned into a political and religious pawn.*"^[85] However, according to Tsurphu Labrang, articles by Julian Gearing on this subject are biased, unverified and without crosschecking of basic facts.^[86]

CIA backing

In October 1998, the Dalai Lama's administration acknowledged that it received \$1.7 million a year in the 1960s from the U.S. government through the [Central Intelligence Agency](#) (CIA), and also trained a resistance movement in [Colorado](#) (USA).^[87] When asked by CIA officer John Kenneth Knaus in 1995 whether the organisation did a good or bad thing in providing its support, the Dalai Lama replied that though it helped the morale of those resisting the Chinese, "thousands of lives were lost in the resistance" and further, that "the U.S. Government had involved itself in his country's affairs not to help Tibet but only as a Cold War tactic to challenge the Chinese."^[88]

Ties to India

The [Chinese press](#) has criticized the Dalai Lama for his close ties with India. His 2010 remarks at the International Buddhist Conference in [Gujarat](#) saying that he was "Tibetan in appearance, but an Indian in spirituality" and referral to himself as a "son of India" in particular led the [People's Daily](#) to opine, "Since the Dalai Lama deems himself an Indian rather than Chinese, then why is he entitled to represent the voice of the Tibetan people?"^[89] Dhundup Gyalpo of the [Tibet Sun](#) shot back that Tibetan religion could be traced back to [Nalanda](#) in India, and that Tibetans have no connection to Chinese "apart... from a handful of culinary dishes".^[90] The People's Daily stressed the links between [Chinese Buddhism](#) and [Tibetan Buddhism](#) and accused the Dalai Lama of "betraying southern Tibet to India".^[89] Two years earlier in 2008, the Dalai Lama said for the first time that the territory, which India claims as part of [Arunachal Pradesh](#), is part of India, citing the disputed 1914 Simla Accord.^[91]

Death of Osama bin Laden

Regarding the [killing of Osama bin Laden](#), the Dalai Lama said, "Forgiveness doesn't mean forget what happened. ... If something is serious and it is necessary to take counter-measures, you have to take counter-measures."^{[92][93]}

Public image



The Dalai Lama receiving a [Congressional Gold Medal](#) in 2007.

From left: Speaker [Nancy Pelosi](#), Senate President *pro tempore* [Robert Byrd](#) and U.S. President [George W. Bush](#)

In 2011, the Dalai Lama was listed by the Watkins Review as the second most spiritually influential person in the world.^{[94][95][96]} His appeal is variously ascribed to his charismatic personality, international fascination with Buddhism, his universalist values, international sympathy for the Tibetans, and western [sinophobia](#).^[97] In the 1990s, many films were released by the [American film industry](#) about Tibet, including biopics of the Dalai Lama. This is attributed to both the Dalai Lama's 1989 Nobel Peace Prize as well as to the euphoria following the Fall of Communism. The most notable films, [Kundun](#) and [Seven Years in Tibet](#) (both released in 1997), portrayed "an idyllic pre-1950 Tibet, with a smiling, soft-spoken Dalai Lama at the helm – a Dalai Lama sworn to non-violence": portrayals the Chinese government decried as ahistorical.^[98] One South African official publicly criticised the Dalai Lama's politics and lamented a taboo on criticism of him, saying "To say anything against the Dalai Lama is, in some quarters, equivalent to trying to shoot [Bambi](#)".^[99]

Critics of the news and entertainment media coverage of the controversy charge that [feudal Tibet](#) was not as benevolent as popularly portrayed. The [penal code](#) before 1913 included forms of judicial [mutilation](#) and [capital punishment](#) to enforce a social system controversially described as both [slavery](#) and [serfdom](#).^[100] In response, the Dalai Lama agreed many of old Tibet's practices needed reform. His predecessor had banned extreme punishments and the death penalty.^[101] And he had started some reforms like removal of debt inheritance during the early years of his government under the People's Republic of China in 1951.^[102]

The Dalai Lama has his own page on [Facebook](#).^[103]

International reception

The Dalai Lama has been successful in gaining Western sympathy for himself and the cause of greater Tibetan autonomy or independence, including vocal support from numerous Hollywood celebrities, most notably the actors [Richard Gere](#) and [Steven Seagal](#), as well as lawmakers from several major countries.^[104] His relationships with Gere and Seagal have been [criticised by Christopher Hitchens](#).^[105]^[why?]

Awards and honors

Main article: Awards and honors presented to the 14th Dalai Lama

The Dalai Lama has received numerous awards over his spiritual and political career.^[106] In 1959, he received the [Ramon Magsaysay Award](#) for Community Leadership.^[107] On 22 June 2006, he became one of only five people ever to be recognised with Honorary Citizenship by the [Governor General of Canada](#). On 28 May 2005, he received the [Christmas Humphreys](#) Award from the [Buddhist Society](#) in the United Kingdom. After the [Tiananmen Square protests of 1989](#), the [Norwegian Nobel Committee](#) awarded the Dalai Lama the 1989 [Nobel Peace Prize](#).^[108] The Committee officially

gave the prize to the Dalai Lama for "the struggle of the liberation of Tibet and the efforts for a peaceful resolution"^[109] and "in part a tribute to the memory of Mahatma Gandhi"^[110] although the President of the Committee also said that the prize was intended to put pressure on China,^[111] who was reportedly infuriated that the award was given to a separatist.^[108]

Retirement

In May 2007, [Chhime Rigzing](#), a senior spokesman for his office, stated that the Dalai Lama was moving into "retirement",^[112] but in 2008 the Dalai Lama himself ruled out such a move, saying "There is no... question of retirement."^[113] Rigzing stated^[when?] "The political leadership will be transferred over a period of time but he will inevitably continue to be the spiritual leader". The Dalai Lama announced he would like the Tibetan Parliament in Exile to have more responsibility over the [Central Tibetan Administration](#).

In response to the [2008 Tibetan unrest](#),^[114] on 18 March 2008 the Dalai Lama threatened to step down,^[115] which would be a first for a Dalai Lama.^{[116][117]} Aides later clarified that this threat was predicated on a further escalation of violence, and that he did not presently have the intention of leaving his political or spiritual offices.^[118]

In the ensuing months, he held meetings aimed at discussing the future institution of the Dalai Lama, including "[A] conclave, like in the Catholic Church, a woman as my successor, no Dalai Lama anymore, or perhaps even two", referring to the possibility of having both his approved successor and China's approved successor both claiming the title. He has clarified that his goal is to relinquish all temporal power and to no longer play a "pronounced spiritual role" and have a simpler monastic life.^[119]

In a speech given on 10 March 2011, the 14th Dalai Lama stated that he will propose changes to the constitution of the Tibetan government in exile which will remove the Dalai Lama's role as head of state, replacing him with an elected leader. If accepted by the Tibetan parliament in exile, this will constitute the Dalai Lama's retirement from his formal political role, although he will retain his position as a religious dignitary.^[120] He formally submitted his resignation as political leader to the Tibetan Parliament-in-exile in Dharamsala, India, on 14 March 2011.^[121]

On May 29, 2011, "His Holiness the Dalai Lama ... ratified the amendment to the charter of Tibetans delegating his administrative and political authorities to the democratically elected leaders of the Central Tibetan Administration."^[122]

Succession and Reincarnation

On 24 September 2011, the Dalai Lama issued the following statement concerning his reincarnation:

When I am about ninety I will consult the high Lamas of the Tibetan Buddhist traditions, the Tibetan public, and other concerned people who follow Tibetan Buddhism, and re-evaluate whether the institution of the Dalai Lama should continue or not. On that basis we will take a decision. If it is decided that the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama should continue and there is a need for the Fifteenth Dalai Lama to be recognized, responsibility for doing so will primarily rest on the concerned officers of the Dalai Lama's Gaden Phodrang Trust. They should consult the various heads of the Tibetan Buddhist traditions and the reliable oath-bound Dharma Protectors who are linked inseparably to the lineage of the Dalai Lamas. They should seek advice and direction from these concerned beings and carry out the procedures of search and recognition in accordance with past tradition. I shall leave clear written instructions about this. Bear in mind that, apart from the reincarnation recognized through such legitimate methods, no recognition or acceptance should be given to a candidate chosen for political ends by anyone, including those in the People's Republic of China.^[123]

On 3 October 2011, the Dalai Lama repeated his statement in an interview with Canadian Television. He added that Chinese laws banning the selection of successors based on reincarnation will not impact his decisions. "Naturally my next life is entirely up to me. No one else. And also this is not a political matter," he said in the interview. The Dalai Lama also added that he was not decided on whether he would reincarnate or if he would be the last Dalai Lama.^[124]

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See also

- [Dalai Lama Center for Peace and Education](#)
- Tibetan Resistance Since 1950

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Further reading

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External links

- [Dalai Lama](#) on Google+
- [Official website](#)
- [Collection of speeches and letters](#)
- [H.H. the Fourteenth Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso](#) – at Rigpa Wiki
- [Dalai Lama at facebook.com](#)

	14th Dalai Lama	
	Dalai Lama	
	Born: 6 July 1935	
	Buddhist titles	
Preceded by	Dalai Lama	Incumbent
Thubten Gyatso	1935–present	<i>Heir:</i>
	Recognised in 1937; enthroned in 1940	<i>15th Dalai Lama</i>
	Political offices	
Preceded by	Ruler of Tibet	
Ngawang Sungrab Thutob	1950–1959	Position abolished
Regent	Part of the People's Republic of China from 1951	
New office	Head of State of the Central Tibetan Administration	Incumbent
	1959–present	

Categories:

- 1935 births
- 20th-century Lamas
- 20th-century philosophers
- 20th-century Tibetan people
- 21st-century Tibetan people
- [Amdo](#)
- Buddhist monks from Tibet
- Buddhist pacifists
- Buddhist philosophers
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- Child rulers from Asia
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- Gelug Buddhists
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- Indigenous activists
- Lamas from Tibet
- Living people
- Male feminists
- Members of the National People's Congress
- Nobel Peace Prize laureates
- Nonviolence advocates
- People from Himachal Pradesh
- People from Kangra
- People from Qinghai
- Ramon Magsaysay Award winners

The current Dalai Lama, the 14th, Tenzin Gyatso, made the following formal announcement on September 24, 2011 with regard to whether or not there will be a 15th Dalai Lama and how he will be known. When I am about ninety I will consult the high Lamas of the Tibetan Buddhist traditions, the Tibetan public, and other concerned people who follow Tibetan Buddhism, and re-evaluate whether the institution of the Dalai Lama should continue or not. Bear in mind that, apart from the reincarnation recognized through such legitimate methods, no recognition or acceptance should be given to a candidate chosen for political ends by anyone, including those in the People's Republic of China. As the current (14th) His Holiness, Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama (born 6 July 1935). Head of state and spiritual leader of the people of Tibet; Awarded the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize; born Lhamo Dhondrub, renamed Jetsun Jamphel Ngawang Lobsang Yeshe Tenzin Gyatso (Holy Lord, Gentle Glory, Compassionate, Defender of the Faith, Ocean of Wisdom) upon being officially recognized as the Dalai Lama. Tibetans often refer to him as Yeshe Norbu, the "Wishfulfilling Gem" or just Kundun - "The Presence.". My true religion is Kindness.