

Approaching Tibetan Studies

Curricular Ideas and Support Materials

When the iron bird flies and horses run on wheels, the Tibetan people will be scattered like ants across the face of the earth, and the Dharma will come to the land of the red men.

- Padmasambhava, Indian Buddhist Guru who helped to spread Buddhism in Tibet in the 8th century, A.D.

When the iron bird flies, the red-robed people of the East who have lost their land will appear, and the two brothers from across the great ocean will be reunited.

- from the Book of Hopi

The word "genocide" must be used with care. Our world and our century have seen countless abominable massacres, and it is easy to slip into the use of the word to denote such atrocities. We should, however, restrict it to those crimes before high heaven which are truly designated by it. If we do so, and if we consider only the last sixty years, there are four such mass murders which can justifiably carry the terrible brand. They are: the Jewish Holocaust, the Stalin Terror, the bloodthirst of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge, and what was done to the people and culture of Tibet during the miserable lust for death and torture unleashed by the mad Mao Tse-tung under the name of "The Cultural Revolution".

- Bernard Levin, The Times, September 7, 1990 (Introductory Quote From Mary Craig's, Tears of Blood: A Cry of Tibet)

Chinese are betrayed by their mistrust.

Tibetans are betrayed by their hope.

-Jamyang Norbu in Red Flag Over Tibet

*If the valley is reached by a high pass,
Only the best friends or worst enemies are visitors.*

- Tibetan Proverb

Chip ... chip. That's the sound of Tibetan civilization being hacked away.

- Melinda Liu, "China Invades Tibet - Again", Newsweek, April 3, 1995

Silence is consent.

- Michel Peissel, opening quote from Cavaliers of Kham: The Secret War in Tibet

*For as long as space endures,
And for as long as sentient beings remain,
Until then may I too abide
To dispel the misery of the world.*

- Shantideva, from A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life

Wisdom is the bliss of seeing through the delusion of self-preoccupation to reveal the underlying dimension of freedom. Compassion is the expression of such bliss to others. Compassion is also sensitivity to other's suffering.

-Robert Thurman, from Wisdom and Compassion: The Sacred Art of Tibet

Not long before his death, the great historian Arnold Toynbee was asked to name what he considered to be most significant event or phenomenon of the 20th century. It was not one of the great world wars, nuclear fission, television, or the computer. It was, he said, "the coming of Buddhism to the West."

- from The Utne Reader, March/April 1993