



Fate and freedom

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"Large insects are eating and secretly injuring small insects", wrote the 13th Dalai Lama to the British Trade Agent in Tibet in 19.26 He was on his way to exile in India, chased by Chinese invading troops.

History has a tendency to repeat itself: "large insects" continue to devour "smaller ones".

Though the 13th Dalai Lama returned to the Land of Snows and publicly declared Tibet's independence in 19.2, his successor had to follow the same road to exile in 1959. Once again, the small insects were gulped down, this time in the name of a "People's" ideology. To add injury to the agony, Mao declared that his troops were 'liberating' the Roof of the World.

What a strange fate for this young toddler Lhamo Dhondrub, born 70 years ago in a small village of Amdo province (northeastern Tibet). One day in 1937, a delegation of monks entered the village and knocked at his parents' door. He immediately recognised one of the servants: "Sera Lama". The man, in disguise, was the abbot of Sera, one of the large Tibetan monasteries near the Tibetan capital, three months away by caravan. A few weeks later, the boy was officially recognised as the reincarnation of the 13th Dalai Lama and at the age of 4, he was enthroned as the head of the Tibetan State. For the Tibetans, the living incarnation of Avalokitesvara, the Buddha of Compassion was back.

In today's world, role models for

was always praying for the quick release of Burma's democracy leader. When asked to comment on the Generals of Burma's military junta, he heartily laughed and retorted that as Buddhists, the Generals should follow the teachings of Lord Buddha in their political activities.

