

## **October 8, 1951**

### **Conversation from [Mao Zedong's] Audience with the Tibetan Tribute Mission**

#### **Citation:**

"Conversation from [Mao Zedong's] Audience with the Tibetan Tribute Mission", October 8, 1951, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Gang er si Wuhan daxue zongbu et al, eds., Mao Zedong sixiang wansui (Long Live Mao Zedong Thought), vol. 3 (1949-1957) (Wuhan, internal circulation, May 1968): 20. Translated by Simon Schuchat.  
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/240236>

#### **Summary:**

Mao promises that the CCP will protect religious freedom and assist with development in Tibet.

#### **Original Language:**

Chinese

#### **Contents:**

Original Scan  
Translation - English

## 在接見西藏致敬團時的談話

(一九五一年十月八日)

共产党对宗教采取保护政策，信教和不信教的，信这种教的或信别种教的，一律加以保护，尊重其信仰。今天对宗教采取保护政策，将来也仍然采取保护政策。

分地的问题，与宗教有所不同。在汉人区域已经分了土地，这里对宗教仍然是保护的。少数民族地区分不分土地，由少数民族自己决定。西藏地区，现在谈不上分地，将来分不分由你们自己决定，并且由你们自己去分，我们不代你们去分。

成立军政委员会和改编藏军是协议上规定了了的。因为你们害怕，我通知在西藏工作的同志，要他们慢点执行。协议是要执行的，但你们害怕，只好慢点执行。今年害怕，就待明年执行，如果明年还害怕，就等后年执行。

西藏地方大，人口少。人口需要发展，从现在二、三百万发展到五、六百万，然后再增至千几百万就好。还有经济和文化也需要发展。文化包括学校、报纸、电影等等，宗教也在内。过去的反动统治，清朝皇帝、蒋介石都是压迫剥削你们的，帝国主义也是这样，使得你们人口不得发展，经济削弱了，文化也没有发展。共产党实行民族平等，不要压迫、剥削你们，而是要帮助你们；帮助你们发展人口，发展经济和文化。人民解放军进入西藏就是执行帮助你们的政策，开始进去的时候不会有帮助，三、四年之内也不可能有多多的帮助，但以后就能帮助你们的，那是一定的。如果共产党不能帮助你们发展人口，发展经济和文化，那共产党就没有什么用处了。

**REMARKS FROM [MAO ZEDONG'S] AUDIENCE WITH THE TIBETAN TRIBUTE MISSION**

(October 8, 1951)

Regarding religion, the Communist Party has adopted a policy of protection, whether you are a believer or an atheist, whether you believe this religion or believe another religion, the rule is you are protected, and your faith is respected. Today we have adopted the policy of religious protection, and in the future we will continue to adopt this policy of religious protection.

The issue of land reform is somewhat different from that of religion. We have already divided up land in the Han regions, but religion is still protected here. In minority nationality regions the issue of whether the land is divided will be up to the minority nationalities themselves to decide. In the Tibetan region, at present we aren't even discussing land reform, and in the future it will be up to you yourselves to decide [when], and it will be up to you to divide the land - we won't implement land reform on your behalf.

Establishing a Political-Military Commission and reorganizing the Tibetan military is stipulated in the Agreement.\* Because you have fears, I have informed the comrades working in Tibet that they should implement it slowly. The Agreement has to be implemented, but since you are worried, it has to be implemented slowly. If you are worried this year, so we can wait until next year to implement [the Agreement]; if next year you are still worried, then we'll wait until the year after to implement it.

Tibet is a big place, with a small population. The population must develop [i.e., increase], developing from its current two or three million to five or six million, and after that it would be fine for it to reach more than ten million. The economy and culture also need to develop. Culture includes schools, newspapers, movies and so on, including religion. The former reactionary rule of the Qing dynasty emperors and Chiang Kai-shek oppressed and exploited you, as did Imperialism, preventing your population from growing, keeping your economy weak, with no development in culture either. The Communist Party treats all nationalities equally, it won't oppress and exploit you, but instead wants to help you; help you develop your population, develop your economy and culture. The People's Liberation Army has entered Tibet in order to implement this policy of assisting you. When it first entered it couldn't yet [provide] assistance, and it won't be able to provide much assistance for three or four years, but later it will be able to assist you, that is certain. If the Communist Party cannot help you increase your population, develop your economy and culture, then the Communist Party wouldn't be of much use.

\* Translator's note: The Seventeen Point Agreement for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet, signed in May 1951 and ratified by the Dalai Lama by telegram from Lhasa on October 24, 1951, shortly after this meeting took place.