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while relentlessly working to dispel the miseries of the humans.

Avalokiteshvara is the earthly manifestation of the self-born, eternal Buddha, Amitabha. He guards this world in the interval between the historical Sakhyamuni Buddha and the Buddha of the future, Maitreya. According to a legend, Chenrezig made a vow that he would not rest until he had liberated all the beings in all the realms of suffering.

After working diligently at this task for a very long time, he looked out and realised that there was an immense number of miserable beings yet to be saved. Seeing this, he became despondent and his head split into thousands of pieces.

Amitabha Buddha put the pieces back together as a body with very many arms and many heads, so that Chenrezig could work with myriad beings all at the same time. Sometimes Chenrezig is visualised with eleven heads, and a thousand arms fanned out around him. As Chenrezig, he is considered the patron Bodhisattva of Tibet, and his meditation is practiced in all the great lineages of Tibetan Buddhism. The beloved king Songtsen Gampo was believed to be an emanation of Chenrezig, and some of the most respected meditation masters (Lamas), like the Dalai Lamas and Karmapas, who are considered living Buddhas, are also believed to be emanations of Chenrezig.

Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh, North India. It is the seat of the Tibetan spiritual and political leader His Holiness the fourteenth Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso, and his government-in-exile, since 1960. According to the Chinese government, he is a "splittist," causing a separatist movement in China's territories. On the other side of story, he has been the chosen reincarnated leader of Tibet for centuries.

Life in exile. It is quite confusing for the new generation. I see a lot of them being torn between keeping up with explaining their genetic make-up as they ascend through their Indian academics, and having to balance their ideals with parents who are still fighting for a lost homeland. For over 1,000 years the Tibetan people have maintained a sovereign national identity that is distinctly their own and different from the national identity of China.

In 1950, China invaded Tibet and embarked on a policy of invasion and oppression that is engulfing the lives of Tibetans even now, in the 21st century (the first written history of Tibet is from early 7th century). This seriously threatens the continued survival and sustenance of the unique Tibetan culture. Ironically, the outside world, that seems to be condemning colonialism at large, is still today ignoring the hard reality of the Tibetans and China's continued occupation.

Since 1951, hundreds of thousands of Tibetans have been killed outright, or died as victims of aggression, torture, and starvation. Over 6,000 monasteries and temples have been destroyed in an attempt to eradicate Buddhism -- a religion which propounds a non-violent approach to human life. Tibetan religion and education are becoming extinct, as they have been