

### CLASSROOM EDITION

(Note: \* signals a more challenging question.)

#### Reading & Understanding – “10 Questions” (p. 6)

This interview with the Dalai Lama is based on questions posed by TIME magazine readers. In order to understand the complicated background of the Dalai Lama's life, you need to understand the complex relationship between Tibet and China, as well as the interplay of politics and religion in this situation.

1. **Background Information:** Complete the cloze passage below using the words in bold print.

For further reading, refer to:

[tibet.com/DL/index.html](http://tibet.com/DL/index.html)

[freetibet.org/](http://freetibet.org/)

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tibet\\_Autonomous\\_Region](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tibet_Autonomous_Region)

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panchen\\_Lama](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panchen_Lama)

#### History and Background

**reincarnations**

**lineage**

**provinces**

**enlightenment**

**buddha**

**modernise**

**intrigue**

**legitimate**

**untimely**

**independence**

**Lhasa**

**deported**

**autonomy**

**cordial**

**hierarchy**

**religious**

**successor**

**posthumously**

Tibetan Buddhists believe that the current Dalai Lama is the 14<sup>th</sup> reincarnation in the unbroken **lineage** of a very important **buddha** in their branch of Buddhism. (Here, the term 'buddha' refers to someone who has attained **enlightenment** and helped others to do so through teaching and example.) This chain of **reincarnations** is believed to stretch back to the birth, in 1391, of the 1<sup>st</sup> Dalai Lama ('lama' means spiritual teacher).

The 5<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama in this chain united the various **provinces** in Tibet with the support of the then Mongolian ruler. From then until 1959, the Dalai Lama was the official head of the Tibetan government, managing most of the country from the capital at **Lhasa**. There was political **intrigue** over the choice and **untimely** death of some of the Dalai Lamas during that period. According to the brother of the current Dalai Lama, "The circumstances are such that it is very likely some, if not all, were poisoned, either by loyal Tibetans for being Chinese-appointed impostors, or by the Chinese for not being properly manageable."

In 1912, the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama declared Tibetan **independence** from China, **deported** Chinese residents in the country, and is said to have undertaken various measures to **modernise** Tibet. The Dalai Lamas continued to rule until the People's Republic of China invaded the region in 1949. The 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama fled to India, claiming a government-in-exile. This means that his government claims to be Tibet's **legitimate** government, but they reside in a foreign country and are unable to exercise their legal power. The implication is that the government-in-exile will eventually return to their native country. The current Dalai Lama has said he seeks greater **autonomy** for Tibet. However, the relationship between the current Dalai Lama and China is obviously not **cordial**.

The issue of who the next Dalai Lama will be is crucial for political and **religious** reasons. The Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama are the two top positions in the Tibetan Buddhist **hierarchy**. Traditionally the Panchen Lama officially identifies the reincarnated Dalai Lama, and vice versa. Often, the 2

people who will occupy these top positions are identified while they are still young children. They are then trained and educated to fulfil their roles. However, in the past, some Panchen Lamas have also been identified posthumously, i.e. recognised as Panchen Lamas after their death.

Following the unexpected death of the 10<sup>th</sup> Panchen Lama in 1989, the search for his reincarnated successor became a political controversy. China correctly pointed out that in the Qing dynasty, the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama were legitimately selected by a system of drawing lots from a Golden Urn. The Chinese government claims that they accurately selected a child as the 11<sup>th</sup> Panchen Lama by drawing lots from the Golden Urn in 1995. However, the Tibetans in exile do not recognise this Panchen Lama, saying the true Panchen Lama can only be identified by the current Dalai Lama.

## 2. Vocabulary

In the table below, match the words and phrases from the article with their **contextual** meanings.

	Word from Article		Meaning in Context
1.	outraged (para 1)	a.	Sanguine and hopeful
2.	optimistic (para 2)	b.	Viewpoint
3.	challenge (para 3)	c.	Excuse
4.	reconciliation (para 4)	d.	Distinguish, differentiate
5.	hard-liners (para 4)	e.	Furious, infuriated
6.	outlook (para 4)	f.	Influenced and controlled in a negative way
7.	shortsighted (para 4)	g.	Difficult trial or test
8.	holistic (para 4)	h.	Stubborn sticklers to a particular view
9.	relevant (para 7)	i.	Accomplishment
10.	pretext (para 8)	j.	Compromise and resolution
11.	manipulated (para 8)	k.	Looking at all aspects and not just a few
12.	make a distinction (para 8)	l.	Restricted to the short term
13.	relative (para 10)	m.	Disappointment
14.	failure (para 10)	n.	Not absolute; can only be determined by comparison to other factors
15.	achievement (para 10)	o.	Significantly pertinent

Answers: 1- e , 2- a , 3- g , 4- j , 5- h , 6- b , 7- l , 8- k , 9- o , 10- c , 11- f , 12- d , 13- n , 14- m , 15- i .

### Reading & Understanding

- What does the answer to the first question show about the Dalai Lama? **Note to Teacher:** Accept any sensible answer, e.g. It shows that he has a sense of humour and he does not want people to treat him as a supernatural being.
- What criticisms of China's leaders are made in the Dalai Lama's answer to the fourth question? What is his source of hope? **Answer:** He suggests that communism's strict authoritarian control over every aspect of life results in cultural and spiritual poverty. However he finds hope in the fact that the Chinese people will demand change within China as they are now becoming more knowledgeable about the world.
- In the answer to the fourth question, do you think the Dalai Lama sounds too much like a pragmatic realist for a spiritual person, or do you think he sounds like a compassionate religious leader with a caring heart for his people? **Note to Teacher:** Accept any intelligent answer. He is indeed being caring in a pragmatic way, but at no time does he make any statement that either exudes or diminishes the notion of "spirituality".

6. Based on the whole interview, does the Dalai Lama resent having had to live as an exile for more than 45 years? **Answer:** There is no note of resentment, but instead a philosophical acceptance of the fact that he actually gained a global perspective and a sense of realism that together may help him foster religious harmony. (See the last column, p. 37 for details.)
7. Which of the Dalai Lama's answers is most interesting to you? If you could pose a question to the Dalai Lama, what would you ask?

**\*Analytical Thinking – “Creation Myths” (p. 52)**

This article considers the ethical issues that should be associated with scientific research. As you read the article, think about what your own moral stance is where research is concerned. Under what conditions would you be willing to put aside your ethics.

1. **Cultural Literacy:** The writer makes several assumptions about the reader's ability to understand her various literary references. These cultural references occur in Paragraph 2 (Genesis; Frankenstein); Paragraph 3 (Jurassic Park) and Paragraph 8 (Rubicon). Complete the cloze exercise below to confirm your understanding of these references.

*Hebrew formless Torah hovering birth narrate Greek*

“Genesis” is the name given to the first of the five books of the Torah (the Hebrew holy book). These five books also form the beginning of the Christian Bible. Literally, the word ‘genesis’ is a Greek word meaning ‘birth’ or ‘origin’. The book of “Genesis” consists of an account of how God created the universe and humankind. The first few sentences of the book are as follows:

*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” There was evening, and there was morning – the first day.*

The next few verses narrate God's creation of water, sky, land, vegetation, sun, moon, stars, marine creatures, birds, wild animals and livestock over a series of days. The Bible then continues:

*Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*

*God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”*

*destructive  
parallel*

*powerful  
companion*

*eternal  
name*

*outstrip  
carcasses*

*horrified  
momentum*

“**Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus**” is the title of a novel written by Mary Shelley, published in 1818. People often refer to “Frankenstein” as a monster. In fact, in the novel, the monster never has a name. The character Victor Frankenstein is a scientist who tries to create life by re-animating what has died. He successfully manages to create a powerful, large monstrous-looking

creature using parts from various human and non-human carcasses. Frankenstein is horrified by the creature's appearance and runs away. The monster becomes destructive and violent in its attempts to find acceptance and love. Rejected by the human world, the monster demands that Frankenstein create a female companion for him. The story takes the form of a narration by Dr. Frankenstein to warn against allowing scientific ambition to outstrip what can be realistically achieved. At the end of the story, Frankenstein dies. The monster commits suicide at the North Pole, after making plans so that his own carcass will never be discovered.

The novel was seen as a warning against scientific power which was gathering momentum in the Industrial Revolution. "The Modern Prometheus" in the novel's subtitle refers to the Greek myth of Prometheus as a parallel to Victor Frankenstein. Prometheus, in some versions of Greek mythology created humankind. Prometheus then secretly took fire from heaven and gave it to humans. When Zeus, the king of the gods, discovered this, he condemned Prometheus to eternal punishment.

*boundary exceeded Latin irrevocable crossed historical*

The Rubicon is the ancient Latin name for a small river in northern Italy which flows into the Adriatic Sea. During the times of the Roman empire, it marked the boundary between the Roman province of Gaul and the rest of the Roman heartland. When Julius Caesar boldly crossed it in 49 BC, he was in effect breaking the law to begin a civil war.

Based on that historical event, the expression "crossing the Rubicon" refers to an action that when taken, allows no turning back or change of heart. It results in irrevocable commitment. In some contexts, "crossing the Rubicon" can suggest a limit that, when exceeded, results in serious consequences. The action cannot be overturned or undone. It can also mean to make an irreversible decision.

2. Based on the 1<sup>st</sup> 2 cloze passages above, what does the writer mean when she says that the latest breakthrough in synthetic biology has left headline writers "torn between Genesis and Frankenstein"? (Para 2) **Answer:** Headline writers and journalists are not sure whether to celebrate this event as an act of truly creating life from nothing, the way God is said to have done in the Bible, or whether to be horrified that a monstrous disaster may result.
3. What is the "moral Rubicon" the writer refers to in the last paragraph? **Answer:** In matters of scientific research, people disagree about when scientists are going too far, and an ethical boundary or moral line has been crossed requiring immediate and urgent action to determine what humankind as a whole must do in response.
4. (a) Comment on the effectiveness and suitability of the graphic that accompanies this article. (b) Read the article carefully and suggest some other graphic that could have been used to accompany the article. **Note to Teacher:** (a) Students should comment intelligently on the graphic of chemical bonds interspersed with bombs with lit fuses as indicative that it is just a matter of time before human tinkering with nature results in dire consequences. (b) Accept any sensible answer based on specific information in the article. For example, based on Paragraph 2, the graphic could have been based on Lego blocks, with some odd-looking fake Lego pieces.
5. Select a sentence in the article that clearly indicates that the writer sees moral issues not as absolutes but as something that must be determined by social consensus. **Note to Teacher:** Accept any well-defended answer. The first sentence of Paragraph 7 or the second sentence of Paragraph 6 are suitable examples.