

Heinrich Harrer, forfatteren av "Syv år i Tibet" er nettopp død. Denne usedvanlige og selvbiografiske boken finnes også på video, med Brad Pitt i hovedrollen. Les Dalai Lamas hilsen til Harrers enke.

Dharamsala, 10 January, TibetNet: In a condolence message to the wife of Heinrich Harrer, His Holiness the Dalai Lama said, "I am extremely sorry to hear of the passing away of my friend Heinrich Harrer. I wish to convey to you and your family members my deeply felt condolence. I am particularly saddened because Heinrich Harrer was a personal friend and taught me English, an Austrian English teacher!

"When I first met him in 1949, he was from a world I was not familiar with. I learned many things, particularly about Europe, from him.

"I want to take this opportunity to express my immense gratitude and appreciation for his creating so much awareness about Tibet and the Tibetan people through his well-known book Seven Years in Tibet and the many lectures he gave throughout his life. His love and respect for the Tibetan people are clearly evident in his writings and his talks".

"We feel we have lost a loyal friend from the West, who had the unique opportunity to experience life in Tibet for seven long years before Tibet lost its freedom. We Tibetans will always remember Heinrich Harrer and will miss him greatly.

"My prayers are with you and your family."

Heinrich Harrer, a famous mountaineer, died at the age of 93 in the Austrian province of Huttenberg on 7 January, according to a statement issued by his family. His classic travel book, Seven Years in Tibet, which recounted his experiences in Tibet after escaping internment in British India in 1944, sold millions of copies worldwide and was translated into 48 languages. This book more than anything else brought Tibet and its tragic situation to the attention and conscience of the world. This book in 1997 was made into a Hollywood movie.

After his escape from British custody in Dehra Dun, he and his companion Peter Aufschnaiter were provided refuge in Tibet, which remained neutral during the Second World War. Heinrich Harrer and Peter Aufschnaiter, two well-known mountaineers, were involved in a mountaineering expedition when the Second World War broke out and the two were brought under British custody.

During their stay in the Tibetan capital of Lhasa from 1946 to 1951, they came to a deep appreciation of the culture and way of life of the Tibetan people and the aspiration of the Tibetan

people to live a life in peace and freedom. Heinrich Harrer came in contact with the highest authorities of Tibet, including His Holiness the Dalai Lama whom he tutored briefly on subjects ranging from geography to English. During this time Heinrich Harrer and Peter Aufschnaiter came to speak flawless Tibetan. This experience of Lhasa compelled Heinrich Harrer to write the classic travel book, *Seven Years in Tibet*, which served as a textbook for several years in many schools throughout India and elsewhere.

When China introduced more liberal policies in Tibet, Heinrich Harrer went back to Tibet in the early 1980s and wrote a sequel to *Seven Years in Tibet* called *Return to Tibet*, in which he lamented the devastation that was brought to Tibet and its people.