Dalai Lama hails Chilkur temple priest’s act

Rangarajan carried a Dalit devotee on his shoulders into the temple amid vedic chants by other priests

Tibet’s spiritual leader, The Dalai Lama, on Monday sent a letter of appreciation to the priest of Chilkur Balaji Temple C.S. Rangarajan, for “carrying Aditya, a Dalit youth on your shoulders into temple’s inner sanctum.”

“I applaud you for your exemplary action. I was moved by your statement that you wanted to show people that everyone is equal in the eyes of God,” he said, in a communication.

As a firm believer in the oneness of humanity and on who has been consistently calling for recognition of the equality of all regardless of caste or creed, he said he salutes Rangarajan for the action he had taken.

The Dalai Lama said “it is all the more heartening to know that once you were both in the temple, you and Mr. Aditya also prayed and performed rituals together,” the Dalai Lama wrote in his letter, a copy of which was released to the media.

He also said it was encouraging to know that other priests were also present when he carried Mr. Aditya into the temple and declared that they would do the same where they worked. There was no doubt that such kindness and generosity was the way forward, he said.

Karuna and ahimsa

The Tibetan leader pointed out that India and its people, for ancient times, upheld a rich and sophisticated philosophy of ‘karuna’ and ‘ahimsa’.

Tolerance and pluralism flourish here. “As a student of ancient Indian thought and one who has lived in India for nearly 60 years, I feel proud of India’s secularism, its unity, diversity and its thriving practice of religious harmony,” he wrote.

Temple priest Mr. Rangarajan on April 17 had carried the SC devotee on his shoulders into the temple amid vedic chants by other priests. He was re-enacting a 2,700-year-old incident ‘Muni Vahana Seva’ to “re-establish the greatness of Sanatana Dharma and to propagate equality among all sections of the society”.