

Articles on The Dalai Lama

Dalai Lama says China is not his enemy

SYDNEY, Australia, 9 June 2011



The Dalai Lama speaks during a press conference at the Hilton Hotel in Melbourne, Australia, on 9 June 2011. The Dalai Lama, who has pushed without success for more autonomy for his native Tibet for decades, told reporters on Thursday that China is not his enemy but some hardline Communists are. AP/Julian Smith/Australia

The Dalai Lama, who has pushed without success for more autonomy for his native Tibet for decades, told reporters Thursday that China is not his enemy but that some hardline Communists are.

China says Tibet has always been part of its territory, but many Tibetans say the Himalayan region was virtually independent for centuries until the 1950s when Communist troops marched in.

Beijing reviles the Dalai Lama and frequently denounces him, alleging that he wants independence for Tibet.

When asked if China was the enemy, the Tibetan spiritual leader demurred.

“Not China. Some hard-liner Communists. They really brought a lot of suffering,” he said.

But the Nobel peace laureate said the solution was not to hate them back.

“I myself deliberately visualized them and practiced tolerance,” he told reporters.

He said he tries to take “their anger, their jealousy, their suspicion ... then give them, through visualization, give them compassion, forgiveness.... That kind of practice (doesn't) help to solve the problem, but that practice is immense help to maintain my peace of mind.”

The Most Dangerous Enemy

When your mind is trained in self-discipline, even if you are surrounded by hostile forces, your peace of mind will hardly be disturbed. On the other hand, if your mind is undisciplined, your mental peace and calm can easily be disrupted by your own negative thoughts and emotions. The real enemy is within, not outside. Usually we define our enemy as a person, an external agent, whom we believe is causing harm to us or to someone we hold dear.

But such an enemy is dependent on many conditions and is impermanent. One moment, the person may act as an enemy; at yet another moment, he or she may become your best friend. This is a truth that we often experience in our own lives. But negative thoughts and emotions, the inner enemy, will always remain the enemy. They are your enemy today, they have been your enemy in the past, and they will remain your enemy in the future as long as they reside within your mind.

This inner enemy is extremely dangerous. The destructive potential of an external enemy is limited when compared to that of its inner counterpart.... In a time when every country is a potential target for the nuclear weapons of others, human beings still continue to develop defense systems of greater and greater sophistication. I do not know if it will ever be possible to create a defense system capable of guaranteeing worldwide protection against all external forces of destruction. However, one thing is certain: as long as those destructive internal enemies of anger and hatred are left to themselves unchallenged, the threat of physical annihilation will always loom over us. In fact, the destructive power of an external enemy ultimately derives from the power of these internal forces. The inner enemy is the trigger that unleashes the destructive power of the external enemy.

Shantideva tells us that as long as these inner enemies remain secure within, there is great danger. Shantideva goes on to say that even if everyone in the world were to stand up against you as your enemies and harm you, as long as your own mind was disciplined and calm, they would not be able to disturb your peace. Yet a single instance of delusion arising in your mind has the power to disturb that peace and inner stability.

—from *The Compassionate Life* by Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama

Saturday, September 26, 2009

The Dalai Lama Says: Love Your Enemy, Be Happy

Inspiring editorial from the Dalai Lama in Vancouver Sun, today, for Vancouver Peace Summit, titled: ['Compassion for our fellow human beings is the key to happiness'](#)



Excerpts that resonated with me:

One great question underlies our experience, whether we think about it consciously or not: What is the purpose of life? I believe that the purpose of life is to be happy. From the moment of birth, every human being wants happiness and does not want suffering . . .

From my own limited experience, I have found that the greatest degree of inner tranquillity comes from the development of love and compassion. The more we care for the happiness of others, the greater our own sense of well-being becomes. Cultivating a close, warm-hearted feeling for others puts the mind at ease. This gives us the strength to cope with any obstacles we encounter. It is the ultimate source of success in life. We can strive gradually to become more compassionate, we can develop both genuine sympathy for others' suffering and the will to help remove their pain. As a result, our own serenity and inner strength will increase. The need for love lies at the very foundation of human existence. It results from the profound interdependence we all share with one another . . .

Whether people are beautiful and friendly or unattractive and disruptive, ultimately they are human beings, just like one's self. Like one's self, they want happiness and do not want suffering. Now, when you recognize that all beings are equal in both their desire for happiness and their right to obtain it, you automatically feel empathy and closeness for them. Through accustoming your mind to this sense of

universal altruism, you develop a feeling of responsibility for others: the wish to help them actively overcome their problems. Let me emphasize that it is within your power, given patience and time, to develop this kind of compassion . . .

We should begin by removing the greatest hindrances to compassion: anger and hatred. As we all know, these are extremely powerful emotions and they can overwhelm our entire mind. Nevertheless, they can be controlled and replaced by an equally forceful energy that stems from compassion, reason and patience . . .

I must also emphasize that merely thinking about compassion and reason and patience will not be enough to develop them. We must wait for difficulties to arise and then attempt to practise them. And who creates such opportunities? Not our friends, of course, but our enemies. They are the ones who give us the most trouble. So if we truly wish to learn, we should consider enemies to be our best teachers. For a person who cherishes compassion and love, the practice of tolerance is essential, and for that, an enemy is indispensable. So we should feel grateful to our enemies, for it is they who can best help us develop a tranquil mind. Also, it is often the case in both personal and public life, that with a change in circumstances, enemies become friends. So anger and hatred are our real enemies. These are the forces we most need to confront and defeat, not the temporary enemies who appear intermittently throughout life.

Individual happiness can contribute in a profound and effective way to the overall improvement of our entire human community. Because we all share an identical need for love, it is possible to feel that anybody we meet, in whatever circumstances, is a brother or sister. It is foolish to dwell on external differences, because our basic natures are the same. I believe that at every level of society — familial, tribal, national and international — the key to a happier and more successful world is the growth of compassion. All that is necessary is for each of us to develop our good human qualities.

Buddhism - We are born to be happy

by [Swati Chopra](#)

An exclusive interview with His Holiness the Dalai Lama



Policemen in mufti swarm around the plush hotel room in Delhi, crackling wirelasses in hand. Spared routine security checks, we are ushered into an antechamber and politely asked to wait—His Holiness the [Dalai Lama](#) is meeting a foreign diplomat.

Minutes (that seem like centuries) later, we are led to an inner suite, a temporary abode of the Yeshe Norbu ('Wish fulfilling jewel') of Tibet. We await him with a mixture of awe and reverence compounded by the presence of his somber attendants. Nothing prepares us for the boisterous, maroon-robed monk who walks in, greeting everyone loudly and shaking hands warmly all around. We are finally face to face with the Presence (*Kundun* in Tibetan).

The next hour is spent in communion with the man, his beliefs, his faith, and of course, his laughter. It seems that His Holiness has perfected the 'art of laughing', if one may call it that. He uses it to punctuate philosophical debate, at times to bridge the awkward silence as he thinks up a suitable reply to a question, but most of all, to convey his innate *joie de vivre*. It is infectious and we join in heartily each time his laughter booms out. We are fortunate to partake of the Dalai Lama's reservoir of loving-kindness, if only for a few fleeting moments.

You seem to exist on numerous planes—as a world figure, the temporal and spiritual head of Tibet, a world-renowned spiritual master. Yet you often refer to yourself as a simple monk. Who is the real you?

I see myself as a monk first, then as a practitioner of the Nalanda (the world reknown Buddhist education center of India, established around 200 B.C.) tradition of wisdom. Masters of Nalanda such as Nagarjuna, Aryadeva, Aryasangha, Dharmakeerti, Chandrakeerti and Shantideva have written the scriptures that we, as Tibetan Buddhists, study and practice. They are all my gurus. I feel that I might have interacted with them in previous lifetimes. When I read their books and meditate upon their names, I feel a connection. At this point, I don't say that I belong to the

Hinayana or the *Mahayana* traditions, but to the lineage of Nalanda.

You are called the 'living Buddha' ...?

The term 'living Buddha' is a translation of the Chinese word '*ho fu*'. In Tibetan, the operative word is '*lama*' which means 'guru'. A **lama** is someone who is not necessarily a Buddha but is heavy with knowledge. I believe that previous Dalai Lamas were manifestations of *Avalokiteshwara* (the Buddha of compassion) and the fifth **Dalai Lama** is believed to be an incarnation of *Manjushree*. I am fortunate to be the reincarnation of all these great lamas! (laughs)

Can anyone become a Buddha?

Oh yes! All sentient beings have the seed of the Buddha within them.

It is also said that eventually all sentient beings will attain Buddhahood?

Yes, this is so because all negative **emotions** of the mind can be eliminated. Once the mind is purified, you are a Buddha.

How would you describe the Buddhist concept of *shunyata*?

Shunyata is different from Buddhahood. It is the ultimate reality of everything. To purify the mind it is essential to know the **nature** of reality, which is *shunyata*. Negative **emotions** arise from a misconception of reality. In order to remove suffering, you have to meditate on *shunyata*.

What does our world need to become a better place?

Undoubtedly we need to be more compassionate.



How can we practice compassion?

Through awareness! I think that ignorance and afflictive emotions, called *klesh* in Sanskrit, give rise to unwanted circumstances. As far as ignorance is concerned, not just Buddhism, every religion recognizes it as the source of suffering. All over the world, much effort is put in

education. It is something sacred as it helps to get rid of ignorance. But we have to be careful about the kind of education we impart to our children. Now I see well-educated people who are so unhappy. Sometimes, I think those who use their minds too much are unhappier than the simple people who don't. Why do they become unhappy? It is because of too much desire, hatred, and jealousy. The antidote to weaken that is increasing the right kind of knowledge. I think, perhaps knowledge coupled with a warm heart brings wisdom.

Compassion, or *karuna*, stems from wisdom. For instance, animals with their limited intelligence, are happier and more peaceful than we are. Even so, I have observed that animals become aggressive during the mating season because there is now attachment to the mate. Attachment awakens feelings of *klesh* within them. Similarly for us, if there is less attachment and jealousy, we are able to focus within.

I believe that whether a person follows any religion or not is unimportant, he must have a good heart, a warm heart. This is essential for a happy life, which is much more important than Buddhahood. This is part of what I call 'secular ethics'.

Are we not conditioned by our past karma that may not allow us to be loving and compassionate? How can karma be transcended?

By acting with awareness.

How can we live in awareness?

Analyze! Let's take the example of *Mahatma* Gandhi. Physically, he was frail. Although he was well educated, there are others who are better educated than he was. Why then did he become a *mahatma*? It was because of his heart. He did not act for himself or in his own interest; that is *karuna*. *Karuna*, I think, is the main element in becoming a good person. Stalin, Lenin, Mao Zedong were powerful leaders. But they lacked *karuna* and became unpopular.

Compassion automatically brings happiness and calmness. Then, even if you receive disturbing news, it will be easier to take, as your mind is still. But if you are agitated, even a minor happening will upset you greatly.

How does one bring about calmness?

Hatred, jealousy and excessive attachment cause suffering and agitation. I feel that, again, it is compassion that can help you overcome these to move into a calm state of mind. Compassion is not being kind to your friend. That is attachment because it is based on expectation. *Karuna* is when you do something good without expectations, even without knowing the other person. It is in realizing that the other person is also just like me. That recognition is the basis on which you can develop *karuna*, not only towards those around you but also towards your enemy. Normally, when we think about our enemy, we think about harming him. Instead, try to remember that the enemy is also a human being. He or she has the right to be happy, just as you do. Talking about myself, maybe I too have some enemies.

Are you talking about China?

No, no! I am talking hypothetically. If one has an enemy, one would want him to suffer. Whenever you feel hatred towards the enemy, think of him as a human being. That is actual *karuna* because you are feeling it for your enemy. You don't have the other's kindness to base your ~~anger~~ upon; the other is actually harming you! That is why I say real *karuna* is unbiased. What we normally feel is biased *karuna*, as it is mixed with attachment. Genuine *karuna* flows towards all sentient beings, particularly towards your enemy. You must keep in mind that developing *karuna* might not benefit the other directly. If I try to develop *karuna* towards my enemy, he might not even be aware of it. But it will immediately benefit me! How? By calming my mind. On the other hand, if I keep thinking how awful everything is, I will immediately lose my ~~peace~~ of mind.

And that will help the enemy?

It is not necessarily helping the enemy as much as harming yourself. By changing your thoughts, you immediately get inner peace. Many people also think that the practice of *karuna* benefits others and not oneself. That sort of thinking is a grave mistake. It must be overcome through awareness, which, as I mentioned earlier, comes from analyzing.

Even modern medical researchers have come to the conclusion that ~~peace~~ of mind is vital to good health. Experiments show that it is easier for those who practice ~~love~~ and ~~compassion~~ to regain a peaceful state of mind after being agitated.

In May this year, I witnessed an experiment performed on a monk at Wisconsin University who was subjected to a loud sound. It had little impact on him and he was able to regain his composure without much difficulty. This goes to prove that the practice of ~~compassion~~ actually calms you down considerably.

I am not saying that ~~compassion~~ must be practiced because the Buddha taught it. No. It must be practiced equally by the Buddhist, the Hindu, the Jain, the Christian. It is part of the 'secular ethics' that I talk about. There is nothing sacred or religious about aspiring to a calm mind. People just need to realize that it is good for our health! My approach is to promote values that enable the individual to have a calm mind.

Having a calm mind actually works wonders. Recognizing this would help me want to develop it.

This has to be made clear to every individual, even to children. It is important to make the child realize that if he loses his temper, he will suffer. If he is able to be more compassionate, he will feel more joy even while playing. If you smile, ~~life~~ becomes sweeter. After all, if I smile at you, you will smile back!

Don't you ever experience anger?

Oh yes, I do. Negative ~~emotions~~ come and go. I do not think they remain within me for long. If

you let anger remain within you, it leads to ill-feeling and hatred.

How do you deal with anger?

Through my clear conviction about compassion. I think negative emotions are part of my mind. It is quite natural to feel angry when faced with problems. But you can change.

Can we say that awareness of your emotions helps in dealing with them?

If you are able to recognize the moment when anger arises, you will be able to distinguish the part of your mind that is feeling anger. This will divide your mind in two parts-one part will be feeling anger while the other will be trying to observe. Therefore anger cannot dominate the entire mind. You are able to recognize that anger is harmful and maybe develop an antidote to it. View your anger objectively. Try to see the positive side of the anger-causing person or event. All these ideas are not Tibetan inventions, they are Nalanda inventions, your inventions! (laughs uproariously) We Tibetans are the *chelas* (students) and India is the guru. But today, our guru is getting too materialistic, perhaps becoming too orthodox on one hand and too westernized on the other. I think it is time that Indians get Indianized!

Since you have been stressing 'secular values', would you not prescribe spiritual practices because they owe allegiance to some tradition?

I would recommend what I call 'analytical meditation'. It is scientific, as the main job of a scientist is to analyze. When you meditate, you shift your focus from the external to the internal, emotional world.

That's why the Buddha is said to be a great psychologist?

Undoubtedly, because he taught the science of the mind.

What is the goal of human life? What are we born to achieve?

To be happy!

What is the purpose of existence?

Happiness.

Happiness for others or ourselves?

Take the example of a plant. What is the goal of its existence?

Service to others?

Maybe the plant just is! It doesn't have fixed goals. It just grows. The plant has no mind, so to speak. Animals also seem to have happiness as their aim.

Change never remains static; growth is essential for a human being. Why do we always say 'Happy Birthday' and never 'Happy Deathday'? Because we don't want to see the end. The human mind is attracted to growth, beginning and freshness. Love thus is the force of growth and development while anger is destruction.

You travel all over the world. Do you think that by and large, the world is moving towards being more positive?

I would like to quote Britain's Queen Mother on this. On her 96th birthday, I asked her the same question. She said that it was becoming better because when she was young, for instance, nobody was concerned about the environment, human rights or the right to self-determination. Today, these have become universal values. When Gandhiji implemented *ahimsa*, I think everyone took it as a sign of weakness. Now the entire world, except perhaps China, accepts nonviolence and practices it, like Nelson Mandela. India has not only given birth to great religious tradition like Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism but has also sheltered many, like Zoroastrianism, Islam, Christianity. The religious tolerance we see around the world is also an Indian tradition.

Do you think that China is changing?

Yes, I think China is also in the process of changing.

Any message for the readers of Life Positive?

Life can be pleasant or miserable. To lead a fruitful life, and to make it positive, practice analytical meditation. And remember that calmness and compassion are an important part of human life. I hope that all Life Positive readers will pay greater attention to inner values.

