



Edited Transcripts of His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama's Visit to New Orleans

May 16-18, 2013

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Transcribed and Edited by His Holiness the Dalai Lama Invitation Committee

Tulane School of Social Work

on behalf of the people of New Orleans, Louisiana

"May All Beings Be Happy"





**Edited Transcript of His Holiness the Dalai Lama
Resilience Conference Keynote Address and Panel Discussion
New Orleans Convention Center
May 17, 2013**

Dr. Ron Marks, Dean of the Tulane School of Social Work: Ladies and Gentlemen, joining His Holiness this morning is his translator, Geshe Thupten Jinpa, and of course our esteemed speakers from yesterday, Dr. Margaret Wheatley and Dr. Richard Davidson.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I want to introduce a simple Buddhist monk, who also happens to be His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of six million Tibetans. A monk who is recognized throughout the world for his message of universal responsibility and compassion. A monk who received the Nobel Peace prize in 1989 for his commitment to peace and nonviolence. Someone who is deeply respected among faith leaders of all religions, and who has met with presidents, prime ministers, crowned rulers, and scientists throughout the world, and is dedicated to exploring human values and inner happiness, promoting harmony among all religions, and advocating for the wellbeing of the Tibetan people, and of all people.

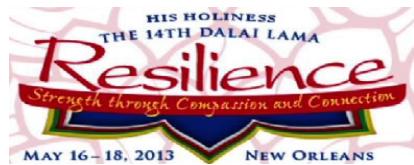
His Holiness will receive an honorary doctorate at Tulane's commencement tomorrow. When I nominated him for this two years ago, I included a very brief statement from his acceptance speech from the Nobel Peace Prize. His Holiness said, basically, universal responsibility is feeling for other people's suffering just as we feel our own. It's the realization that even our enemy is entirely motivated by the quest for happiness. We must recognize that all beings want the same thing that we want.

His Holiness has said, "If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion."

Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm humbled by what I'm about to say: It is my profound honor to present to you His Holiness the Dalai Lama, whose laughter is infectious and emanates from the purity of his being. His Holiness. [Applause.]

And one last thing, Your Holiness. All the people in this room have been invited to sign a Commitment to Compassion, and I want to just read for you the words in which they signed, the card in which they signed.

"In response to the historic visit of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Louisiana, I choose to make a Commitment to Compassion, motivated by the wish to promote happiness and reduce suffering of all beings. May the actions of my body, speech, and mind reflect justice, respect and equality. May I work



to reduce violence, exploitation and prejudice at the personal, local and global levels. May I connect with all humanity in protecting our planet and the diversity of life that it supports. My signature below will be presented to His Holiness."

And I'd like to ask my good friend Tsering Phuntsok to hand me the signatures of all the people in this room. [Venerable Tsering Phuntsok hands the binder of signatures to Ron Marks, and together they present the binder with *kata*¹ to His Holiness, who reads silently the Commitment while holding Dr. Marks' hand.]

His Holiness will now say a few words, and then we'll have some questions for the panel.

His Holiness: I see. This hat, I suppose is for me? I think.

Dr. Ron Marks: For you.

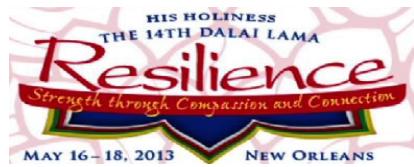
His Holiness: Otherwise, it's stealing, right? Sometimes very strong light. Firstly, sometimes irritates my eyes. Most important, with strong light, sometimes it's difficult to see the people who are far away. [His Holiness puts on Tulane University visor. Audience applause.] Very helpful, very good to see. And particularly those people whose face is very smart, very attractive. [His Holiness laughs.] I think as a Buddhist monk, we cannot touch, but can look, appreciate. [Laughs.]

So, brothers and sisters, firstly I want make clear, you should not think that now the person who is speaking is something special. Don't think that. We are the same human being. Mentally, emotionally, physically. We are the same human being.

So, on that level, entire seven billion human beings are the same. I think it is quite relevant, you see, to get that kind of firm conviction that entire seven billion human beings are the same human beings. Everyone wants a happy life. Everyone wants to have every right to achieve a happy life. In order to achieve that, you see, differences have come in human society, including different religious traditions, different countries, nationalities, and different systems to achieve our basic goal, a happy life.

However, I suppose that the method to achieve that goal sometimes destroys that goal. We put too much emphasis on secondary level of differences. We forget the oneness of human beings. Then, obviously, people through religious belief or through political systems, political power, or national interest, kill other people, feeling the so-called enemy is worthwhile to eliminate.

¹ A *kata* is a ceremonial silk offering scarf.



Why?

If these people would think, "They are also human beings, they also come from their mother, they are nurtured by their mother, and not by themselves," then, even if there is some anger, extreme sort of anger comes, even on the level that they want to kill them, but the second thought comes, "Oh, they are human beings like myself." Then, they are a little hesitant. So, therefore, often the secondary level of differences becomes more important than the fundamental level of oneness, which is sometimes neglected.

I think that in human history, with all these problems or tragedies, including in the Twentieth Century, nearly 100 or 200 million people were killed through violence.

I often tell people about my friend, not only friend, but I consider him as my teacher about quantum physics. I have two teachers of quantum physics. One, David Bohm; the other, Von Weizsäcker², a German. So, once Von Weizsäcker told me when he was young, every German eyed the French as their enemy. And in the French eye, Germany is their enemy. He told me that in about the 1980s or '90s. I think nowadays, that kind of attitude is completely changed. So, they at least reached the oneness of European.

So, the concept or system of the European Union developed, with, I think, about 300 million Europeans. If there is still too much emphasis on secondary level of differences, then these things are impossible to materialize. So, at least they developed the oneness of Europeans. Very good.

Unfortunately, sometimes in the past, there were military alliances. That's mainly for destruction. Now these things are constructive. I think people, at least Europeans, on a whole are more mutual. I often ask some young people in Europe, "What do you feel now?" Sometimes I ask some Austrian or Germans, "What you feel about your neighbor?" They say, "Oh, just our neighbor, the same."

So now, we need effort to promote awareness of the oneness of humanity. I think that is very important. And also you see, when tragedy happens, such as what I noticed in Japan after the tsunami and the flood. When I visited that area, I was told, immediately after that sort of tragedy all neighbors came to help them, irrespective of whether they knew them or not, simply as part of the same community. Maybe as same Japanese. [Laughs.]

So, due to these things, people who experience tremendous suffering there feel, "Oh, we are not alone. All our brothers and sisters are really sharing our problem." When I reached that place, I met

² Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker (1912 - 2007)



those victims, including some children. When I met them I held their hands, and in their eyes, tears. I also, you see, feel very sad. Some tears. So these things happened. These are really nice things.

Also, in Australia, after the immense flood in the Brisbane area, again I was told of the full cooperation from neighboring people. I think here also, perhaps, similar. And one time, I was told after the September 11th event in New York, the same sense of community became stronger.

So, from the wider perspective, seven billion human beings are passing through some crisis, some problem, due to global warming and population explosion.

Just the other day...

Translator Geshe Thupten Jinpa: His Holiness is referring to a panel discussion he had at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, where one of the environmental scientists mentioned we just crossed a major threshold of carbon emissions of 400 parts per million³, and he then mentioned that if we were to cross 450 parts per million, then it is very dangerous.

His Holiness: After I heard that, I was really more sort of anxious. Anxious. But one way then I thought, now I am quite old, so I will not face that problem. So, these young people, you may face this problem. [His Holiness laughs, audience laughs.]

So, anyway, you see, also I think a lot of manmade problems. Look at the Syrian problem, and the Middle Eastern problem. Really. And also, in some areas in different parts of the world. These are really manmade problems.

When I say "man," I do not necessarily exclude females. Sometimes females also create some problems. [Laughs.]

Dr. Margaret Wheatley: Never. [Laughs.]

His Holiness: But, I think, biologically, females have more sort of sensitivity about the pain of others. Some scientists experimented on that. The data clearly shows that the female biological factor is more sensitive to the pain of others. So therefore, generally, I think females are less troublesome.

Dr. Margaret Wheatley: Thank you, thank you.

³ 400 parts per million atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide.



His Holiness: Except in the family. [Laughs.]

So, anyway, there are many problems that we human beings created ourselves. So silly! Big contradiction: Everybody wants a happy life, and doesn't want problems, but problems are self-created! Why? Out of ignorance. Out of short-sightedness. Out of a sort of narrow view about short-term interest.

So, now, we can change these kinds of views through education and through awareness. So, I always say, we are the same human being. We have every right to achieve a happy life. And that is related to more sense of concern for others' wellbeing. Then that gives you self-confidence, inner strength.

Recently I saw one article, written by one American scientist. People who often tell lies mentally have much more stress. It's true. So, with this cheating and telling lies comes disrespect of others, only thinking of yourself. As long as we develop a genuine sense of concern for others' wellbeing, we automatically develop respect for others. Then there's no room to harm them, to bully them, to cheat them, or to lie to them. As a result, you see, the person is full of confidence. With that, you carry your life honestly, truthfully, and transparently. The result is that more trust comes. Trust is the basis of friendship. Without trust, how to develop genuine friends? Isn't it? When you have trust, then friendship comes.

We are social animals. In our lives, a genuine trusting friend is very important. If one remains in distrust, this side distrust, that side distrust [points left and right], then that person eventually, while outwardly may be very a successful billionaire, very powerful, but deep inside is very lonely, full of distrust and suspicion.

Therefore, through that way we need more of a sense of concern for others. You get maximum benefit. Peace of mind. Through that way, your health also improves. Now I think this scientist, my long time friend, has more to explain about their research work [gestures to Dr. Richard Davidson, on stage]. So, my word may not be very authentic. His word is more authentic, because they truly experiment.

So, anyway now, Richard. Once you have full confidence, then no matter how difficult the situation, you can face that with a firm determination or will power. If inside, a little fear or insecurity, when some difficult situation comes, then really hopeless. Demoralized.

So, therefore, in our life there's no guarantee that life will be without any problem. We are bound to face some problem that cannot be removed by money. If there was a way to avoid problems



through corruption, then it's good! [Laughs.] Or with money, then I think rich people, or billionaires, would never face any problems. But some of my friends, who I think are very rich economically, as human beings, they are very unhappy human beings. I witnessed; I noticed this.

Therefore, the ultimate source of happiness and joyfulness is very much linked with peace of mind. Peace of mind is very much linked with your mental attitude. With more warm-heartedness or sense of concern for others' wellbeing, then all things, you see, become very easy. I think that way. Is it suitable for that slogan? [His Holiness refers to the conference title behind him, *Resilience: Strength Through Compassion and Connection*.] Like that.

I'm telling you these things as a human being, not as a Buddhist. Buddhism, a religious faith, is individual business. Now we are talking about humanity. So a sense of concern that is very much related to a sense of concern towards your own friends, your own family or community, then sometimes, actually, that sense of concern or love is very much mixed with attachment.

Attachment comes and your mind becomes biased. More love to your own friends, more hatred to your enemies. Because that kind of love is very much mixed with attachment, it creates a biased attitude. With a biased attitude, even for religious faith, if you are too much attached to your own faith, then your mind becomes biased. Through a biased mind, we cannot see other things objectively. So that's why, you see, these problems happen.

So, we must make a genuine love based on the oneness of humanity, and further that goes towards all sentient beings. You see no reason for, "This is my close friend." No. "This is part of my community." No.

So, that way, even your enemy, as far as their attitude is concerned toward you, it's still negative. So we call or we categorize this as enemy. But further, you see, these people, your enemies, are also human beings. Part of humanity. When the emphasis is more on that level, then his or her attitude towards me doesn't matter. It doesn't matter. That attitude is also out of ignorance, misunderstanding, their own attachment, or negative emotions. Then, thinking that way, instead of anger, you get more of a sense of concern for them, "How foolish, how sad." You see such people who become sort of slaves of destructive emotions. So, looking in that way, more of a sense of concern for their wellbeing comes. That is genuine love, without attachment.

I very much appreciate the organizers of this. [Holds up Commitment to Compassion card.] I never had this kind of experience. "I choose to make a Commitment to Compassion, motivated by the wish to promote happiness and reduce suffering of all beings." All beings, you see, beings of existence.



Usually we say, "sentient beings." Just beings, then I think it's difficult to eat vegetables, to cut vegetables. Vegetables are also beings. I think that's too vast. [Audience laughs.]

Earlier I spoke about the problem of inhalation of carbon emissions. Then I think that should come sooner. The sooner, the better. We human beings would be eliminated, and disappear. Then fewer problems. [Laughs.] So then, I think "the suffering of all beings" should be "the suffering of all sentient beings." That means, the beings who have the experience of pain and pleasure. We usually describe that as sentient beings. So, I think for English words, you know better. My understanding of English is very limited.

Then, "May my actions of body, speech and mind reflect justice, respect and equality." Wonderful, wonderful. "May I work to reduce violence, exploitation and prejudice at the personal, local and global level." Wonderful. "May I connect with all humanity in protecting our planet." Wonderful. "And the diversity of life it supports." Wonderful, really wonderful.

So, now, the only thing is, in this short moment, this short period, these ideas are very alive in your mind. But after one week or one month, they gradually decline. That should not happen. At the beginning, you are full of enthusiasm. Then, in order to implement these things, it is not easy. So then, you may lose your interest or your enthusiasm about these practices. That should not happen. So, familiarize yourself with these things. Even in your dreams, remember these things. Then the real strength will come through. Then your life will become much happier and much more stable.

Thank you. Some questions, right? [Audience applause.]

Dr. Ron Marks: Okay, where do we go from here? Your Holiness, yesterday as part of our meeting we asked people in the audience to write questions, and these questions I will now present for our panel.

The first question I would like to ask is, you just cautioned us that perhaps we're all very enthusiastic at this moment, we're very excited about this Commitment to Compassion that we've made, and you cautioned us on the danger of perhaps letting it fade away. What can we do to continue to allow that commitment to be sustained?

His Holiness: Now of course, from the practitioners' sort of experience, and in my case I am Buddhist, though I think a poor Buddhist practitioner [laughs], usually we first learn these wonderful ideas or principals through listening or reading. Then, do not leave it at that level. Analyze by yourself, constantly thinking and deliberately raising all kinds of obstacles to these things. At this next stage, it's important to



engage in critical reflection and imagine the scenarios that are contrary to the sentiments that you are expressing, or espousing, so that it becomes more challenged.

Particularly when we are passing through a period of negative feelings, when they are about to come, then remember these sorts of principles. Then try to combat that destructive emotion. Through that way, familiarize. Get used to these habits. Once you have taken a certain position on these deeper values, then through familiarization that gains more strength. As that part gains more strength, the opposite, the negative side, gradually reduces. We usually call that the first level, the second level, and the third level. On the second level, you get some conviction out of analysis. On the third level, you get much more of a stronger conviction through your own experiences.

So, timing is major factor. Familiarize yourself with these things. Do not just leave it on an intellectual level, but find a way to reinforce them so they are integrated with your emotions as well. Like that.

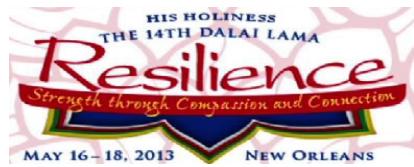
Dr. Ron Marks: Yesterday, we heard a number of comments from Dr. Wheatley about how we move our communities forward, how we can sustain ourselves in the community. I'd like to pose this to the panel. New Orleans, last week, experienced a profoundly violent event⁴. What can you recommend for us as individuals, as well as the community, to create a space for the wisdom of compassion?

His Holiness: I think since you mentioned that, you should answer [gestures to Dr. Wheatley].

Dr. Margaret Wheatley: I will happily answer, Your Holiness.

I think it's really important, if we are taking this vow, which you've all signed, at those moments when something horrible happens, that's when the vow becomes most important. That's when it becomes the guide to how we will react. So, it's possible after the Mother's Day violence or after any kind of violence, or terrorism, or anything, to get very angry and to feel very disturbed. But if we can not react instantaneously and have practiced this vow to behave compassionately, that's the moment for the practice. That's why we discipline ourselves ahead of time to really take the vow in, to meditate on it, because in those moments when we meet violence, I think very often our first reaction is to want to strike back. Yet, what is needed is our compassionate presence because that will change the dynamic.

⁴ The Mother's Day 2013 shooting in New Orleans.



So, the outrage, the anger, and all the aggression that's in the press and in the public, we have to be the different voice, we have to just hold the place of compassion and not go down that road of wanting to counter violence with violence.

Dr. Richard Davidson: Your Holiness, you often talk about the important role of education, and I think that this is an example where, particularly, early education can be so helpful. Scientific research teaches us that kindness and compassion are something that we are born with, that we come into the world with, but it is very much like language. We all come into the world with a capacity to speak and to understand language, but we need a linguistic community for that seed to be nurtured, and I think that it's very similar for kindness and compassion. We all come into the world with this seed for kindness and compassion but we need a community to support and to nurture the development and strengthening of those capacities. And I think here early education can play such an important role.

Your Holiness also distinguishes between something that neuroscience also distinguishes between, which is knowledge about something, knowledge about kindness and compassion versus really feeling it emotionally. That's something so critical. When we feel it emotionally it becomes more of a habit so that it can arise spontaneously in situations where it is most needed, and that kind of education I think can be best done early in life.

His Holiness: Absolutely, absolutely.

Dr. Margaret Wheatley: But what about us? We're all people who are trying to practice compassion, and we keep hitting up against these events that really test us. So, besides educating early, teaching children, we made this commitment and now we just have to figure out how to do it on a daily basis.

Dr. Ron Marks: How early can we start teaching children about meditation, and when did you first meditate, Your Holiness?

His Holiness: In my own case, I think seriousness came about the practice from fourteen or fifteen years old. Before that, not much interest. Of course, I learned. I had to study those texts, but as a duty. So, at exam time, I studied with great reluctance. So, therefore, the times my teacher would come to teach



me, I would feel, "Oh, the sun has also become a little bit dark." [Laughs.] And when there were some days of holiday, or festival days, then so much excitement, "Now, tomorrow holiday!" No rest, like that.

At around fourteen or fifteen years of age, I then developed some genuine interest and began thinking seriously. Then the situation also became more difficult⁵. During this period, I think circumstances also taught me how you must have some kind of training mentally. How you need some kind of mental strength. Then these trainings really were immensely helpful for me to keep will power or determination, like that.

I would like to share something for the adult people. One time, in Jerusalem, we had some discussion. Some Palestinians, some Jews, and also, some Christians. One Jewish person, who worked as a teacher, told that meeting that in his class he has a number of Palestinian children, so he told them, "When you face some danger, and develop some agitation or anger, then think of the person who is causing that as the image of God." Image of God. He mentioned that. He told that to his class. So, later, some students told him, "Oh, your advice has been an immense help." When they pass through some Israeli check post, sometimes usually they get some kind of uncomfortable feeling. But then, they remember, "Oh, that person, image of God." So, immense help.

So, those people who have some sort of belief in the teaching of Jesus Christ, or the teaching of Mohammed, and some other sorts of teaching, I think that is useful.

Then, as I mentioned earlier, we are social animals. Thinking about this in a more secular way, that is something common. Actually, you see this secular thinking is the basis of all major religious traditions.

Simply, I believe these sorts of values are already present from birth. Then different religious traditions utilize different sorts of methods. That means different philosophies or different concepts to strengthen these basic values that come from birth. So, very useful.

Then in my own case, for example, on 10th March, 2008. As usual, we carried out some sort of commemoration.⁶ That afternoon I received one message from Lhasa. Now some people you see had already started demonstrations. Then immediately I felt, now something difficult will certainly come. If it is a violent demonstration, then I thought immense suffering, and a lot of anguish, fear, and also hopelessness will come. I felt that immediately.

⁵ Around 1950, when the Chinese Communist military forces first began their occupation of Tibet.

⁶ March 10 is commemorated as Tibet Uprising Day, the anniversary of the failed March 10, 1959 uprising against the Chinese Communist occupation in Lhasa, Tibet.



But then I practiced one sort of visualization toward those Chinese authorities on the local level there, who carry some decisions, make suppression, and these things. So, I visualized them. There is one sort of Buddhist practice, called Giving and Taking⁷. That means, you take their anger, their suspicion, their fear, through visualization. And you give them your certain experiences of love, compassion, forgiveness, and these things, through visualization. Of course, that won't help reality on the ground, but for peace of mind, there is immense benefit through that practice. So, such things we can practice.

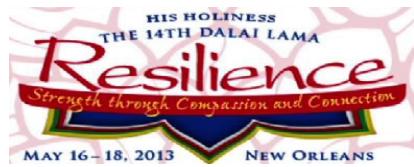
Those people who believe in God the Creator can think, all these people are also created by God. As I mentioned, one my Muslim friends told me that genuine practitioners of Islam should extend love towards the entire creation of God, or Allah. So, therefore, the people who follow different religious traditions, who sincerely believe, practice effective methods to develop forgiveness and tolerance. Just repeating the word forgiveness, or tolerance, will have an effect. Think these things. That's quite enough.

Then some people are non-believers, so should be more realistic. So, when some tragedy happens, then think, if that tragedy can be overcome, don't develop too much worry, sadness, or frustration. Usually, frustration and sadness can develop anger. So, try to reduce these sort of negative emotions. So, if the tragedy can be overcome, then there is no need for too much worry or too much frustration. Instead of frustration, or becoming demoralized, make a firm sort of determination, and tackle that problem. Try to work on it. Then, tragedy should not cause demoralization, but cause inner strength, an inner sort of will.

After thoroughly, objectively analyzing the situation, then if it is beyond your control, if there's no way to work on that, then there is no need for too much worry or too much sadness. Anyway, now you can't do anything. There is an eighth century Buddhist master⁸, a great philosopher, who wrote a piece of advice which is, when confronting a difficult problem in your life, you should look to see if you know what the nature of the problem is. If there is a way to deal with it and overcome it, then there is no need to be so overwhelmed and worried. On the other hand, as a result of your inquiry, if there is no solution or you cannot do anything about it, then there is actually no point in being so overwhelmed and worried!

⁷ Tong-len meditation.

⁸ Shantideva, in the classic Sanskrit poem, *Entering Into the Way of an Awakening Being (Bodhisattvacharyavatara)*, Chapter 6, Verse 10.



Many years ago in Tibet, you see, one day I complained about some problems to my teacher, Ling Rinpoche. So, this advice was actually an instruction that my own personal tutor gave me once, when I was complaining a lot about something. This was in the 1950s when I was still living in Tibet, and my teacher Ling Rinpoche reminded me of those four lines.

So, it was very helpful. Very helpful. That means, you should be realistic. You see, too much sadness causes too much pain. Mental pain is actually created by our own mind. Same tragedy, but two persons. One looks from a wider perspective, and one looks just at that. Big differences. Same tragedy, same suffering, but two people, because of different mental perspective or approach, differences there.

Therefore, since we have this marvelous intelligence, when we are passing through some difficult or desperate sort of situation, then we should not act like an animal but we should act as human beings, with this marvelous sort of intelligence.

[Points to Conference Title.] "Resilience: Strength Through Compassion and Connection." Compassion is mainly related with warm-heartedness. Now connection, that is more related with intelligence. Now things, every event, do not come through just one factor, but many factors. And then also, you see, as I mentioned earlier, think of the oneness of humanity, as a community, connected like that. Then, those people who do not have much interest, they probably face a more miserable life. That's your own creation. [Laughs.]

Dr. Ron Marks: Ok, another question from our audience, for all of our panelists. What is the greatest moral crisis and the greatest moral victory of the early part of the Twenty-first Century?

Dr. Margaret Wheatley: Well, I think the greatest moral crisis is the destruction of the home planet, which I think impacts us unconsciously in ways that we're just beginning to see. The violence and the aggression, for me, come partly from a deep sense of, "Oh my word, we have destroyed our home." I don't think we've ever done that before. So, I think that's the greatest moral crisis.

The greatest moral victory, I think the one good news that I look for in this Twenty-first Century, is the stepping forward of local women in communities across the planet, who are taking responsibility and can't wait any longer for the children to become healthy, for the community to come together. That's a beautiful good news story from the Twenty-first Century, which you have also spoken about, Your Holiness. It's women stepping forward because there's no more time and we can't wait.

[Applause.]



Dr. Richard Davidson: Well, I certainly agree that one of the great moral crises is our failure to care for our planet, and as His Holiness mentioned just a few days ago in Madison, we heard from environmental scientists about the dangers of exceeding 400 parts per million of carbon dioxide and the trajectory we are on.

In my view, our greatest moral victory are gatherings like this, and the frequency of which communities are coming together, supporting each other, and underscoring the importance of teaching, strengthening, and nourishing kindness and compassion at very early ages and throughout the lifespan.

As I talk to lay communities throughout the United States and throughout the world, I've been more and more impressed with how many people are really touched by Your Holiness' message presenting these ideas in a way that is secular, universal, and accessible to all people, and the growing movement of individuals who are embracing these ideas. More than just embracing the ideas, they're actually working to implement at a local level in education, healthcare, and business. Those are the three major institutions of modern culture. To bring these methods to help people familiarize themselves with these qualities, I think is a very hopeful message, and a hopeful sign.

His Holiness: Then perhaps I may add something.

As I mentioned before, I think the problems we are facing fall into two categories. One, mainly due to nature changing, and natural forces. Certainly also our own behavior makes some difference, but basically things like natural disasters are beyond our control. I think there is some limited thinking to reduce carbon emission. These things.

This reminds me, I think in 1965, on one occasion I was in south India. One Gandhian told me, "Now motorcars are very bad. We must abandon them and use bullock carts." [Laughs.] It sounds like there seems to be some reasons, but firstly, it's unrealistic, and secondly I think it's too extreme. So, anyway, our lifestyle very much depends on technology. There are side effects there, but at the same time, I think it is of immense benefit. So, now we have to make more of a balance. This is one thing.

Two, the manmade problems, like the killing now present in Syria. As I mentioned earlier, it's sad. You see, it's really senseless. We sit with tight hands [folds arms] and do nothing. It's quite sad, innocent people, women and children are dying, but still we just sit and complain, complain, complain. Then also, many people in Africa, also in Asia, have malnutrition, and some places starvation. I was told



in some cases the government of the concerned people spend a lot of money building their military forces and buying military aircraft at high costs, but completely neglect their farming.

These are manmade problems, not created by nature. They are within our own hands. If we really look more realistically and more compassionately, basically as I mentioned earlier, on the basis of a clear awareness of the realization of the oneness of humanity, then certainly we can reduce these things. So, I think these many problems, I feel they are a very serious matter.

And then the second question, hope. I became a refugee now fifty-four years ago. In the early period, I think I met very few people who talked about inner peace, these things. And decade by decade, more and more people are now showing interest about inner peace, particularly in affluent society. Now when you reach certain sort of stage, you find the limitation of material value. So, a lot of material there, yet mentally not necessarily calm or happy.

The most important thing for me is scientific research. Now scientists, through their own experimentation or research, are now really telling us that warm-heartedness or a compassionate heart is really an immense benefit for health. No question. They are compassionate, then the family is much happier.

Since the global economic crisis, I have expressed, for those people who always are concerned about money, money, money, including in their dreams some money, perhaps this global crisis brought much more worry to such people. And those people who do farming in the countryside, I think less. And also, people who have a very compassionate family, I think much less effect.

So, therefore, more people are really showing interest about our inner values, not necessarily because they believe in religion, but because in daily life, too much greed, anger, or frustration is very bad for your own health. So, I think awareness of that has really increased.

And now, in the spiritual field, we find new gurus. These scientists are truly gurus. We are old-fashioned gurus, these people are modern gurus. I think for modern people, in modern times, modern guru is more effective than old-style, old-fashioned gurus.

So, this is a really hopeful sign. I think tremendous difficulties, in one way, can make you demoralized or hopeless. Then, in the worst case, suicide. On the other hand, difficulties open our mind. Usually we take for granted our usual sort of way of life, or our way of thinking. When you see some real crisis comes, it opens our mind, and then provokes our mind. Then we analyze, do further research. I think this is that kind of period. So, that's a hopeful sign. [Applause.]



Dr. Ron Marks: Richie, is there any evidence that pregnant women who meditate have children who are calmer, or have more self-control?

Dr. Richard Davidson: To the best of my knowledge, there is no evidence for that, but there's no evidence because it hasn't yet been explored. I think that we do know that a pregnant mother who is more relaxed has reduced stress hormones. There is a change in the physiological reactivity in the fetus. And we do know the reverse, that stress during pregnancy has a deleterious effect on the developing fetus that can actually impact the wiring of the brain during fetal development, which then can have consequences after birth.

I think that the extent to which we can find an antidote to that, for a pregnant mother to learn to be calm, more peaceful, and more compassionate during pregnancy will directly translate into a change in the physiology of the fetus and actually influence brain development, as well as gene expression in the developing fetus. We know that genes are regulated early during fetal development in ways that can be very enduring, and pregnant women who are exposed to traumatic events can have fetuses that have altered gene expression, which then can again have long-term negative consequences. So, I think that all of this underscores the importance of having a relaxed and caring environment during pregnancy, which I think can then influence the growing child.

Dr. Ron Marks: And, Your Holiness, you agree with that I see.

His Holiness: Yes, of course. I was told by one Japanese scientist, many years ago, that during pregnancy the mother's sort of calm has a very positive effect on the child. An unsteady mind, often having some anger or stress, is very harmful. That was many years ago, I think thirty years ago, like that. So, sometimes I mention that everybody knows how important compassion is after birth, how valuable mothers' affection is. But even before birth, our mothers' sort of calm mind or compassionate mind is a very crucial factor for the unborn child.

Dr. Ron Marks: In Western culture we use the concepts of trauma, coping, and resilience. I am wondering, do you have these concepts in Tibetan culture, and do we find these concepts in other cultures around the world?



His Holiness: So here, part of the question is related to the different ways in which cultures use language to parse reality. For example, we had a similar discussion in the past about whether or not there is an exact correlate to the English word "emotion" in the Tibetan language. In the Tibetan language, the intellectual part, or classical part, is very close to Sanskrit, so the same question is raised about the Sanskrit tradition as well.

Although the specific word "trauma" is not there, there is a similar concept called "adversity," or "adverse experience." Of course in the Buddhist and Tibetan literature, there are a lot of discussions about how one copes in the face of adversity, how to approach challenges, and what kind of attitude and mental faculties one needs to bear upon these experiences.

So, for example, in the tradition, individuals are instructed to cultivate a sense of forbearance. And one practice of forbearance is to cultivate a sense of equanimity so that you do not take the adversity that you experience too personally or too seriously. At the higher level, forbearance can even take the form of voluntarily embracing hardship in the course of some other objective.

These two forms of forbearance practice have different functions. Forbearance that involves voluntarily embracing hardships in the course of your work is to really build up your resilience, so that you have that mental preparedness when you are involved in a task. Forbearance in the form of maintaining equanimity protects you from giving in to negative instinct and impulses in the face of someone else causing harm to you.

You know, whether or not trauma leaves an imprint on the person's mind is also probably dependent upon the kind of attitude and the mental faculties the individual brings to the experience. I think you already heard about one Tibetan monk I knew before 1959, when he was already a senior monk. From March 1959, he lived in a Chinese *gulag* for seventeen or eighteen years. Then in 1980, Deng Xiaoping made new, more open laws, so he also had the opportunity to come to India to join his own monastery. Since we knew each other very well, on one occasion I just caught up with and talked with that monk. He told me during seventeen years in the Chinese *gulag*, he faced a few occasions of some danger. And I thought, danger on his life. I asked, "What kind of danger?" And then his answer was, "Danger of losing compassion towards Chinese perpetrators." So you see, he considered it extremely important to keep a compassionate attitude towards his enemy.

As a result, his mind is very clear. He is a very happy person. I think his age is now perhaps ninety-seven or something. So, on one occasion in our scientific seminar I mentioned that. Then some scientists showed interest to interview these people, and I think he was also included. Some scientists



interviewed a few people who had traumatic sorts of experiences in their early life inside Tibet. But they found no traces of trauma.

Dr. Richard Davidson: Post-traumatic stress.

His Holiness: Ah. So, it clearly shows that the mental state, a more compassionate mental state, not anger, not hatred, that really makes the difference. Of course, physical sort of pain is there. But mentally there is not much pain.

And then some practitioner later told me their best period for spiritual practice was during their prison time. So you see, they are physically in prison, and occasionally receive some torture. But mentally, it is sort of their best period of practice. So, mental thinking is a really very serious matter in our life. Like that.

Dr. Margaret Wheatley: So, Your Holiness, I just want to say a bit more here, because I think this is the great gift you offer us. People who have gone through trauma, it's how we hold the experience. So, this word coping really struck me, because we think we have to cope and then get back to normal, instead of using the experiences of life that will happen to all of us. We don't use them to transform or develop our mind, but instead we're often placed in the position of victims, and we have to recover. I'm speaking to New Orleans now. Something bad has happened to us, and rather than seeing it as part of life, and then working with the trauma so that it's not trauma, it becomes our experience and we grow from it.

And for me, this is a fundamental difference between what you present and what our psychological orientation in the West has led us to. We rush in and offer counseling but we don't really work with the experience so that it teaches us or it develops us, and I think this is the greatest gift that you offer people who have been traumatized.

His Holiness: I usually tell people, it's like the body's health. If the immune system is strong, then some virus may not disturb very much. So mentally, it is similar. If the basic mental situation is stable, as I mentioned earlier, with self-confidence and some kind of sense of concern for others' wellbeing, then when there are some disturbances or difficulties, they may not disturb much. So, these are not like a tranquilizer, but years of familiarization with these things.



So, as you mentioned, throughout childhood, educate or create awareness of these things. And then, I think through education, our society will become a more compassionate society, from more compassionate families. In order to develop a compassionate family, the compassion must start from one individual.

I think we usually take compassion as something sort of simple. Part of the problem is that sometimes we may all value compassion as an idea, but our relationship to compassion tends to be very simple. We just say, "Oh, it's wonderful. Let's be compassionate!" But what is required is a much more serious understanding of what it takes. What is the function of compassion? What are the opposing emotions that come in the way? What are the adversities that come in the way of cultivating those qualities? So, it is in this way that our engagement with compassion can be more serious.

Dr. Ron Marks: Your Holiness, for the last two hours you've shared with us the essence of your beliefs and teachings on compassion. We're about to end, and as we leave the room and go about our day, and the busyness of our lives, what last words can you tell us as we begin to have doubts about these great lessons and wisdom? How can we hold on to this as we go back to work tomorrow and have all the headaches of modern society? What words can you share with us in closing?

His Holiness: I often tell people, I am leaving the day after tomorrow, and so your problems remain with you. [Laughs.] So, you have to analyze more. I think in this respect, you and you [gestures toward Dr. Wheatley and Dr. Davidson] have something to say, some new things. Besides what I already mentioned here, there's not much. I think it's really relevant for you two, at least you remain here, isn't it? [Gestures toward Dr. Wheatley.]

Dr. Margaret Wheatley: I'm visiting here. I get to leave...

His Holiness: But you are at least American, so you see, you remain in America. I'm leaving. So, American problems remain with American people. [Audience laughs.] They do not go with me. [Laughs.] Something, something to say? I think maybe some more practical sort of advice, suggestions maybe. So, come.



Dr. Margaret Wheatley: Well, I think we know what to do, and we're committed people. You've signed a vow about compassionate behavior, and so it's just staying awake to that. Of every day, watching yourself, and learning how hard it is to act with compassion, free from regression. But that's our vow, that's our commitment. So, it takes discipline, determination, focus, and repetition. Lots and lots of practice here. We do know who we want to become, so that's the path forward. Practice, watchfulness, mindfulness, with this deep dedication that we do choose to be people of compassion in a very troubled time.

Dr. Richard Davidson: There is often a disconnect between our knowledge of what we'd like to be and the extent to which we embody that knowledge. And I think that one of the things that neuroscientific research teaches us is that we can create both outer and inner conditions to help facilitate that by reminding ourselves as frequently as possible. Creating environments where we can have little reminders, whatever they may be. Pictures that help us remember, or specific sayings, and come back to them on a regular basis several times a day so that we infuse this throughout each day, every day.

And I think that if we can create the outer conditions as well as the inner conditions to continuously remind ourselves, then it becomes more familiar, it becomes more spontaneous, and we will act in ways that are more consistent with the values that I think all of us here hold.

So that gives me an optimistic sense of the future, and the fact that all of you are here to hear His Holiness today, I think underscores the values that we all hold. I think now we have to work hard to embody them.

Dr. Margaret Wheatley: Practice, practice, practice.

His Holiness: And perhaps, I think something useful. I think naturally amongst this audience, some of you might be neighbors, so on weekends or holidays, perhaps spend one hour in some discussion about the change in your experiences. Also sometimes, we Tibetan monks in some monasteries do that. So you see, on one weekend each family brings some sweets, chocolates, or some sort of cookies, then enjoy that together, and have some serious discussions. Also, it is an opportunity to show which cookie is better, or which chocolate is better! [Laughs.]

So I think, occasionally have some refreshment of these sorts of ideas. If you just hear one time, then gradually as time passes, it becomes fainter and fainter and eventually goes away. So I think it is



better, instead of just thinking about this by oneself, though that is also important, but come together in a sort of group. A family group, or those trusted neighbors. If a little bit of distrust, then exclude them! [Laughs.] So, we discuss these things, but still a strong concept and "We" and "They!"

So, I really feel you should make it fresh from time to time. I also think according to individuals' experience, new ideas or new experiences may come. Then it is useful like that.

Thank you! [Applause.]

Dr. Ron Marks: Ladies and Gentlemen, please join me one more time in thanking Richie Davidson and Meg Wheatley for sharing their extraordinary knowledge and great, great work that they've been doing.

And please join me one more time. Your Holiness, thank you for being here with us, thank you for sharing your great wisdom, and thank you so much for being here in New Orleans with us in this historic moment. [Applause.]

His Holiness: Thank you! [Offers *kata* to Dr. Wheatley, Dr. Davidson, and Dr. Marks. Bows to audience with joined hands.]



Edited Transcript of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Public Talk

New Orleans Convention Center

May 17, 2013

New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu: Thank you all so very much for being with us today. For sixty years, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has been a leading voice for peace and for human dignity. A Nobel Laureate and a powerful advocate for the people of Tibet, he has tirelessly traveled the world on their behalf, visiting more than sixty-two countries, spanning six continents.

Today, he is here to bring us a message of resilience and strength through compassion and connection. I am deeply humbled to have the great honor to welcome to the City of New Orleans His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. Thank you for coming, Your Holiness.

I wish to also welcome all of our honored guests. The monks who have traveled here, His Holiness, and welcome to those with us today who have come from near and far to be here.

His Holiness' visit could not come at a time that is more appropriate for this blessed city. We in New Orleans are in need of his message of peace and reconciliation. It has been a very trying and difficult week for us all. The shooting on Mothers' Day shocked us all. So many victims, so many friends, so many neighbors, fathers, sons, mothers, and daughters.

In the face of this horror and the daily grind of violence and murder on our city's streets, I have personally drawn strength and solace in the prayer of St. Francis, and many times including this past week, my mind and my words have turned to it.

"Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace. Where there is hatred let me sow love. Where there is injury, pardon. Where there is doubt, faith. Where there is despair, hope. Where there is darkness, light. And where there is sadness, joy. Oh Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console. To be understood, as to understand. To be loved, as to love. For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life."

These words of love, devotion, and hope for all mankind tell us that we have a choice. We can reach a deeper understanding and be one in peace, because in the end you and I are together. You are I, and I am you. We are all the same, and it is through this oneness and unity of being where we may find the way to turn bad to good, death to life.

Make no mistake, it is an epic struggle to love in a moment of hate. To have faith in times of doubt. And to forgive those who injure us so deeply. It will always be a struggle but we must travel



down this most difficult path. We must have clarity and become agents of love in a troubled world as we seek to change the New Orleans' culture of violence into a culture of peace.

So, I pray that each of us open our minds and our hearts to His Holiness. Hold close his words and wisdom and from them act. Act for the betterment of all.

It is now my distinct honor to mark this historic occasion with a very special presentation. Your Holiness, I am humbled to be able to give you a key to the heart and the soul of this troubled yet beautiful and historic city, the City of New Orleans. In honor of your first visit to our beautiful city, the passage on this key reads, "May His Holiness' message of peace, love, responsibility, and compassion be received throughout our great city and around the world."

His Holiness, thank you so much for being with us today. Ladies and gentlemen, His Holiness the Dalai Lama. [Applause. Mayor Landrieu presents His Holiness with a key to the City, and His Holiness presents Mayor Landrieu with a white *kata*.]

His Holiness the Dalai Lama: Thank you, thank you very much. Thank you.

Dear brothers and sisters. Indeed, I am very happy on this occasion to visit here, and meet mainly local people, I think who in recent years, have experienced some tragedy due to natural disasters and also just a few days ago some shooting took place.

Among the audience, is there anyone who is member of those families of victims, anyone? No.

I want to express my sharing in their suffering. Of course, in actuality, we cannot share. But mentally, someone showing genuine concern, then it has really great mental effect. Very helpful. So, sometimes, you see, the person who has had some sort of sad event, then in his or her room, they have some pets, dogs, or cats. Their owner looks little bit tired, or a little bit sort of sad, and to some extent these pets know, so they show a special sort of affection. Isn't it? Then we feel some sort of comfort mentally. So, I would like to express my genuine sense of concern for these victims.

So, I want to express a special thanks to the organizers who extended this invitation for me. I usually visit different places only when an invitation comes. There are two reasons. One you see, it's quite difficult to say, "I want go there, and you must make some preparation." I do not want to say that. And secondly, to visit, particularly a long distance, as a simple Buddhist monk, my pocket is not big. So, an invitation with free ticket I really very much appreciate. [Laughs, audience laughter and applause.]

Now, I usually describe myself as a simple Buddhist monk. It is true. In my dreams, quite often, I feel I realize that I am Buddhist monk. But in my dreams I never sort of feel I am Dalai Lama. I never



dreamt like that. So sometimes, I tell people, "Some people describe me as a living Buddha. Some people describe me as a demon. But all these are nonsense." In reality, I am just a simple Buddhist monk. So long as I have kept my vows, nobody can change that. The others are names. Some people love me, pleasing too much. Some people don't like me, with too much sort of negative expression. So, these are not serious.

So, see me as a human being, now aged seventy-eight next July. The year I was born, 1935, on July 6, in Asia, in China, already there was some conflict. I think civil Japanese conflict, I think already very clear, intense sort of things like that. In Europe, Nazi power was gaining. And also in Italy, I think Mussolini. And on the other side, after the Bolshevik Revolution, Stalin. I think in the '30s, really, I think intense fighting. This sort of power [makes fist].

So, then the Second World War happened. After that, Korean War. Vietnam War. And before that, immense sort of civil war in China. So some historians say, during the Twentieth Century around 200 million people were killed through violence.

And within the Twentieth Century, I think some important sort of events like the Berlin Wall gradually disappeared. Not by force, but by popular movement, peaceful movement. Then, the Soviet Union also collapsed. So a certain sort of authoritarian system, with a closed society and too much centralized authority, started within the Twentieth Century and, at least on the European continent, ended within the Twentieth Century.

However, some traces of the immense violence during the Twentieth Century, now began with this Twenty-first Century, with some violence. Kosovo War, and then the Middle East, this war. And then in America, the September 11th event. And since then there were number of occasions, so-called terrorists attacks. So, my whole life I witnessed violence in different forms, but actual violence.

So, with this immense violence, including the use nuclear weapons, innocent people, numbers of innocent people suffered immensely. If that amount of violence had brought a more peaceful world, a better world, then some may say, "Oh, that violence was really huge violence, however, it really brought some good result." But that's not the case.

As I mentioned earlier, the tremendous violence in the Twentieth Century, you see, impacted the beginning of this century with some violence. So, the tragedies at the beginning of this Twenty-first Century are symptoms of past mistakes, of past negligence. That's very clear.



Then, in the meantime, the human population. In the 1970s and '80s, the population was around six billion. Now seven billion, within a few decades. Now, some experts say, at the end of this century, the population will be ten billion.

And in the meantime, the huge gap between rich and poor. Not only on the global level, but also national level. One time, in Washington, I gave a public talk. I mentioned in Washington, the capital of the richest nation, biggest nation, greatest nation, in the suburb of Washington, there are many poor people, poor families. So, you see, this gap remains. It is not only morally wrong, but also practically a source of problems. Those rich people whose houses are among those poorer sections of people, sometimes they have constant fear, constantly feel threatened. Logically, if there is so much gap between rich and poor, the poorer section of people has deep inside some sort of frustration, some kind of resentment. So, that frustration often creates violence. Very sad.

We have to pay serious attention as to how to reduce this gap between rich and poor. On the global level, of course the Northerners, generally speaking, have some surplus. But for Southerners, even basic necessities sometimes are not adequate. Millions of children are malnourished, and millions of people, really their stomach often remains hungry, empty.

Same human beings. Same planet. It is truly unfair. Some people, you see, have surplus and a lifestyle of extreme luxuries. On the same planet, same human beings, on the other side, really are facing difficulties.

In ancient times, without knowing these things, we can't blame those people. Now in modern times, information from everywhere now reaches everywhere. When we watch some television or some documentary film, there are those mothers, firstly due to lack of sufficient food, who are very thin and sick, and they carry children who are also very thin. If we are human beings... even animals, if their companion is sick or their companion is wounded, the other one is licking. Even animals do that. And we are human beings.

So, someone is really passing through difficult period, but we simply remain indifferent. This is difficult. Difficult to understand.

So, therefore, now the population is increasing. In the meantime, we have this huge gap. We must reduce this gap.

Then, natural resources are also now questionable. Drinking water, there is some problem. And then, due to global warming, regarding farming, there is also unpredictable weather now sometimes. So,



for farming production also sometimes they find difficulties. This is not only in one area but whole continents now, the whole world.

In India, where I have spent my own last fifty-four years, you see now the weather pattern has become unpredictable. Usually, you see, farmers know, "In this month, rain will start, so we must cultivate. Then this month, and such and such month, when the rain reduces, then time for harvesting." Now, since weather is unpredictable, it really creates a lot of trouble.

So, there are plenty of problems. On top of that problem, we have violence, which is our own creation. Weather conditions are beyond our control. Population, I don't know. [Laughs] Proper volunteer family planning, maybe it's ok. I think it should be.

So, sometimes, we really consider that human life is very precious. But now the time has come that the entire precious human beings now face some problems because of too many precious lives! [Laughs.] We have to think in a holistic way. Under these circumstances, I think sometimes some kind of birth control is necessary, in a nonviolent volunteer way. So, sometimes I really tell people, the best method of birth control, that is nonviolent, is more monks and more nuns. [Audience laughter and applause.]

So there are really now a lot of problems, particularly violence. These problems are man-made problems. So, certain problems are beyond our control. On top of that, we deliberately create more problems. Then, really big questions. We are truly human beings who have this marvelous intelligence [points to head], or seed of compassion here [points to heart], but we really create these kinds of things.

So, therefore, I usually tell people, I believe that the Twentieth Century became the Century of Violence, the Century of Bloodshed. Now, that immense violence failed to bring a happier world, or fewer problems. Therefore, now this Twenty-first Century should be Century of Dialogue.

That means, there are some disagreements, some problems. So long as human beings remain, some problems are bound to happen. Some conflict will always be there. The only choice is whenever we face problems, the method of dealing with that problem will not be by force but by understanding and dialogue. I think seven billion human beings should be considered one human family. Any problem within that community must be solved through the family approach.

So, this century should be Century of Dialogue. Now, in order to maintain a Century of Dialogue, we need will power, no matter what difficulties. A clear sort of conviction that the only way to solve these problems is through talk.



Dialogue means you also respect their rights, and you must understand their interests. Then meaningful dialogue comes. If you stand up just for your own gain, disregarding their rights, how can meaningful dialogue develop? So, meaningful dialogue must come from one hundred percent equality. Respect their interests, respect their rights, and be willing to share some of your own gain. Share with them.

Therefore now, obviously, in order to develop a genuine respect for others' rights, a genuine sort of respect for others' views, and a willingness to share your own things with them, entirely depends on a sense of compassion, a sense of concern for their wellbeing, on the basis of the oneness of humanity: "My life depends on them. My interests, my future, depend on them. So I must take care of their interests." So, the century-old self-centered attitude is outdated according to today's reality.

Global warming, the global economy, and many other factors now facing humanity have made the world become smaller. Humanity must now realize that reality. Sometimes I think the problem happens because our perception still carries a Nineteenth Century or Twentieth Century sort of perception. "We," "Our Nation," and "They." Then, there is some kind of isolation or separation. That's the basis of the concept of war: Destruction of them, victory of you.

If, once we realize my future depends on them, then how can we eliminate them? So, the Hawaiian native people, they have a saying, "My blood is your blood. My bone is your bone." That means, your suffering, your sadness, is my sadness. My happiness is your happiness.

I think naturally, in ancient times a thousand years ago, in a small community with a difficult life, sharing together was something very necessary. In modern times, there are too many people, and too much of a sense of competition, exploiting each other, then looks like these sayings are not relevant. Just thinking of oneself, that the whole world is part of me. "Me, me, me, me, me." Like that. That, I think, is a false view. A false view.

The reality is that we are social animals, and as I mentioned earlier, global warming, ecological problems, and the global economy are now really telling us, "You entire seven billion human beings must act as one humanity."

So, the key thing is that sort of concern for others' wellbeing. I mean, concern for others' wellbeing, respecting others' wellbeing not by force, but voluntarily, knowing that my future depends on them.



So, I am really telling you that we human beings, not only human beings, but all sentient beings, are selfish. It's ok. Without that self-interest, you can't survive. You can't move forward. So self-interest is there. But self-interest should be wise-selfish rather than foolish-selfish.

So, out of self-interested concern, self-interest that thinks only of oneself, and for satisfying oneself, you exploit others, bully others, cheat others, and tell lies. Actually you are losing the basis or ground of your own interest, your own future.

We are social animals. We want friends. If you always tell lies, how can you develop friends? I think everybody will say, "Oh this person is a big liar, don't believe what he says, or what she says, and it's better to keep a little distance." This foolish person may be different, but otherwise you see, if there is someone who is always telling lies, or always pretending something different, then people will automatically remain distant. Through that way, how can we develop friends?

Friendship comes only when you show your sincerity, honesty, truthfulness, and transparency. Through that way, trust can build. This trust does not matter if you are rich or poor, educated or uneducated. Real friendship comes. So, we are social animals. We need friends. Individual survival depends on others. That's reality.

So, therefore, friendship and cooperation are very essential. These do not depend on money or power, but depend on warm-heartedness. So, please don't think that the practices of compassion or forgiveness are religious practices. Then those people who have no interest in religion, they also forget about these things. That is wrong.

Whether accepting religion or not, that is up to the individual. Even non-believers must maintain and cultivate these basic human values in daily life. They are very essential. So, I usually tell people, that when compassion is present, self-confidence automatically comes. Self-confidence on the correct and sound basis. Sometimes if there is too much emotion, then over self-confidence sometimes happens. That's based on ignorance. But self-confidence based on compassion is self-confidence with a really sound basis. That brings inner strength. With inner strength, no matter how difficult the situation, because of self-confidence and inner strength, you can deal with these things. If self-confidence is based on a sense of concern and sense of compassion, then that self-confidence has a real sound basis and can be transparent.

Some kinds of self-confidence are based on too much arrogance or ignorance. Then when you really face some problem, once obstacle comes, then you are demoralized immediately, like that.



So, therefore, in order to maintain a peaceful century, we must develop the concept that this century should be the Century of Dialogue. In order to maintain that, first we must pay attention to our inner values. That's the human sense of compassion, or sense of concern for others' wellbeing.

This is very possible if we use our intelligence properly. Firstly, we are born from our mother, and we grow up on mother's milk, surrounded by an immense sort of affection. Those people, I think there are a few thousand people here, those people who received maximum affection at the time of early life are much happier deep inside. Less fear. Those individuals who lacked affection from their mothers, or sometimes received abuse from a parent, then no matter how successful they seem outwardly, deep inside they have a sense of insecurity, or a sense of fear is often there.

Therefore, the amount of affection we received from our mother is really absorbed in our blood. Those people whose life has a more affectionate atmosphere are always happier and more affectionate. Our life starts with affection. Human compassion and human affection are also very important for our life.

In order to receive affection from others, first you yourself should show affection to others. Then it is logical that they also respond. If you maintain an extremely self-centered attitude, but in the meantime expect some love from others, it is nonsense. Illogical.

So therefore, whether you are a believer or nonbeliever, these things are the key factors for a happy life. Biologically, you see, we are also already equipped with these things. We all have the potential. Now our intelligence should help to nurture that, to sustain that. That's important. Therefore, combine the warm-heartedness we were given at birth with the human intelligence developed through education. Combine these two things, and our life will be happier.

And as one individual becomes happier through that way, then their family automatically becomes happier. As one family sort of practices or creates that kind of happy atmosphere, then neighbors, then ten families, a hundred families or a thousand families. That means society, community.

Meaningful life starts from the individual. That multiplies: ten, one hundred, one thousand, one hundred-thousand. That's the way to change humanity's way of life, way of thinking. So, you should not think, "One individual is helpless, I cannot do anything." For example, world peace. "Oh, world peace is so big, I cannot make differences." We should not think that way.

When we talk about society, community, or humanity, change must start from individuals. One individual changes using their brain and using their potential, their natural potential to become a more peaceful, happier person. Through that way, we eventually can change humanity's way of life, and



through that way we can develop this century as the Century of Compassion. Once the Century of Compassion is developed, the Century of Nonviolence, the Century of Peace will automatically come.

Peace will not come from the sky. I am a spiritual person. I am Buddhist. In my daily prayers, of course I pray to Buddha. Other sorts of spiritual brothers and sisters also pray, you see. But real change must take place through our action, not prayer. I think for a thousand years, millions of people prayed for world peace or something good, but it failed to materialize.

So, logically, if problems are started by God, then we can pray to God, "Please reduce these things." But we started the problems! [Audience laughter and applause.] We continuously create more problems, then ask God, "Please give us peace, peace." How? I think if we do that too much, we may get a scolding from God, "You are not behaving well, you are doing something wrong. You yourself create problems, and in the meantime pray to me." [Audience laughter.]

So, therefore, I think now we must pay more attention to our action. Action, right action, entirely depends on motivation, with vision.

That's what I wanted to tell you. Thank you. Now some questions. Question-Answer. [Audience Applause.]

Dr. Ron Marks, Dean of the Tulane School of Social Work: Your Holiness, thank you for bringing this message of peace. Thank you for bringing this message of compassion. This morning you told us that if we don't fix this, problems are left to our children. Earlier this week, we had children from throughout the community ask questions, and we have questions from some community leaders. And so now we are going to ask you to answer these questions from the community's children.

Geshe Thupten Jinpa, Translator: What is the situation now in Tibet, and will you ever be able to return? This is from Da'Nesha Tally.

His Holiness: The Tibetan situation, for more than sixty years now, sometimes is comparatively better, sometimes is worse. Now in recent years, it has been worse. During the early fifties, when Chairman Mao Zedong⁹ was there, those communist leaders were truly dedicated to serving people, with a certain ideology. I also, you see, spent several months in Beijing and also toured in China proper. I met a

⁹ Mao Zedung (1893 - 1976) led the Chinese Communist Revolution, was the Chairman of the People's Republic of China from 1949 to 1959 and the Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) from 1935 until his death.



number of [Communist] Party members and leaders. Of course, several times I had meetings with Chairman Mao Zedong, and received lectures from him. Really marvelous, really very good.

Many Tibetan communists were really full of enthusiasm. But then, around 1956 or 1957, then gradually things changed. Most of these Tibetan communists were dismissed from their various sorts of posts, military as well as civilian. Then, many of them were put in prison.

Then, the 1959 situation happened, and we escaped. Then, in the early 1980s, when Hu Yaobang¹⁰ was there with power, things really were very hopeful. I have no doubt if Hu Yaobang remained in power more years, or the leaders followed his sort of thinking, then I think the Tibetan problem would already be solved. No question, no doubt.

But then, in the mid 1980s, because of demonstrations, I think that first started from many universities, Hu Yaobang was dismissed, and the whole policies hardened. Then, finally, the Tiananmen event, the Tiananmen massacre happened. Then, in Tibet's case also, there was more and more suppression, and also more and more criticism about Tibetan culture and Tibetan Buddhism. So, things become much more difficult.

However, I always summarize the last sixty years as: Chairman Mao's era, Deng Xiaoping's¹¹ era, Jiang Zemin's¹² era, and Hu Jintao's¹³ era. So, in each period there was some change. Mao Zedong's era emphasized pure ideology. Deng Xiaoping's era emphasized the importance of the economy, so he even decided to follow capitalism. Socialism is just lip service. Then, Jiang Zemin. Now at that time, wealthier families also became quite influential. Therefore, the Communist Party became no longer the party of working class people, but the Community Party represented all other new classes, so the concept of "Three Represents"¹⁴ developed. Then, Hu Jintao. The new situation, you see, was the new development of the gap between rich and poor, and also the big differences between the living standards of people in coastal areas and the country side, or interior areas. Also some privileges which were guaranteed, now

¹⁰ Hu Yaobang (1915 - 1989) was the General Secretary of the CCP from 1980 to 1987 and the Chairman of the CCP in 1981 and 1982. He helped abolish the post of Chairman in 1982.

¹¹ Deng Xiaoping (1904 - 1997) was a high-ranking member in the CCP holding various top-level posts from 1952 until his retirement in 1989. He implemented the One Child Policy and economic liberalization.

¹² Jiang Zemin (1926 - p.) was the General Secretary of the CCP from 1989 to 2002 and President of China from 1993 to 2003. He was more authoritarian than his predecessor, Hua Yaobang and further implemented privatization.

¹³ Hu Jintao (1942 - p.) was the General Secretary of the CCP from 2002 to 2012 and the President of China from 2003 to 2013. As the Party Secretary in Tibet, he imposed martial law after demonstrations in 1989.

¹⁴ The "Three Represents" policy of Jiang Zemin is that the CCP represents the development trends of advanced productive forces, the orientations of an advanced culture, and the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the Chinese people.



that a new sort of market-oriented society with more competition developed, these sort of guarantees also were reduced. Therefore, he emphasized the promotion of harmony. So, due to these things, the same Party acted according to new realities.

Now is the fifth era, the new president Xi Jinping¹⁵. Now the harmony concept is very good, but during Hu Jintao's period, in order to achieve a harmonious society, he depended much on force, security personnel, and more tight control. So, the result was just the opposite. Also, you see, too much sort of censorship. Anyway, with modern technology, you can't control all information.

So, therefore... Now here is my Indian friend. [Points out a person in the audience.] I usually describe Indians as our guru. Ancient Indians were our guru, not modern Indian. [Laughs.] I'm teasing. I'm teasing you. So, Indians and Tibetans have some unique special relations, like teacher and student. For centuries, it remained like that.

So, now, my sort of topic. Wherever I go, I always discuss nonviolence. Nonviolence is an act of compassion. And religious harmony. These two things are Indian tradition. I describe myself as sort of messenger of India. Wherever I go, I always talk about *ahimsa*¹⁶ and religious harmony.

So, sometimes I tease my Indian friends in India. You see, non-violence and religious harmony, mainly you see, nonviolence India really exported a lot. Now while you are exporting, you must produce more in the country. If everything is exported, nothing is left within the country! Wrong. [Laughs.]

So, anyway, look at India: east India, south India, west India, and north India. Different languages with different scripts. But all enjoy equality, rule of law, freedom, and democracy. So therefore, there is no danger of separation. Whereas in Tibet, one time, around fifteen years ago, there was one Chinese Party Secretary, Chen Kuiyuan¹⁷. At one party meeting, he actually stated that the ultimate source of danger of Tibet being separated from mainland China is the Tibetan Buddhist faith. It's totally wrong, said out of ignorance, narrow mindedness, and short sightedness.

At that time, you see, Tibetans expressed that there was some kind of semi-cultural revolution started. That was the real cause of the 2008 crisis. Like that. So anyway, since then, a lot of suppression. Now these days, Tibetans from Tibet always say there is a lot of tension and fear, like that.

Therefore, the previous sort of leaders, with that good slogan, they tried but failed. So now, for this new leadership, actually there's not much choice except to follow more openness. Like the previous

¹⁵ Xi Jinping (1953 - p.) has served as the General Secretary of the CCP since 2012 and President of China since 2013.

¹⁶ *Ahimsa* is sanskrit for non-harm or non-violence.

¹⁷ Chen Kuiyuan (1941 - p.) was the Party Secretary in Tibet from 1992 to 2000.



Prime Minister Wen Jiabao¹⁸ mentioned publicly on several occasions, China needs political reform. Sometimes he even mentioned that China needs American style of democracy. He publicly mentioned that.

So, I think now the new leadership may sort of seriously consider the more realistic approach. Though economically quite strong, in order for the People's Republic of China to achieve a really united society, particularly among those different so-called minorities, in order to develop genuine harmony and unity, rule of law is very important, and freedom of expression and free information are very essential. So I think the new leadership may follow a more realistic approach. As Deng Xiopeng stated, "Seeking truth from facts." That is really a scientific way or really right way to approach reality with a full understanding, seeking truth from facts.

Basically I'm optimistic. Things will change. And Chinese people historically have shown to be hardworking, cultured, and realistic people. So I think things will change.

Translator Geshe Thupten Jinpa: In New Orleans, we love food. What is your favorite food? This is from Frank Aseron.

His Holiness: One time in South India... Of course, in South India you see, the vegetarian food is very good. I think as far as vegetarian food is concerned, I think Indian vegetarian food is better than Chinese vegetarian food. [Laughter, applause.] Non-vegetarian, I think as far as non-vegetarian food is concerned, Chinese food is really delicious. [Laughs.]

So, one time in South India, one hotel manager asked me, "What is your favorite food?" Then, I responded to him, "I am like pig. Whatever I get, I will accept." [Laughs.] Buddhist monks are actually like that. You have no right to have a preference, to prefer this food or that food. You have no right to ask. Whatever you get, through alms...

Translator Geshe Thupten Jinpa: Buddhist monks traditionally go on alms begging.

His Holiness: So whatever you get, you must accept. So, I think, forty or fifty years ago I discussed about vegetarian and non-vegetarian food with one Sri Lankan Buddhist monk. And he told me, Buddhist

¹⁸ Wen Jiabao (1942 - p.) was the Prime Minister of China from 2003 to 2013.



monks are neither vegetarian nor non-vegetarian. That means, whatever monks get, they must accept. So, that's true.

At the same time, in some Buddhist traditions, like in the Chinese Buddhist tradition, they are very strict vegetarian, for the monastics. Like that.

As for me, when I'm in America, I love American food. [Laughter.] In India, I love Indian food. No problem. No problem.

One problem in Japanese dish, particularly at the more formal sort of luncheon, the food is very good, but very small in quantity. [Laughter.] Quality is good, but quantity is very small. So, someone like me, a Buddhist monk, has no dinner, only lunch. Breakfast and lunch. A very small quantity of lunch cannot fulfill my stomach. [Laughs.] That's the only complaint. Otherwise, you see, every food no problem. As far as quantity is concerned, I think American hotels are very good. You see, full of things. And also, Italians. Italian restaurants give you really big lunch like that. That's good. [Laughs.]

Translator Geshe Thupten Jinpa: Do you believe that humans are inherently good? If so, how do you explain all the wrong in the world, like war and murder? This is from Saraya Sibley.

His Holiness: That I think I already answered. You see, basic human nature is of a more compassionate type, because we grow up that way. And we are social animals. For any social animal, on the mental level, some kind of compassionate mind is very essential in order to bring together friendship.

The very nature of anger is to expel, to separate. I think on the level of motivation for one's own survival, we need to bring all those positive factors that bring attachment, love, or loving kindness. Like that.

To differentiate yourself and expel obstacles, the motivation level is anger. So, anger and attachment are actually for our own survival. But sometimes, it becomes extreme, and creates problems. So, basically, our nature is more compassionate, and therefore more gentle. But, if in the meantime, when we grow up we neglect these positive things, such as compassion, and affection, then the sort of potential for these becomes dormant.

Then also society makes differences. In a society where there is much competition, aggressiveness and these types of things grow. The potential good side is not further developed and remains dormant. Then the more aggressive side grows.



So, therefore, now in education we must pay equal attention to brain development and the development of warm-heartedness. Now with help of many of my friends, many scientists, many educationists, we are really working now about how to introduce education about warm-heartedness into the modern education system. Now we are researching how to introduce.

Translator Geshe Thupten Jinpa: Could you address the importance of social responsibility? This is from Madeline Leefe.

His Holiness: I think since we are social animals, the society of course has a very important role. And because of that, an important responsibility. So if there is some weak person, society can help, has to help. So even for a weak person, if the society there is full of affection, full of care, that person can develop. So, that's my view.

Translator Geshe Thupten Jinpa: Could you address the topic of global warming and environmental disasters, like Hurricane Katrina? This is from Edward Johnson.

His Holiness: Now that is a very serious matter. As I mentioned earlier, a really very serious matter. Just the day before yesterday, at the University of Wisconsin, one specialist...

Translator Geshe Thupten Jinpa: His Holiness is referring to panel discussion he had at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, where an environmental scientist informed the audience that a few days ago we crossed a threshold, which is the total atmospheric accumulation of carbon dioxide of 400 parts per million. And then if that goes up to 450 parts per million, then it will be very dangerous.

His Holiness: So, we are really now reaching a more serious level. This is really very serious. This is a question of the survival of humanity, so it's really very serious.

In the meantime, as I mentioned earlier, it's our lifestyle. I think we must pay more attention, with understanding about the ecologic problem, to our usual sort of way of life. Too many cars and these things, just sort of mainly oriented about business and money. Without sort of thinking more holistically, we now reached a quite serious sort of level. Like that.



So, natural disasters, I am quite sure will increase. So people here, I think, better to pack your possessions in your home so if something happens, you are ready to leave. [Laughs.] Then eventually, due to global warming, due to melting ice at the North Pole and South Pole, I think sea level will increase, will rise. So, those areas which are at a little bit lower level, are really dangerous. I think within this century, some cities like Calcutta, Shanghai, or even New York, are in some danger. And here also, some danger.

So within this century, I think the time may come when whole cities shift. When Katrina struck, I expressed that now it's better to make a new plan, to shift to a higher area. And in Japan also, I mentioned, that after the tsunami, I expressed that it's now better to move these human houses. They should be on small mountains, and that lower land, leave simply for cultivation.

Look, if something happens, then it's crops. Ok, some vegetables. But at least human beings can be safe. Or like the tsunami in Japan, I can't remember the place, but there is one temple on a hill. Not a big hill. Not like a Himalayan hill, but a baby hill, a small hill. You see there was one temple, a Buddhist temple on the slope of the mountain. The seawater reached up to there, so that monastery, that temple survived. Nothing happened.

So, perhaps, I think now the long-term city planners have to try to think about moving to a higher area. Then when the seawater comes, then you can enjoy it from a higher level, a high place. [Audience laughs.] Then?

Translator Geshe Thupten Jinpa: This is from someone called T.J., a little boy. What makes you happy?

His Holiness: Of course, I think, just like you. When I was young, after I reached Lhasa with the name of Dalai Lama, I was separated from my mother. We stayed in separate buildings. So, quite often my mother came to see me with a variety of different breads. My mother really was expert at making different varieties of bread. When she would come to see me with fresh bread which she made, I felt very happy. [Audience laughs.]

So, I think, for you also, when your mother gives some sort of item of food or something, or I think at Christmas time, when you receive some nice gift, I think you feel very happy. [Audience laughs.]

So, for me also. When I was young in Lhasa, the British Mission occasionally came and formally sort of received me. They always carried some sort of toys, binoculars, and gadgets like that. So, when I received information, "Now tomorrow, one foreigner will come to see you," I expected something.



"Maybe something, something...." [Laughs.] Then, sometimes you see, some foreign visitors would come without any gift. So then I was disappointed. [Audience laughs.]

So, I think here, parents must provide maximum affection to your children. And spend more time and play more with your children. It's very essential. Your children should not be isolated. I think sometimes in this sort of reality, you are working all day long, and then come back during the night and the child is asleep. So, I think you have to try some period mixing or spending time with your children, and provide maximum affection. So, that's I think the real preparation. The rest of their lives your children will be happier persons.

I always feel that I was very fortunate. My mother was illiterate and uneducated, just a farmer. Even when I was very young, she would always carry me in the field, while working in the field like that. But I think all of my brothers and sisters never saw my mother's angry face. Always very peaceful, very compassionate. And when I was young, I was her youngest child, so naturally I received I think the maximum affection my mother. I think that. I really feel fortunate.

So there is a certain amount of compassion here [points to heart]. The real seed was cultivated by my mother like that. So, I think that's important. [Audience applause.]

Dr. Ron Marks: Your Holiness, *Thukje che*¹⁹. Your Holiness, thank you. Thank you for sharing your wisdom. Thank you for sharing the purity of your laughter. Thank you for showing us how we are all deeply connected, and how through these connections we build stronger communities and healthier individuals. Thank you. Thank you for being here and for this great gift to the City of New Orleans.

His Holiness: Thank you! [Offers *kata* to Dr. Ron Marks.] Thank you, thank you, thank you. [Audience applause.]

Dr. Ron Marks: At this time I want to thank our sponsors. I want to thank the New Orleans Tourism Corporation, Cox Communications, People's Health, East Jefferson General Hospital, Dr. and Mrs. Patrick Torcson, Magnolia Companies of Louisiana, New Orleans Saints, and New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau.

I want to remind all of you that for the last four days the Drepung Loseling monks have been painstakingly assembling a sacred sand *mandala* in Hall G in the Lobby downstairs. This is a

¹⁹ *Thukje che* means thank you in Tibetan language (literally, "Great Heart").



representation of a roadmap to enlightenment. This is a sacred and mystical art of Tibet, which has only been seen in the West for the last twenty years. This is a work of art and it's beautiful.

At 4:30, the monks will ceremoniously deconstruct this sand *mandala*. They'll be able to hand some of this out to those of you who are there, and they will distribute this into the Mississippi River so this sacred blessed sand will move through the river into the Gulf and through the oceans and delivering messages of peace. [Applause.]

You are all welcome to go downstairs and view it. The ceremony will begin at 4:30. Your Holiness, thank you. [Applause.]

His Holiness: Bye bye! Thank you, thank you, thank you.



Edited Transcript of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Keynote Address
Tulane University Commencement, New Orleans Superdome
May 18, 2013

[His Holiness bows to the crowd, audience applause.]

Martin Davies, Law professor and Chair of the Honorary Doctoral Committee: Your Holiness, as both head of the state and the spiritual leader of Tibet, you have spent your life committed to serving humanity. At the age of two, you were recognized as the reincarnation of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, and formally enthroned as the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. Since the young age of fifteen, you have met with political, civic, and religious leaders in more than sixty countries, spanning six continents, advocating non-violent peaceful solutions, and sharing your message of compassion with people all over the world.

In 1989, you were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of your opposition to the use of violence in Tibet's struggle for freedom.

Tulane University President, Scott Cowen: Your Holiness, we honor the efforts and sacrifices you have made to uphold democratic values and ethical responsibility.

You are a symbol of peace and tolerance and gracefully remind us of the importance of cherishing our historical and cultural heritage, while demonstrating respect towards everyone.

We laud you for your distinguished contributions to Buddhist philosophy, and your leadership in promoting a calmer, more peaceful, and sustainable world.

By virtue of the authority vested in me by the Tulane Board, and with the esteem of the entire Tulane community, I hereby confer upon you the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, *Honoris Causa*. In token of which I hand you this diploma and hood of Tulane University. Congratulations, Your Holiness.
[Audience applause. His Holiness and President Cowen hug.]

When I first learned that His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama was going to speak with us, I felt honored and humbled, and then I thought how strange a task it would be to introduce him. No one can really introduce this man, and I knew that just by being in his presence, the audience would know all it cared to know. I could form sentences around words like patience, humility, joy, servant, teacher, perseverance, non-violence, Nobel Laureate, and peacemaker. But they would only serve to delay us all from the message you came to hear. So, I will use an original source, the man himself.



His Holiness was once asked why he was so popular to so many. After thinking a bit, he replied, and I quote, "Perhaps because I have a positive mind. Of course, sometimes, I get a little irritated, but in my heart, I never blame or think bad thoughts about anyone. I try to consider the needs of others more than mine. When I meet someone for the first time, they are not a stranger to me. I always have the same impression, he is another human being, nothing special. Me too, I'm the same. Under the skin, same nature, same kinds of desires and emotions."

Tulane University's motto is *Non Sibi Sed Suis*, a Latin phrase that translates as, "Not for oneself, but for others," or as His Holiness expressed it, "To consider the needs of others more than mine."

Please welcome a gentle man of great faith and humility, His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. [Audience applause.]

His Holiness the Dalai Lama: Thank you.

Respected President of the famous university, and other teachers and professors, and particularly, young brothers and sisters who are now achieving some sort of result after several years of hard work, and perhaps occasionally, when some important examination happened, even you might have lost your sleep. [Laughs.] I myself also, when I had the important examination, sometimes felt a little bit nervous.

But now you really achieved the result of your hard work or study. And I'm very much impressed to see that students here, while you study, you also engage in some sort of helping other people, serving other people. That is wonderful. I think the very purpose of education is to make a meaningful life. In order for life to become meaningful, you take care about others' wellbeing. Then, you feel, "Oh, my life, now something meaningful."

Just thinking of oneself, or in the worst case, exploiting others, bullying others, or cheating others, then deep inside you won't feel very happy. So, therefore, I always say, I always believe, the very purpose of our life is a happy life. Happiness. I think for a simple reason. Our existence is very much based on hope. There is no guarantee that our future will be something good. No guarantee, but we simply exist on hope. Hope means something good, something better. Therefore, once we have lost hope, and are completely demoralized, then that mental attitude itself shortens our life. And also, your physical health then becomes difficult.

So, always be hopeful in spite of difficulties, always keep optimism. "I can work through these difficulties." Then, that mental attitude itself not only brings inner strength, or self-confidence, but also



in that way you can carry your conduct more honestly, more truthfully, and more transparently. That brings trust. Trust brings friendship. We are social animals. We need friends, and also, now in the world, there are many problems that one individual cannot solve. Cooperation. Not only your own community's people, but also on the global level. For problems like global warming, we need worldwide cooperative effort. For that, trust and friendship are very essential.

I think in our daily life, if some people are a little bit sort of distant to each other, then it is difficult to expect some kind of cooperation. Difficult. So, cooperation is highly necessary. The basis of cooperation is trust and friendship. Therefore, I really appreciate you already starting some work serving others. That's wonderful.

So, now, of course I heard you mention your own state, or your own nation. Wonderful, of course it should be like that. But, America is the greatest democratic country, so you should look at the whole world, on a global level. Actually, I often tell people, America is the leading nation of the free world, so it's very important for you think on a global level. Now here, in order to create a sense of global responsibility, it is extremely important to develop the concept of the oneness of humanity.

Seven billion human beings. We are part of that. If the seven billion human beings are happy, and also the natural environment is positive, then everybody gets benefit. If on the global level seven billion human beings are facing some sort of difficulties, individuals cannot escape from that.

And then, as far as modern education is concerned, I'm someone who hasn't attended a class even for a single day. I think compared with your knowledge, my knowledge is almost zero, nothing. [Laughs.] So it may not be very appropriate to tell you, but according to my own little experience, many of the problems on the global level, and also on the national level, and even on the community level, are actually our own creation. Of course there are natural problems, natural disasters that are beyond our control. But many other problems are essentially our own creation.

So, logically, these certain problems we ourselves created, therefore we must have the ability to overcome these problems, or to reduce these problems, because these are manmade problems. If these problems were created by some other, then it would be difficult to solve by human beings. But that is not the case.

Therefore, I often tell, particularly now here to these young people who are educated, fresh, and bright, you see, you have long future. Now my generation, not only myself but some of the professors, you see these great learned people [gestures to the others on stage, audience laughter], we are actually the same sort of generation, the Generation of the Twentieth Century. Our century is



already gone. Our generation which belongs to the Twentieth Century, now gradually saying "Bye, bye."

[Laughs.]

Now you people whose age is below thirty, twenty, or fifteen, you truly are the Generation of this Twenty-first Century. Past Twentieth Century, despite many sort of encouraging achievements, marvelous achievements, but that century almost became the Century of Bloodshed, or the Century of Violence. Some historians say 200 million people were killed through violence. If that immense violence, including the use of nuclear weapons, really created a better shape of the world, then some people may say, "Oh, it was worthwhile, there is some sort of justification." No, that's not the case.

So therefore, now this century, we are just in the beginning, about thirteen years past. Now, nearly 87 years yet to come. The future is very much open. So, our behavior really can make a new shape of the world.

So please, Generation of the Twenty-first Century, think more on the global level and try to create a more peaceful world. That means a more compassionate world. So long as a sense of concern for others' wellbeing is there, respect for others' life is there, then there is no room to use violence because you respect others' life, you love others. How can a person who has that kind of motivation, that kind of mental attitude, use force to eliminate others? Impossible.

So, therefore, a peaceful world means a compassionate world. Should be a compassionate world, irrespective of whether you are a believer or non-believer. Biologically, we are equipped, we have this potential. Children, young children, as soon as they are born, already received immense sort of affection from our mothers, and care. And then, over the next few years, our survival entirely depends on our mothers' care, with mothers' milk. So, you see, everybody begins life that way.

At an early age, at the beginning of our life, we received an immense sort of affection from another. So, that seed is in our blood, the potential of affection to others. So, biologically, you see we are equipped with the sense of concern for others' wellbeing. Biologically. And secondly, we are social animals. So biologically, we need a sense of concern for others' wellbeing.

I think due to extreme self-centered attitudes, selfish attitudes, gradually you see these basic human values are becoming more dormant. And then in our education, our brain further develops, further develops, and sometimes society's culture, a materialistic culture, that sometimes you see is a culture of a little bit of competition. So, therefore, in that way, aggressiveness further develops. So, that's why seven billion human beings right from the beginning are more compassionate, but gradually



that's not very active, and aggressiveness, suspicion, distrust, bullying, or cheating, then become stronger.

So, I think we can reduce these things through education and through awareness, not necessarily through prayer or though religious faith. Simply by using our common sense. Everybody wants a happy life, happy family, and happy community. Real happiness is very much related with our emotions, not money.

So, therefore, now young brothers and sisters, please pay some attention about our inner values. Then, your brain and warm-heartedness come together. Your education and your knowledge then become constructive. If as a student you are really bright, but you neglect warm-heartedness, eventually some of you truly will become troublemakers on this planet. Education alone sometimes creates more problem. Individuals themselves also, do not necessarily become happy ones. Always worried, lonely, or scared. When we meet a person, fear, some fear, or distrust. The result is a lonely feeling. That's against basic human nature. Like that.

So, therefore, please pay some attention and some knowledge about how to create inner peace. Through inner peace, all your professional knowledge can be constructive. If all your professional knowledge is motivated by anger, hatred, or suspicion, then your knowledge becomes destructive.

That much is from my own experience and observation. I think that one old person may have some better knowledge because of age. We have a lot of different experiences.

Anyway, now you see, you really are our hope. We are relying on your shoulders. Please think more seriously about how to build a happy century, a peaceful century. This one thing.

Then of course I would like to express my congratulation to all of you for your graduation. And then, also you see, until now in your life, in some way some other people have been taking care of you. Some kind of routine, more or less predictable. Now you start your real life. It could be more complicated, or you may have difficulties. Then, you should not be demoralized due to small incidents. This is really the source of failure. In spite of difficulties, you must keep optimism and self-confidence. This is very important. That I wanted to share with you.

And then, of course, whenever I receive some honorary degree, I always see it as a great honor, and feel very happy, so I must thank you. It's a special thing, usually, without much effort some degree is given me. It is something wonderful. [Laughs, audience laughs.] So, thank you very much. Thank you.

I promise, senior brothers and sisters, and also younger brothers and sisters, now my age is already nearly 78. But perhaps, after another ten years, 88. Then, most probably, another ten years, 98.



So, I promise, my body, speech, and mind are dedicated to the wellbeing of others. That I will maintain. That kind of thinking, that kind of commitment, I will carry. So, hopefully your honorary degree may not spoil.

Thank you, thank you! Bye-bye! [His Holiness bows to audience hands joined, and waves.] Audience applause. His Holiness removes graduation cap and presents it to President Cowen.] Now I think, you see, this hat is not mine! But, from the President, he lent me this. So, now return it to you.

President Scott Cowen: You now know the secret of why I was not wearing my cap today. His Holiness did not have his, I gave him mine as a sign of love and affection, but I'm also hoping that with this cap on now, I will be inspired, and I will reach to greater things than I ever have before, because of you. Please join me again in thanking His Holiness. [Audience applause.]



Edited Transcript of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's public address

University of New Orleans Arena

May 18, 2013

[His Holiness greets crowd and Senator Mary Landrieu with joined hands. Applause.]

Senator Mary Landrieu: Ladies and Gentlemen, please be seated. It is my honor to welcome all of you to this really extraordinary event. [Senator Landrieu smiles and gestures to His Holiness]. His Holiness, a University of New Orleans supporter. Yes!

Welcome, Your Holiness, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. As we know, an internationally renowned spiritual leader and statesman.

As we know, in 1959 the Dalai Lama was forced to escape into exile in Northern India. He fled Tibet after a failed uprising against the Chinese invasion. While in exile, however, the Dalai Lama established a democracy for Tibetans that fled Chinese occupation. From India, he set up a variety of schools and institutions to preserve the culture and religion of Tibet, and to care for Tibetans who followed him across the Himalayas into exile. He remains in India today. But today we are honored that he is with us in New Orleans, in Louisiana, a place of resilience, a place of respect.

His Holiness has devoted himself to the plight of his people, to promoting world peace, and advocating on behalf of all people oppressed and suffering everywhere. He has received too many awards to name, honorary doctorates, honors recognizing his message of hope and peace and resilience and joy. He's authored more than 72 books. He's won the Nobel Peace Prize for his refusal to use violence in the struggle for liberation.

In recent years, His Holiness has traveled extensively, sharing his philosophy of peace based on compassion, love, and personal responsibility, a message that falls joyfully on our hearts today, as our city and our state struggles with violence right here at home.

He has traveled to more than sixty-two countries spanning six continents. He's met with presidents, prime ministers, and rulers of major and minor nations alike. Just this year he's been across India, through Italy, Switzerland, and on to London. He arrived in the United States less than two weeks ago. He's traveled already through Maryland, Oregon, Wisconsin, and now we welcome him to Louisiana.

He is extraordinarily well educated, as we know, and his interest is in science, particularly in nuclear physics, neurobiology, and ecology. He has spoken out against nuclear arms, the destruction of



our environment, and the suppression of political freedom and human rights. Millions upon millions of people around the globe of all faiths, creeds, and colors seek his guidance and his wisdom.

His Holiness continues to look for solutions to international conflict, human rights issues, and global environmental problems. He describes himself as a simple Buddhist monk, but we all know him and love him as more than that.

Today His Holiness is about developing a sense of universal responsibility, and how we can find strength through connection and forge a pathway to peace and prosperity for all. His message and the theme in calling him are resilience and sustainability. And I think that's one of the reasons that he could have gone anywhere in the world but chose New Orleans, Louisiana. Our state has been through a great deal, and he is the embodiment of his message of calm, peace, and practical work; working together.

Let me end with a quote. He says, "My message is a message of compassion, love, kindness. These things are very useful in our daily life, and also for the whole of human society these practices can be very important." He says, "Basically, universal responsibility is the feeling for other people's suffering, just as we feel our own. It is the realization that even our own enemy is motivated by the quest for happiness. We must recognize that all beings want the same thing we want. This is the way to achieve a true understanding unfettered by artificial consideration."

Your Holiness, we are again honored to have you. Let's give him a rousing warm welcome.
[Extended applause. His Holiness bows to the crowd.]

His Holiness the Dalai Lama: Thank you, thank you, thank you. Sit down, sit down.

[His Holiness gestures to the stage lights.] Sometimes there is very strong light that is a little bit uncomfortable for my eyes. Last year, in February, this eye had surgery to remove a cataract. Then last July, this one. So now quite clear. I can see you, the one gentleman, whose head is quite bald. So there are a few hairs I can see. Then those people, the little fellow, each have wrinkles. I can see.

[Puts on University of New Orleans visor.] So, as a protection, I usually have this. Since I wear this kind of hat, when I give a talk, each place or each university gives me this kind of hat, so now I have I think at least fifteen or twenty. I may open one shop selling these things. [Laughs.]

Now, brothers and sisters. I always make clear, we are the same human being. Physically, mentally, emotionally, we are the same. You have the same sort of potential, or seed, of negative emotions such as anger, hatred, fear. These I also have the same. Then also, this seed or potential to develop affection and compassion. With that, willpower, forgiveness, and tolerance. You have these



things, and I also have these things. So, basically, we are the same. So, I always make clear the sameness of these things, because if you consider me as something different, or a stranger, or something special, then when I try to share my own experience, it may not feel relevant if you consider the speaker as something distant.

I myself may also, you see, consider you, "Oh American. You are New Orleans people. It's quite a hot place. I come from the roof of the world, it's very cold." So if I look on you as something different, then I think it's maybe a similar thing if I consider myself "His Holiness Dalai Lama." That kind of thinking creates distance from you. What's the use? No. Uh-uh.

And on the basis of these things, we sometimes put too much emphasis on formality. I don't like formality. Look at the way we were born and the way we will die. No formality. Isn't it? In your life, the most important event is birth, so you always sort of celebrate, "Happy Birthday, Happy Birthday!" So that means it's some kind of very important event in your life. Then, in the end, death. I think you then have some kind of special prayer or something like that.

But for us, you see, the Buddha's final *nirvana*, or death, is recognized to be an important day. And for many important masters we maintain some kind of celebration or commemoration of that person on the day of their death. We always remember these people's sort of deathday, but we don't know what's their birthday! We consider the deathday more serious than the birthday. So, you people consider the birthday more important than the deathday.

But anyway, in these two important events, there is no formality. As for myself, since I was about four years old, I think, since I reached Lhasa, my life has grown up in a very much ceremonial sort of atmosphere. I'm fed up. There is really no use.

Also you see, some of our Chinese friends, and officials, they also love a little bit of formality. Also, Japanese love this sort of formality. So that's why, one of your former presidents, Mr. Bush Junior, I love him because since our first meeting, he showed a completely informal way. [Audience laughs.]

You see, as a usual sort of practice, when we meet, after sitting down there is some sort of drink and cookies. Then I expressed, "Which cookie is better?" And then he immediately expressed, "Oh this is better!" You see, like another human person. Sometimes, some leaders when we meet are a little bit formal, a little bit distant. Then the second time, third time, then closer, closer. I don't like that kind of thing. Straightforward. After all, they are also human beings. I am also a human being. I know their sort of emotions. I know. So there is no use, you see, to hide these things.



So, therefore, please consider me just one human being. I also consider you another human being. Yes, different races, different culture, different language, and different faith. But fundamentally, we are the same human being. Seven billion human beings, same human being. Now I really feel that awareness or conviction of the sameness of the entire seven billion human beings is very essential, because not only in the past human history, but even today, some manmade problems like killing, bullying, and cheating are mainly due to secondary level of differences.

Secondary level, as I mentioned earlier, are faith, race, color, rich or poor, and this nation or that nation, like nationality. These are actually adding to our concept of "We" and "They". The strong concept of "We" and "They" is the basis of violence, the basis of war. If we really feel that the others who have different interests are causing conflict, but still believe they are our human brothers and sisters, that they also have every right to achieve their goal and their happiness, then we would not create obstacles for their desires or aims. Then there is no basis for violence.

So now, you see, the importance of a clear awareness of the oneness of humanity, according to our new reality, is very relevant. An ecological outlook. Like global warming. The ozone layer becoming thinner. Now these things are problems for the entire seven billion human beings. Then also, we have a global economy, also beyond national boundaries or religious boundaries. The human population is increasing. When I first came to America and Europe, the population was around six billion. Then, after thirty or forty years, now the population is seven billion. According to some, quite warm. According to some experts, by the end of this century the human population will be ten billion.

And our lifestyle is also changing. Our lifestyle is more sophisticated. So therefore, unless we share each other's problems and think of the common interest, I think more and more problems will happen. So, full cooperation is very essential.

Some time back in Indonesia, the tsunami, a major disaster, happened. That even affected the east coast of India, Sri Lanka, and many others. So at that time, I think there was a worldwide response. No consideration of different faith, different race, different sort of culture, or different nation, but consideration as a human being. The response from the rest of the world was immense. I think this is really an important spirit.

And I think also locally, here the flood took place. I think people from the areas not so affected even came to help. And I noticed in Brisbane, Australia, after there was an immense sort of flood in this area, many Australians from different parts came to help. And in Japan, near Tokyo, again a tsunami and



also a nuclear accident.²⁰ On one occasion, I had the opportunity to visit. So there was a really good spirit, as same human beings. Some human beings suffered, and other human beings, regardless of whether they knew each other or not, came to help.

We need that kind of spirit, now, on a global level. I think that is very important. I think if we develop a firm conviction in the oneness of human beings, then it is really possible that this century can be the Century of Peace. The Century of Peace.

Peace will not come through prayer, through nice words. I feel the worst thing for world peace is some pigeon kept and then released for world peace. I think it is at least an immense disturbance for those pigeons! It doesn't help to bring peace. No.

Also, regarding peace through prayer. I think two or three years ago in Hiroshima, Japan, there was one peace meeting, I think mainly against nuclear weapons. That meeting took place in Hiroshima, where the bomb fell. Some Nobel laureates were also there. So, at a more formal meeting at the end of the conference, speeches were made by different sorts of persons. Many expressed that due to God's blessing, through our prayers, peace will prevail.

Then, my talk. I'm always quite frank. So, at my turn, I then said, "Peace will not be achieved through prayer. Peace is achieved only through our action, our effort." Action is so important.

[Applause.]

Then also, another story, from three years ago. In one Indian state where Bodh Gaya²¹ is located, the Chief Minister or the local state government constructed one Buddhist temple. So, at the opening ceremony of the Buddhist temple, the state government invited me and representatives from many Buddhist countries. At the function, the chief minister mentioned that due to the Buddha's blessing, his poor state rapidly prospered. He mentioned that.

Then, again, my turn. [His Holiness laughs.] Of course, I know the Chief Minister very well, so I told him, "If your poor state rapidly prospered due to the Buddha's blessing, then your state should have prospered much earlier, because the Buddha's blessing has lasted there already for 2,500 years! So, the Buddha's blessing needs an able Chief Minister's hand." I mentioned that. Again, action.

So, since he took responsibility for the government, that state has much improved.

Real world peace must be created by ourselves. Almost, I think, it's like our responsibility to destroy peace, and God's to look after peace. That's unfair.

²⁰ Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident, Japan.

²¹ Bodh Gaya, in the present day Indian state of Bihar, is the holy site where the Buddha attained Enlightenment.



So, therefore, who creates violence? Not God, nor Buddha. The real creator of violence is we human beings. Other animals, even tigers, whose lives depend on others' lives, others' flesh, their attack, or their violent sort of action is very limited. If one thousand years go by like that, there is not much effect. But then we look very gentle. Our nails are also very gentle, not like a cat or tigers' nails. And our teeth are also like those vegetarian animals', very beautiful. Even monkeys have these long teeth called fangs. So, you see, they are even physically equipped like that. But, because of this intelligence, we really look like a human mammal. We look very gentle. But that gentle mammal really creates lot of destruction and violence. So, logically, since this immense violence is created by human beings, we have the responsibility to reduce that, and eventually eliminate violence. [Applause.]

So, now, at this moment in your country, there is a lot of discussion about gun control. Very good, but ultimately gun control is related with the heart. Control hatred and anger. Increase forgiveness and tolerance. That's the real way to control guns. That's very important. [Applause.]

Now the population is increasing. Major disasters may also increase. Already we have a tremendous sort of gap between rich and poor. Poverty, even within America. This is a nation that uses maximum consumption. One time in Washington I gave a public talk. I mentioned in the capital of the richest, most powerful nation, that in the suburb of Washington there are a number of poor people. A huge gap. The number of billionaires are increasing, but poor people still remain poor. I think within this state, also, there are many poor people, a huge gap.

Regarding this gap between rich and poor, once one is economically poor, in poverty, then some kinds of frustrations often develop. That develops anger, which brings violence. So, therefore, this gap is not only morally wrong, but it practically also starts problems. We have to deal seriously and affectively with this. That does not mean all rich people should be poor. No. The poorer section of people's living standards must be uplifted.

Now, on the global level, Southerners and Northerners. Northerners, those industrialized nations, have surplus. Southerners, sometimes even basic necessities are not adequate, and millions of people are nearly facing starvation. Millions of children are malnourished.

In India, also. Are you from India? Guru-ji? [Refers to an audience member.] I always describe Indians as historically our guru. Buddha, our guru, was Indian. All the masters of Nalanda, Vikramashila, and Taxishila²², through the centuries all these sorts of top scholars, philosophers, and thinkers in these

²² Ancient Buddhist monastic universities located in present-day India and Pakistan.



institutions were mainly Indian. So sometimes, I describe us as not only *chela*²³, but reliable *chela*. Why? You see in your own area, there were lots of ups and downs. But we kept intact all the ancient knowledge. Like that. But anyway, this is sort of... I am going on an aside.

So, I really feel that I'm talking to just another sort of friend. I don't think it is something serious, talking to a few hundred thousand people. Same human beings. When I talk to one or two people, or I talk to a few thousand, several thousand, or even a hundred thousand. No differences. As I mentioned, I firmly believe we are all one human being. Same potential. Same desires. Same rights. [Applause.]

So, anyway, in India, a huge gap. And now, even in China, a socialist country. In the early fifties, I think this kind of huge gap would have been unthinkable. Now, it happened. So, these are very much related with our mental attitude. If we consider others as our human brothers and sisters, then we all have the same rights, equal rights. We must have serious concern about others' well being, on the level or basis of clear awareness in the oneness of humanity, irrespective of whether we believe in religion or not. So long as we are human beings, we need a sense of concern for others' wellbeing. And also, we are social animals. As I mentioned earlier, cooperation. I think so long as we are social animals, individuals' future depends on the rest of the community.

If you stand alone and don't care about the rest of society, the members of your society, how can you achieve a happy life? Because community is the ultimate source of our own happiness, our own successful life, we must take care about the concerns of the rest of the community. As I mentioned earlier, now go further and further, and then the whole global level, entire humanity becomes part of us, part of "We".

So, now the time has come, we must create big WE. Entire seven billion human beings are part of WE, and the whole planet, our home. You cannot say, "My nation, that nation." Global warming will not make any distinctions. So, entire peoples, entire nations face the same problem. Therefore, we have to think on the global level for a happy future.

Now here, I want to tell you something about a compassionate heart, the sense of concern for others' wellbeing. Some people get the impression that the practice of love and compassion is good for others, but not necessarily good for oneself. And also, I think towards people who have a more compassionate attitude, sometimes other people see them as a weak person, and they easily bully or cheat them. And towards someone who has a really sort of aggressive, self-centered attitude, then sometimes other foolish people give more respect. This is totally wrong. Totally wrong.

²³ *Chela* is Sanskrit for spiritual student.



A sense of concern for others' wellbeing is the ultimate source of inner peace, of peace of mind. Its system is like this. When the sense of concern is here, the sense of concern of others' wellbeing, the very basis of distrust reduces. In that way, the very basis of fear reduces. And also for yourself, as you develop concern for others as human brothers and sisters, in the sameness of humanity, or at least show some kind of expression of genuine feelings, then automatically you also feel that you are a part of them, and they also are a part of you. That is tremendously helpful to reduce fear. And through that way, a sense of self-confidence comes that brings inner strength.

Inner strength is very important for the body element, for becoming more balanced. Too much fear, and fear brings anger. Anger brings hatred. Now, the constant experience of fear, anger, and hatred, some scientists say, actually eats our immune system. So, these medical scientists and brain specialists nowadays say a healthy mind is a very important element for a healthy body. I think that on that level, according to my own experience, I have something to say, or to share.

These days, when I meet some of my long-time friends, many of them when they see me, they express that there is not much change on my face. Some ask me, "What's your secret?" I usually tell them, "Oh, nine hours sleep. That is my sort of secret or source of energy." [Laughs.]

Yes, each day, I usually get up at about three or three-thirty. Then some physical exercise, some recitation, some mantras, some meditation, and some prayers, like that. And then, of course, sitting cross-legged, at least three or four hours, some meditation. So, then, in the evening, around six or six-thirty, my eyelids become quite heavy. [Laughs.] Then, I go to bed. So every night, about eight to nine hours of sound sleep. I usually half-jokingly mention that. I think, seriously, my mental state is quite peaceful, no matter what sort of difficulties.

I always make distinctions. When there are some difficulties or some tragedy, of course on the intellectual level, we know that, and we must find ways and means to overcome or reduce that. But on another deeper level, on the emotional level, we have the sort of ability to make distinctions. On the intellectual level, there is some sort of agitation, but on the deeper level, calm. That we can do.

So as a result, sometimes I describe it like the ocean. On the surface, there are always some waves. Sometimes very big waves. But underneath always remains calm. We can do that. Intellectual level, yes, quite colorful. But on the deeper level, calm. So, the calm mind is very important for our health.

Some scientists at some American universities; University of Wisconsin, Emory, Stanford, and some others, have actually carried out experiments in the last few years. Some people, a group of



people, maintain about three weeks of some kind of training of their mind each day for about half an hour or one hour. Before they start that kind of training, they examine their blood pressure and amount of stress. After three weeks, they test again. Blood pressure reduces, and stress much reduces. Then they become much happier persons. As a result, their relations with their friends and families are much improved.

So, they are not talking or thinking about the next life, or heaven or hell, but doing this in order to achieve a healthy body and a healthy family. So, the practice of a sense of concern for others' wellbeing is of an immense benefit to oneself.

So, firstly, you should not consider the practice of love, compassion, forgiveness, and these kinds of things as religious, as part of religious practice, thinking, "These things are important or relevant for any person who has some kind of interest in religion, but it looks like these things are not relevant for those people who have no interest in religion." That's wrong.

It is up to the individual whether to accept a religion or not. I've witnessed many people who are non-believers, actually some of them are very critical about religion, but as people they are very sensible. Their lives are really dedicated to the wellbeing of others. So there are cases of non-believers who are very warm-hearted persons, because these things are biological factors. We come from our mother. And then, I think for at least three or four years after birth, mother's affection and mother's care are extremely important, with mother's milk.

So here, I think there are a few thousand people. We all came from our mother, and all survived by mother's care, mother's affection, and mother's milk. We all have the seed of affection, because we ourselves experienced the tremendous value of mother's affection or some other's affection. So therefore, we already cultivated the seed of affection. Now it's important to nurture that, to strengthen that. That's a serious point.

So mother's affection, taking care of us, we take for granted. Then, when we grow up through modern existing education, there is not much emphasis on the importance of these moral ethics or affection. We just consider about brain smarts, like that. So, I think I have some sort of critical view about the existing modern education system, which is very much materialistically oriented. This is not adequate.

I think this society is materially very affluent, and modern education is also highly developed or highly advanced, but there is a lot of mental crisis, including crimes. So, senseless behaviors happen, not



due to lack of money. In some cases, poverty also causes that, but not necessarily in general, and also not necessarily due to lack of education.

So, therefore, we must think more seriously about how to educate these basic values while we grow up. Usually, these sorts of biological factors, positive things, become dormant when we grow up. Other sorts of aggressive parts, or self-centered attitude, increases. So eventually, we emotionally become very much unbalanced like that.

Therefore, the practice of love and compassion is of immense benefit to oneself. Then, also, once you are honest and truthful, you can act transparently. That creates trust. As I mentioned before, trust brings friendship. So, we need friends. We need really trusted friends. How can we make trusted friends? Not by money, not by fame, not by power, but by warm-heartedness.

Even animals don't care whether you are a believer or non-believer, rich or poor, educated or uneducated. They do not know. They do not care, as long as we show affection sincerely. Cats, dogs, and birds. So, basically, we are same animals. These are biological factors that brings friends. We are social animals. We really need friendship. Friendship brings genuine cooperation. When someone is passing through a difficult period, all the remaining sorts of members are ready to help. At least ready to show they care.

Very good. So, the ultimate sort of basis of building a happy society or peaceful world is very much related with an individual's mental attitude. So, that is what I want to share with you. Please think more about these inner values.

And then, it's not enough to just say, "Oh, oh that's important." Not that way. Not that level. First, you must get some kind of understanding or awareness through listening or reading. Then you must investigate according to your own experience, and also by watching your neighbors' situation. Those families, your neighbors, which economically may not be very rich, but are full of affection and compassion among the family members, are much happier. Then there are those families that may be very rich or powerful, but even the father and mother disrespect each other, and the parents and children also have a little bit of suspicion or distrust. How can such a family develop a real happy atmosphere? So, we can examine this.

Then we get a firm conviction that real warm-heartedness is the key factor for happy individuals and happy families. Then, also as I briefly mentioned, the scientific findings are that a peaceful mind is very essential for our health, and related to many problems, a crisis in our moral society. One time, in San Francisco, I participated in one seminar about the crimes among the youth. We had a few days of



discussion. Then, finally we universally agreed how in the society and the family, there is a lack of compassion. So, therefore, many problems are not due to a lack of education or money, but ultimately due to a lack of inner peace or inner affection.

So, now let us try to start inner peace. From one person to ten persons. One hundred persons to one thousand persons. Like that. Through that way, we can eventually bring genuine peace on this planet. So, the past century became the century of bloodshed. Now this century, it's very possible, and it should be, a peaceful century. Peaceful means not just the absence of violence, but a more compassionate world. Not through religious faith, but through education and awareness. That I think is very possible. Wherever I give talks, I always emphasize these things.

So, if you feel this is something serious, then think more, and familiarize yourself. If you think these things are not very useful, then do not think seriously, and leave it. No problem. I'm leaving tomorrow. You will remain here with your own problems. So, you have to solve your problems. Nobody will come to help you.

So therefore, peace of mind is a very important factor for utilizing human intelligence properly. Too much fear or anger really disturbs our ability to research and analyze. So, without a full understanding about reality, all our efforts or all our methods become unrealistic methods. Unrealistic methods always bring disaster. So to help this sort of human intelligence [points to head] and willpower from here [taps heart], combine them and calmly analyze things. Then our methods should become realistic methods.

So, I must mention Mr. Bush. I really love him. I really accept him. But as far as his policies are concerned, I have some reservations. [Applause.] So, actually, after the Iraq War started, on another occasion I met with him. Then I expressed, "I love you. I respect you. I consider you a very close friend, a genuine human friend. However, as far as some of your policies are concerned, I have some reservations." And, he smiled and laughed, like that. So, I think in his case, his motivation is wonderful, and his object was very good. But his method was wrong.

Also, the Chinese leaders, like the previous president Hu Jintao. After he became president, his slogan was "Promoting Harmonious Society." Wonderful. Really, that is really needed. Not only in China, but for the whole humanity, we really need harmony. So, his motivation was very good. His aim was very good, but his method was relying more on the use of force. That was a mistake. As a result, instead of harmony, there was more suspicion and more fear. It's clear.



So I think our method, the non-violent method, is very important. And also, the non-violent method is a realistic method. The violent method is an unrealistic method. Like that. Thank you.
[Applause.]

Then, I think some questions. I think in Question-Answer I may refer to something. Ok, thank you. [Applause.] Thank you, thank you. Sit down, sit down. Now questions.

Dr. Ron Marks: Good afternoon, I'm Ron Marks, Dean of the Tulane University School of Social Work. Your Holiness, thank you. We have a few questions. We have collected these questions throughout the week before you arrived here, from children, from adults, from people all over the City of New Orleans, and we have a few questions to pose to you today.

Your Holiness, do you ever experience doubt, and what do you do in these times of doubt? Or what advice would you give us, for those of us who do have doubt?

His Holiness: Yes certainly. As a person whose life is now quite old, and who has faced a lot of difficult challenges, quite often doubt has come. Then, further discussion and further investigation is the only way. Further analyze and investigate, with a calm mind. Also, try to look from various angles.

For example, I lost my own country. Over the last fifty-four years, I have been a refugee. In one way, it's sad. In another way, that new life really has brought immense benefit or opportunity. So, looking from one angle, "Oh, we lost our country. There are a lot of problems within our country." That brings more frustrations, more sadness, and more anguish, like that. But from the same event, looking from another angle, "Yes, a sort of new opportunity." For example, meeting with a variety of people, people from different religious traditions, and opportunities to exchange our different philosophical views, and more importantly, the deeper experiences. That's been immensely helpful to develop mutual respect.

I'm Buddhist. I have faith toward Buddhism, but respect toward all major religious traditions. So therefore, on one occasion in Australia, before my public talk, one Christian preacher quite well known in the Sidney area introduced me. He mentioned me as a good Christian. Obviously, I'm Buddhist. He knows that, but you see he described me as a good Christian. That means, you see, we have the same practice. Then during my turn, I responded to him, "I consider you as a good Buddhist."

So, in common practice, I think many Christian brothers and sisters are truly wonderful people. Their whole lives are dedicated to the wellbeing of others. So wonderful. As is Islam. Sometimes you



see, in the West, there is a little bit of a negative impression. I think that is wrong. I think it's too early to make a conclusion because of a few mischievous people, terrorists whose background is Muslim. Then, because of that, you generalize all of Islam as something militant or something negative. That's totally wrong. [Applause.]

I know many Muslims who are really wonderful. One Muslim teacher, a preacher, said at a function, "A genuine practitioner of Islam must extend love towards the entire creation of Allah." That's wonderful. According to their belief, entire human beings, and also, the world or planet, is created by Allah, so they must give respect and love. Same. So therefore, you see, all religious traditions have the same message of love, forgiveness, tolerance, and these things.

So now, here it's important to make a distinction between faith and respect. They are two things. So, out of respect for all religions, maybe in your own practice, everything gets mixed. Do not do that way. And in the philosophical views, there are big differences.

One time my very dear close Christian friend, a Catholic monk, really showed interest about Buddhist techniques, about the promotion of love, forgiveness and tolerance, and also single-pointed meditation. So, we often discussed these things. One day, he asked me about emptiness. That is something unique, the no-soul theory. He asked me that. Then, of course as I knew him as an old friend, I told him, "Now you should not ask this question. This is not your business. This is our Buddhist business, so don't ask that."

There are unique differences there, which are an individual's business. But in common practice, we can learn from each other. Very useful. That's the sound basis for mutual respect. Mutual respect is the real basis for genuine harmony amongst the different religious traditions.

So, becoming a refugee was an immense sort of opportunity to meet with people, different followers of different religions, and also scientists. Immense benefit.

As far as physical matter is concerned, modern scientific findings are extremely highly advanced. It's very useful to learn from them. In Buddhism, there are teachings that also mention about particles, including atoms. These are mentioned, but modern scientific knowledge is much more precise and detailed. It's wonderful. So, very useful.

Similarly, as far as emotion or mind is concerned, the ancient Indian sort of psychology, the Indian knowledge of mind and emotion, including Buddhism, is highly advanced. So when compared with Western modern psychology, modern psychology looks like kindergarten. So, the ancient Indian sort of psychology was highly developed, therefore many scientists are really showing genuine interest



to learn more from the ancient Indian thought about mind and emotion, and also about mind training.

So, if I still remained in Lhasa, in the Potala²⁴, perhaps now the old Dalai Lama would be a very conservative Dalai Lama, maybe. [Laughs.] So, my becoming a refugee has been very useful, very helpful. And, obviously, there have been more opportunities for meeting a variety of people. Isn't it?

So you see, when we face some problems, we should not immediately go through some ups and downs. We must look calmly at that problem or dilemma, further investigate it, and if you have some friend, discuss it. That's the only way. Next Question? [Audience applause.]

Dr. Ron Marks: Your Holiness, a little boy named TJ wants to know what makes you happy?

His Holiness: I think one thing is sound sleep the previous night. Then the next morning, very fresh. Then, some exercise as I mentioned, and also some meditation. Then, usually, as a Buddhist monk, I have no dinner, you know. After lunch, I am practically fasting until the next morning. So, the next morning, almost every morning, I am like a hungry ghost. So, on top of the freshness of sufficient sleep, after breakfast, I feel very happy. [Laughs, applause.]

Then, I think, most importantly are meetings like this. You see, this is an opportunity for me to share some of my own experiences, some of my own thoughts. And people really look serious. If when I give this kind of talk, I think the majority feels sleepy, then I feel unhappy. [Laughs.]

But maybe in some corners, in those dark areas, maybe some are sleeping. Otherwise, at least here I can see everybody is very attentive. So deep inside, whether you agree or not, you are really showing some interest. So, I feel very happy. [Applause.]

As a part of my own practice, I dedicate every day. I dedicate my body, speech, and mind to the wellbeing of others. So, after a busy long day, in the evening I feel a little bit physically tired. But, mentally I feel, "Oh, I fulfilled some purpose of my life." So, I really feel happy. Like that. [Applause.] Yes, next question.

Dr. Ron Marks: Your Holiness, this next question makes me very sad. New Orleans has a large population of children born into troubled homes. These children suffer physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, often at the hands of family members. How can these children learn compassion for others when they have not experienced it for themselves?

²⁴ The Potala Palace was the residence of the Dalai Lamas in Lhasa, Tibet.



His Holiness: Yes, it is true. It is true. Those people, even elder persons, no matter how successful they may be, if those individuals who at young age lacked the affection of their mother, or were sometimes abused, deep inside will be unhappy.

One time, soon after Eastern European countries became free democratic countries, I had the opportunity to visit Poland. Near Warsaw, I visited one group of children. These children were unwanted children, without parents. The parents had just abandoned them. I felt very sad. I think previously in our country such things were almost non-existent, impossible. Of course, we had a small population. So, these things are very sad things.

However, at a young age, effort by foster parents and some sort of social workers help. Also, I was told by one experienced lady in Los Angeles, who works worldwide in Africa and some other different countries taking care of young children and orphans, that it is important to remain for longer periods. As a worker, change within a short period is very harmful. Children need some kind of trusted old friend that is reliable. That's very important.

So, therefore, although some unfortunate things have already happened, we must make it up. So those workers, I think are mainly female. It is especially very important to provide for those children who have some kind of deep sense of insecurity inside, and through that a distrust of others. We need special effort to provide for them, very sincerely showing affection, not in an artificial way. That, also, not for days, weeks and months, but for years. Then these things can change.

So, that's the only way. Maybe now some neurosurgeons, through some kind of surgery can remove a certain part of the brain that develops that kind of emotion. I think that is impossible. The only thing is, you see, emotional problems must be dealt with the mental way, on the mental level, through training their mind or broadening their mind. That's the only way.

I think for these children, one tragic experience happens, and then I think constantly they are thinking about only that. So, you see, more frustration or sad feelings are always kept there. So, try to broaden or widen their mind, and let them develop an interest for more variety of fields. That also can be useful. And most important is to show affection constantly. That should give some kind of impression. The concerned people, take special care of such sorts of individuals. I think that's important. [Applause.]



Ron Marks: Your Holiness, our students are committed to serving individuals and communities in need here in New Orleans and all over the world. What advice would you give us to help us to be most effective in serving others?

His Holiness: That's, I think, difficult to say. You see, it's case by case. Different sorts of cases, and different individuals, so it's difficult to generalize.

First, serving others is marvelous, wonderful work. Your life becomes meaningful. The more you serve needy people, your life becomes more useful, meaningful, and purposeful.

However, when you start that kind of work, you should not expect too much. You must keep in mind, "Oh, this work will not be easy, some obstacles are bound to happen." So, it is much better, right from the beginning, to keep prepared in your mind for some obstacles, that some difficulties are bound to happen. Then, actually, when some difficulties come, since you prepared, it is much easier to tackle these things.

If at the beginning you expected, "Oh, that work will be very successful, will be very easy," then, when some small obstacle comes, you are demoralized and sometimes develop frustration and anger. So, therefore, you should not expect too much.

I always tell people who are showing interest in Buddhist practice, they should not expect some positive sort of change within days. It is unrealistic, isn't it? You know, we Buddhists usually discuss, "eons, eons," not only just a few years or one life. We say, "life after life, for thousands and billions of lives." And, in the Hindu tradition. Also, we believe karma, the law of causality, goes on for life after life. So, you see, those people, who are in this time, or century, have too much automatic machines. So, they have the same attitude about our mind also, that it is something automatically easily changed. That is unrealistic. So I think better to keep the expectation you are bound to face some problem, and it will be difficult work. You must be determined.

And also, one important thing is, before starting any particular work, you must analyze whether you can do the work or not. Thoroughly analyze, and if it is workable, then join and start work with full determination. If from right at the beginning you start without knowing the reality, with some kind of false hope, then disaster comes. So, objectively analyze your goal, whether it can be achieved or not. That I think is very important. Then, once you join, keep enthusiasm and determination. Like that. Yes? [Applause.]



Ron Marks: Your Holiness, how do you manage to be an optimist when there is so much trouble in the world?

His Holiness: Oh, frankly speaking, there's no other choice. [Applause.] It's much better, isn't it, to keep some kind of hope, some kind of optimism. If a lot of problems are there, and then you yourself have completely lost hope, and, "Oh, oh," like that [acts depressed], then what use?

There was one great eighth century Indian Buddhist philosopher²⁵. He mentioned that when we face some tragedy or tragic situation, then analyze the situation. If the situation can be overcome, then there is no basis for worry, and we must make effort. If in the situation there is no way to overcome that problem, then no use for too much worry. It's realistic, isn't it?

Too much worry, on top of the difficulties, also adds problems and more worry. So in spite of the difficulties, then look. Yeah, you can't avoid that. We have to face them.

When something happens, when someone loses their friend, parent or partner, like that, I often tell them, "Oh, it's not just in your own case. You are not the only case. There are millions of people with that similar sort of problem and similar sort of suffering out there." Because sometimes people, when something happens, feel, "Oh something worse has happened to me. Oh, why?" So, that increases worrying or sadness. Thinking, "Not me alone, there are many," then at least for a moment, a little sort of that intensity reduces. Then, as I mentioned earlier, try to look.

Now, for example, out of I think around twenty teachers from whom I received sorts of knowledge and oral transmissions, when my late teacher, the main teacher who gave me monastic ordination passed away, I really felt very terrible. Terrible sort of sadness and feeling of fear. As long as he was alive, I always had some kind of solid rock upon which I could lean. Now that he is no longer, I feel very sad. Then, I thought about my sadness. In any way, it is not possible for him to return. Now the time has come, I must fulfill his wishes with firm determination. So, that sadness translated into more determination.

And I often tell people, after their dearest friends pass away, and they have a lot of sadness or worry, "Look if your dear one who is no longer here, if he or she had some way to know of your condition, and you remain too sad, crying and hopeless, then that person will have even more worry."

²⁵ Shantideva, in the classic Sanskrit poem, *Entering Into the Way of an Awakening Being (Bodhisattvacharyavatara)*, Chapter 6, Verse 10.



Instead of a sad event, if the remaining people remain calm, optimistic, and determined to fulfill their late friends' will, or wish, then the person would feel much happier. So, that's the proper way to fulfill their wish. If you have too much sadness, hopelessness, and sometimes almost some kind of mental breakdown, and if that person had some way to know, then they would have additional worry. Isn't it? That I always believe and tell people like that. Clear? [Applause.]

Ron Marks: Your Holiness, in New Orleans, we seem to love food. Do you have a favorite food?

His Holiness: I think the other day, also the same question. I answered, one time in South India, at one restaurant, the manager asked me what was my favorite dish. He asked me if I had any restrictions. Then I told him, "No restrictions as a Buddhist monk, whatever get, we must accept." So, we are like pigs. Anything we get, we enjoy. [Audience laughter.]

One time, perhaps thirty or forty years ago, one Sri Lankan monk and I discussed about vegetarianism and non-vegetarianism. We just casually talked about these things, because you see some Buddhists, like many Chinese Buddhists, Zen Buddhists, and I think Vietnamese Buddhists, are very strict vegetarians. Isn't it?

But in Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, and Tibet we are not very strict. So that *Bhikshu*²⁶ from Sri Lanka told me, "Buddhist monks are neither vegetarian nor non-vegetarian." That means, whatever you get, you must accept. You have no right to demand, "I want vegetarian or non-vegetarian." You have no right to demand or to ask. So, that's true. In the *Vinaya Sutra*²⁷, you see, we have a begging bowl. Whatever you get, you should accept.

Then some Sanskrit texts mentioned it is better to be vegetarian. So, you see, amongst Tibetans, some are vegetarians for certain periods, and some for their whole lives. But in most cases, Tibetans are non-vegetarian. However, for some period, say a few months or even a few years, they are strictly vegetarian. That kind of practice is there. So, I think for complete vegetarians, I think you should consider your own physical health. But in the meantime, eating too much meat is also not good. I think we have too many beef farms, poultry farms, and fisheries, because of too much consumption.

And for these chickens, millions of chickens firstly multiply too much, and then some disease comes that eliminates thousands and thousands of them. Sometimes at some markets or some

²⁶ A *Bhikshu* is a fully ordained Buddhist monk.

²⁷ The *Vinaya Sutra* describes the rules and vows for Buddhist monks, nuns, and lay persons.



restaurants, like in India, I noticed at some small restaurants there are some chickens among the vegetables, and people have no sense of concern for their lives, no feeling of their pain.

I think if people have no feeling for others' life, killing and cutting, then these people will also eventually feel that towards human beings also. You see, they don't have much feeling for others' pain.

That way some people, in the name of "enemy," and based on a strong sense of "I" and "They," in order to get some foolish temporary satisfaction, play with others' lives. Cutting their hand, their leg, their nose, or their ears, and enjoying others' pain, others' crying. Sometimes, you see, they enjoy torturing their enemy and their painful sorts of expressions. These things must be wiped out. We must develop a sense of love, and a sense of respect for others' life. Not only for human beings, but even for animals. I think that is very important. [Audience applause.]

Dr. Ron Marks: Your Holiness, from all the people of New Orleans, and from all the communities represented by the people here today, I want to extend a heartfelt thank you for your being here today. [Applause.]

His Holiness: Thank you. Thank you very much.

Dr. Ron Marks: Ladies and gentlemen, this is the culmination of a profound and historic visit by His Holiness. It began many years ago through our commitment to the communities of Tibetan refugees in North India, and dedication to working on their behalf. These last several months our work at preparing for His Holiness' visit has been an expression of our compassion. It has been compassion in action.

It has created many connections throughout our communities and made clear how we are all deeply connected. And through these connections and engagements, we get to accomplish very meaningful work to make stronger communities and healthier individuals.

We have heard His Holiness' message today. We have come to understand that if we truly understand the doctrine of compassion, which is based on ancient wisdom, that if we truly understand this profound message, there are no strangers.

His universal message of peace has permeated and blanketed our city like the Tibetan prayer flags that we have raised all over the communities of New Orleans. He has asked all of us to commit



ourselves to compassionate behavior. Your Holiness, again, from the people of New Orleans and all communities represented here today, thank you, thank you. *Thukje che*²⁸.

I also want to thank our many sponsors who helped to make this historic visit possible. Thanks to the New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation, Cox Communications, Mr. David Schulingkamp, Magnolia Companies of Louisiana, People's Health, East Jefferson General Hospital, Dr. and Mrs. Patrick Torcson, the New Orleans Saints, and the New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau.

I want to be clear, finally, that His Holiness receives no fees for his speaking engagements, and received no fees for his visit to New Orleans. All proceeds received through ticket sales and sponsorships are used to cover the costs of these events. We raised over \$600,000 and had expenses of over \$550,000, and this surplus will be distributed to non-profit charitable organizations in consultation with the Office of Tibet. [Applause.]

Again, Your Holiness, thank you for making this an historic and profound visit.

His Holiness: Thank you, thank you. Over the last two days, I had the opportunity of meeting with several thousand people, so I really feel very happy. Thank you. Thank you very much.

So, bye-bye! Good night! Good sleep! Good rest! [Audience laughter and extended applause.]

²⁸ *Thukje che* is Tibetan for "thank you," literally meaning "Great Heart."