

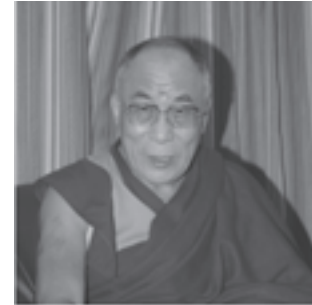
Universal Peace and Compassion: The Dalai Lama's Visit to IIM Indore

On June 10, 2009, the Chairman Board of Governors, IIM Indore, Mr. L. N. Jhunjhunwala, introduced the Dalai Lama to the participants:

“At a symposium held at Delhi University in 1995, I was struck by the contrast of two great men – Amartya Sen and the Dalai Lama, and I realized how well their differences complemented each other. My interest now well and truly caught, I persuaded Swami Atmapriyanandaji and Shri Rajeev Mehrotra to solicit the Dalai Lama to come and address the students of the Indian Institute of Management, Indore. Imagine my surprise and my delight when I received news that the invitation had not just been accepted, but that definite plans had been made for his arrival.

Following his arrival at the institute, the national anthem of both Tibet and India were played after which we welcomed His Holiness and invited him to the podium to speak.

I am quite certain that I shall never forget the day that IIM Indore was so greatly honored by the visit of the Dalai Lama. My personal impression of him was of a man who even under the most adverse of circumstances, continues to be cheerful and tries to bring happiness to all those around him. This alone elevates him from an ordinary mortal, to a man of greatness, which I believe, says it all”



Dedicated to management scholars:

“I am pleased and honored to be here with you. The twenty first century is going to be fundamentally different from the twentieth. As young people you have an opportunity to contribute to universal peace, therefore, when I received the invitation to come to IIM Indore and talk to you, I thought it would be a good opportunity to share some of my thoughts on love, compassion and peace. But please, don't elevate me to the position of God. There is nothing special or extraordinary about me and I am certainly not an avatar of Buddha. I am as human as you are, not some sort of miracle man with healing power and I have come here to talk to you as one human being to another. Let me tell you a little about myself. I lost my country when I was four years old and I lost my freedom at the age of 16. In the last fifty years, the only news I receive about Tibet seems to be bad news and the people of Tibet trust me and look to me to set

things right. They expect great things of me, which makes my responsibility a heavy burden to shoulder. We live in a period of great crisis, a period of troubling world developments. It is not possible to find peace in ourselves without security and harmony between peoples. I am pleased that in certain ways, India practices this school of thought on a day-to-day basis.

India has a great history of religious tolerance. It has been practicing ahimsa for the last 2000 years. It has inspired leaders in countries such as the United States of America and Africa to put ahimsa into practice. The World is witnessing unnecessary conflicts that more often than not, end in war.

The new century needs compassion, love and understanding more than ever before. But, then again, most people think ahimsa is the opposite of physical violence and while that is true, I believe exploiting a person or abusing a person verbally and mentally are also dangerous forms of violence. Which is exactly why ahimsa needs to be put into urgent practice, because ahimsa is a form of compassion.

Compassion is in our minds. It is based on attitudes and values. It is ingrained in our very being. If animals and birds can show compassion how much more should we extend it to our fellow beings? In order to show compassion to others, you need to show compassion to yourself first. If you cannot love yourself, you will not be able to relate to people close to you – let alone your enemies – in compassion.

Using words like “I”, “me” or “mine”, are often signs of individuals wrapped up in themselves to pay attention to the suffering of others. People like these are much too self-centered to appreciate the value of simple courtesies and have little or no capacity to appreciate truth. Tibetans have nothing to hide because we believe in truth and honesty. Perhaps China needs to realise, that in order to maintain prosperity, a little interdependency might actually be a good thing. And to cement such relationships, truth and trust are two vital ingredients.

I believe that is how animals instinctively recognize when someone is trustworthy. If you show them true affection, they respond in a like manner, but if your motives are based on anything other than genuine affection, they either snap and snarl at you, or ignore you completely. Since human beings need to socialise, they cannot afford to harbour grudges or be self-centered.

Buddha taught his disciples several seemingly contradictory philosophies regarding matters like these. He didn't teach them to confuse his students and neither was he confused about them himself. The reason behind this was the simple fact that since each person was, and continues to be, different from the other - different approaches would be needed to communicate with people of diverse religions.

The young men and women of today have forgotten these simple truths. They are threatened by each other's differences and see that as an excuse to be competitive to the point of idiocy. There is too much

jealousy. We need to develop a global attitude of compassion; we need to develop a mind of peace. Throughout centuries, society has been shaped by the attitudes we hold in life just as surely as society itself influences our attitude toward life. The attitudes we hold trickle down to create ripples, in our family, our society and our country. They affect the country in more ways than we know.

Let us take India and China as two examples. These two countries play an important role in the global context. While economically China maybe strong, with 1.4 billion people it still continues to face problems – like every other country. In India, though, democracy is the order of the day, rule of law exists, there is transparency in the governing structure and there is freedom of speech and press – perhaps a little too much at times – but nonetheless, it exists.

Take Pakistan for instance. Pakistan and India acquired freedom at the same time. Pakistan is a quite a small country when compared to India, it is characterized by a single religion and has strict laws that are supposed to be adhered to. Technically, it should be easier to govern Pakistan than India. India on the other hand, has people of different races, culture, religions and castes and by all rights should be floundering in chaos; instead, it strides forward in the spirit of harmony towards all.

India has inspired nations to follow ahimsa, simply by being what it is. A greater emphasis on ahimsa, truth, love and compassion will strengthen India's democracy and its economic growth. I believe in this great nation of India, the young men and women will rise to form a new day that will dawn with the bright hope of love for all.