

# The Dalai Lama calls for a Unified World in the wake of the Olympics

BY **ADRIENNE PAPP** FOR LA2DAY.COM 09 AUG 2008



The Dalai Lama, one of the world's most revered spiritual leaders, made an appearance and gave keynote speeches during the Keynotes Symposium on Tibetan Art and Culture, hosted by the **Aspen Institute** along with **The Conservancy for Tibetan Art and Culture** in Aspen, CO on July 24- 26<sup>th</sup>.

His Holiness, The Dalai Lama, a self-proclaimed "simple Buddhist monk" seen by many around the world as our leading spiritual teacher, was clad in red robes and a white scarf that had been decorated by schoolchildren. One of the Dalai Lama's 90-minute talks, which was broadcast live on Aspen Public Radio and the Aspen Institute's website, as well as reported around the World, stressed the importance of forgetting differences among the planet's 6 billion people and the benefits of finding inner peace.

In his speech, in addition to **the relationship between China and Tibet**, the spiritual leader focused on his notion of universal responsibility, the positive effects of meditation, and the relationship between science and faith.

"Basically, universal responsibility is feeling for other people's suffering just as we feel our own. It is the realization that even our enemy is entirely motivated by the quest for happiness," he said. "We must recognize that all beings want the same thing that we want. This is the way to achieve a true understanding, unfettered by artificial consideration."

Expounding on that idea of universal responsibility, a quality, he added, which is also very important for the next President of the United States, the Dalai Lama explained his three lifelong commitments: the promotion of human value, the promotion of religious harmony, and the independence of Tibet.

The Dalai Lama has been living in exile from **Tibet** for almost 50 years, and has spoken out repeatedly against China's repression of Tibetan people and culture and emphasized it is his hope that the Chinese people would know the truth. He, however, feels it is "impossible to get the truth out" as the Chinese heavily filter the media and use force to maintain a suppressive position. "At present, we are not seeking separation," he said. "At the moment, we want more modernization, so Tibet will stay within the People's Republic of China. It is in our best interest, provided we can retain our culture, our heritage, our religion. But heavy-handed suppression, use of force, is destroying Tibetan trust in China. People of China, in order to become a superpower, need moral authority. But with use of force, that is impossible." He also called China "a communist country without the communist ideology." He is not opposed to communism, which tries to support the poor, but it seems that the Chinese Government resorts to force and secrecy "as opposed to transparency," which latter is the basis of a good leadership.

The Dalai Lama's message of universality included promoting human values around the world.

"Promoting human values includes world peace, improving the environment, the energy crisis, water crisis, water resources, and also the gap between the rich and poor not only on a global level, but also on a U.S. level," said the Dalai Lama. "The key factor here is to create a more compassionate society, successful society, responsible society. "Religious harmony," he continued, "comes from valuing all religious traditions."

The Dalai Lama also discussed the correlation between spirituality and brain function, thus touching on the subject of the relationship between science and mind. "If you follow any spiritual practice, your mind becomes more compassionate and calm, more peaceful, and your mental function becomes more effective."

Participants among the many highly credentialed attendees included **Ben Bradlee**, vice president-at-large of **The Washington Post**; **Carl Gershman**, president of the National Endowment for Democracy; Aspen Institute trustee **Margot Pritzker** and her husband, **Tom Pritzker**, chairman and CEO of the Pritzker Organization and the **Global Hyatt Corporation**; Julia Taft, former US Assistant Secretary of State and Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues; former Secretary of **State Madeleine Albright** and **Her Majesty Queen Noor of Jordan**.

The **St. Regis Hotel** and landmark building of **Aspen** was home to many attendees and served the legend of Aspen well with the hotel's extraordinary hospitality in a setting of classical elegance and exceptional quality. His Holiness also had a private meeting with presidential candidate, **John McCain** and blessed members of the audience, including a little girl from the crowd. He called the people of Aspen "very soulful" and humorously added that the **"beautiful women** will just be even more beautiful if they smile a lot more often."

On the second day of his visit and after more than 4,000 people had enjoyed his life altering, and in cases, life changing insights, the audience was left with sighs and whispers of "feeling so fulfilled, peaceful and happy."



"I have great admiration for the Dali Lama," said **Dr. Eric Fugier** who practices reconstructive and cosmetic dentistry in **Beverly Hills**. "He is my spiritual leader, but also the spiritual leader of the world in opposition to religious leadership which causes division, war, hatred and terrorism.

After I became a spiritual Buddhist and read all the Dali Lama's books I have become a better person, and a better **dentist**. I became more compassionate toward my patients, staff, friends and enemies. I also understood why you have to be compassionate towards the people who try to hurt you: they are ignorant, and you have to be sorry for them and try to help them to see the light."

On this note, expressed by one of the many highly educated and successful recipients of his teachings, it must be emphasized that unfortunately the Dalai Lama is misconceived by many as a religious teacher, and thus discounted as "only a preacher of Buddhist principles" when indeed his Holiness worldwide contribution to the recognition of human values is supported even by science.

Story by: **Adrienne Papp**