

PART I

Simple Monk,
World Leader

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Chapter One

THE *PUBLIC* DALAI LAMA: HIS APPEAL TO THE MASSES

Justin Trudeau, educator, son of the late Pierre Elliott Trudeau [1919–2000, prime minister of Canada, 1968–1979; 1980–1984]

I have done a lot of reading on him, trying to understand him. The one thing that keeps coming back is how people are physically affected by his presence. And to be quite honest, I had sort of dismissed that a little bit—I figured it was something that people would get overly worked up about or were particularly religious—and when he walked over to me and greeted me [just before Mr. Trudeau introduced the Dalai Lama at an appearance at the SkyDome in Toronto, Canada, in April 2004], his presence was like a physical blow, like a wave that actually hit me, and it absolutely amazed me. He exudes this joy and this strength and this simplicity that absolutely *floored* me. I had been given a scarf to hand to him, for him to put on me, and he took the scarf that I had been given, put it aside, and took out one of his scarves, which I think was of better quality—and certainly more beautiful—and he had me bend over and he put it around my neck. He sort of smiled and nodded and said a couple of words of thanks and greeting. And then he pulled me in toward him and pressed his temple against mine and just held me for a moment. I have rarely felt as welcomed and comfortable with someone as I did in that moment of connecting with him. I was on the verge, and slightly over the verge, of tears for the entire experience. I thanked him and walked down

off the stage and back to my seat and for the first fifteen minutes of his talk, I was basically in a daze, which was wonderful, so it was a very, very powerful, moving experience.

Professor Robert [A. F.] Thurman, former Buddhist monk, ordained by the Dalai Lama in 1965; Jey Tsong Khapa professor of Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Studies, Columbia University; author of *Inner Revolution*, *Infinite Life*, and other books; cofounder and president, Tibet House, New York City

There is such a thing as the charisma of office, then there is the charisma of person. In the case of the Dalai Lama, there is definitely the charisma of person. My wife and I were once asked by an Indian gentleman, “Have you ever seen the Dalai Lama perform a miracle or do something magical?” I had seen a few funny things happen around the Dalai Lama, but I thought it wasn’t a good idea to talk about them. But my wife said, “Oh yes, I’ve seen *plenty* of miracles. You know that the Dalai Lama is a very busy person and while I’ve seen him in many different settings, I have never seen it happen that he was with somebody and didn’t give the person his total attention and total focus.” The Indian gentleman was disappointed, but my wife insisted that the Dalai Lama’s response to people is miraculous. When people walk into his field, they feel a different kind of space for themselves. Normally, when we meet each other, we reach out to the person *over there* and communicate. With the Dalai Lama, there isn’t this person who is *over there*. He is *over here*, with *us*.

Richard Gere, actor; social activist; philanthropist; president, The Gere Foundation; chairman of the board, International Campaign for Tibet

I first met him in 1981, in Dharamsala. I had been a Zen Buddhist for some time before I went there, but I had a strong impulse to meet the Dalai Lama, although I had not read much of his material. And we had a mutual friend, John Avedon. John was just finishing up a book he was writing, called *In Exile from the Land of Snows*. I really had not known—as almost no one on the planet knew—what had happened to the Tibetans. It had been a very guarded secret for some reason. John arranged for me to go to Dharamsala and I stayed with His Holiness’s younger brother, Ngari Rinpoché.

They were very skillful with me. They said, “His Holiness will be able to see you but it will probably be ten days to two weeks before he has the time. In the meantime, while you’re waiting, we want to show you the community. So they spent ten days to two weeks showing me everything

about the Tibetan community in exile, and it was quite an extraordinary education. Of course, by the end of that, I was pretty much a card-carrying Tibetan. And then, when I met His Holiness, Ngari Rinpoché was there. He was educated in an English school in Darjeeling, so his English is impeccable, and he was kind of the interpreter when it was required.

I came there with my girlfriend at the time. He was very gracious and quite striking in his appearance—quite handsome and formidable as a person—and he had the kind of aura that a powerful public person has. At the same time, he was utterly simple and direct. In many ways, he reminded me of my father in his directness, in his simplicity.

*Do People Admire Him More for His Spiritual Search,
His Political Symbolism, or His Great Celebrity?*

Sir Malcolm Rifkind, KCMG, PC, QC, former foreign minister, United Kingdom It's a combination of all these factors. After Nelson Mandela he's probably the nearest thing to a global icon there is. If you think of Mandela, if you think of the Pope, and if you think of the Dalai Lama, there are not many others today who have that global reputation based, essentially, on their personality and their values, and the fact that they combine these personal qualities with an unswerving political set of objectives. So he's not just a spiritual leader and he's not just a politician; it's the combination that makes him remarkable and makes me compare him with the other two people whom I've mentioned.

Dr. Ronald B. Sobel, Senior Rabbi, Congregation Temple Emanu-El of the City of New York; host of the Dalai Lama's appearance there in 1998 I suppose if I were a political figure, it would be his political struggle that would be on the forefront of my consciousness—although it's on my consciousness, it's not on the forefront of my consciousness. But even while saying that, history has thrust this Dalai Lama into a position where political leadership and world statesmanship are not divorced from his religious role, and it was his overwhelming humanity that impressed me. Now, obviously, we have different theological affirmations; our world views are hardly the same; the cultures are significantly disparate. But there are similar factors that we sense: his exile and his people's diaspora, the Jewish people's exile and diaspora, even though it's been a hundred years since my maternal and paternal grandparents came to America, fleeing a world of

pogrom and persecution and horror. And what I see in the Dalai Lama are qualities that I would wish always to see in myself but, alas, do not. So, in that sense he becomes also an exemplar for me, by giving values toward which I, personally, should strive to attain.

Reasons for His Popularity in the West

Sir Malcolm Rifkind It's a combination of things, but it also reflects an awareness of the total disparity of power between China and Tibet—China a billion people, Tibet a handful of people; China incredibly powerful, Tibet effectively no power at all in the conventional sense; China a great empire well-known around the world, Tibet still relatively unknown. So there's a romantic element to it, there is the David-and-Goliath relationship, and there is also awareness that in the last twenty years it has been demonstrated that even the impossible can happen. People are saying it *looks* impossible; it probably *is* impossible; but after what we've seen just in the last twenty years in other parts of Asia and in other parts of Europe, you can't say it's impossible.

Tsering Shakya, born in Lhasa in 1959 of Nepalese ancestry; expelled with his family to Nepal by the Chinese; author; fellow in Tibetan studies, London University Historically, the fascination with the Dalai Lama was always there; the institution of the Dalai Lama was there. There has always been support by Western travelers, and a lot of books and religious figures have created this fascination, so the institution of the Dalai Lama has always been mysterious and something unique. At the same time, the present Dalai Lama has created this type of personality and stature just out of his own work and his own engagement with the world and the West. So part of the institution of the Dalai Lama is historical, and there has been this fascination, but mainly today's standing really has to do with his own engagement with the world and how he has managed to be so successful—to engage and encounter and relate to the modern world. The Dalai Lama in some ways is really fantastic at understanding about psychological and social conditions of the postindustrial society. That's why he is able to relate so well to Western society; he can relate to these conditions and have the answers and the solutions to the problems you have.

Patrick French, visitor to Tibet in 1999; author, *Tibet, Tibet* It's hard to say what it is that makes the Dalai Lama such a globally popular figure.

It's not really because people are directly following Tibetan Buddhism; it's not really because they're interested in the politics of Tibet. It's that there is something about him, personally, that seems to catch people's imagination, the fact that he has some kind of personal presence. And I think it's very much linked to the fact that he appears to represent the transmission of some ancient spiritual lineage that he's discovered in this extraordinary way, through supposedly recognizing objects that belonged to his predecessor, and that he attained this position of considerable political and religious power at a very young age. Then he had the experience of trying to cohabit with the Chinese communists, fleeing across the Himalayan Mountains into exile. It's a very glamorous story. And I also think that people feel that, somehow, by being around him or by listening to him, that they are going to get some kind of secret and maybe that will help them to live their lives in a happy way.

I've often noticed when I've been with him that people come to him who need help of some kind. Normally, people who have emotional, psychological, personal, or health problems come to the Dalai Lama because they think he's going to reveal a secret, or he's going to heal them in some way. And he's extremely patient and compassionate in how he deals with people like that. He will interrupt what he's doing to give his full attention to somebody who says, "I've just been diagnosed with cancer," or "I have some major upset in my life." I've even noticed that when people know you've had some interaction with the Dalai Lama, they want a little bit of that: "What was he like? What did it feel like, being around him?" They want some of the magic that he appears to give off. In the end, it's not something that's definable; it's more than a religious thing.

Lama Surya Das, né Jeffrey Miller, American convert to Buddhism; author, *Awakening the Buddha Within*; meditation teacher; scholar; founder, Western Buddhist Teachers Network; assistant to the Dalai Lama in France The Dalai Lama was very, very impressive. I never expected that much from somebody in his position. I would never have sought out the Dalai Lama of Buddhism or the Pope: growing up in the fifties and sixties and being somewhat disillusioned with such people, I didn't expect that much from statesmen and leaders. But he was everything and *more*. I felt such a profound personal connection with him. He was really interested in me; when he was with me, it was the most important thing he had to do in the world, which is quite a marvelous feeling. Even if it's just one moment, he's really *there*, although he definitely has other important things to do.

Father Laurence Freeman, monk of the Monastery of Christ the King, London, United Kingdom; author; lecturer; director, World Community for Christian Meditation Some are born to greatness; some have greatness thrust upon them. He does keep a certain distance. Sometimes he responds to questions when it's best not to respond to them, and then the media jump on that. There have been some unpleasant, negative articles about him, but on the whole the media haven't turned on him as they tend to turn on people they idolize at some point. He had to handle that very delicate situation and at the same time be the father of his people and the symbol of their integrity, their unity, and their culture. Tibetan history is full of conflicts. Even now, the Tibetan monastic world has its conflicts and rivalries, and he's carrying an enormous burden as the symbol of unity. So I think very few people would have been able, in terms of character or temperament, to carry that off, and he has done it in a most amazing, mysterious way. At the same time—maybe this is the answer as to why—he has kept his own identity as an individual.

Lama Surya Das I asked my own personal teacher, Tulku Pema Wangyal Rinpoché, who is one of the leading teachers in France, “How is it that some of our lamas, who are known to be the greatest of lamas—the Dalai Lama himself goes to the teachings—don't seem to have so much outreach, know so much, and touch people so widely?” And he said, “The Dalai Lama's quality is sort of turned inside out to the world because of his role and position in the world, and some of the other Tibetan sages don't have that role or position, so their qualities are more luminous within for those who can see.” I thought that was very interesting, that even the Dalai Lama's teachers, who, he would probably say, are even more enlightened than he is, still don't have that kind of charisma or outreach or skillful means to touch all modern people, to speak to people of the different religions the way he does.

Harry Wu, Shanghai-born former prisoner in the Laogai, the gulag of the People's Republic of China; human rights activist; executive director, The Laogai Research Foundation; author of *Bitter Winds: A Memoir of My Years in China's Gulag*; *Laogai: The Chinese Gulag*; and *Trouble Maker: The Story of Chinese Dissident Harry Wu* When I met the Dalai Lama for the first time, he touched my hand and he said to me, “You know, Harry, we are brothers.” The Dalai Lama is a very special character. You cannot ask John Paul, the Pope, “What do you think about sex?” or, “Do you ever think about being with a woman?” The Dalai

Lama will answer these questions. You can ask any question. He's always calm, he's always smiling. There was only one time when I was with him that he almost cried, when he was talking about the Tibetan people. All other times, he is always smiling. There is a phrase in Tibet: "As the rains fall into the ocean, there is no decrease or increase," because you're the *ocean*; you're not a lake, you're not a river, you're not a pond, you're not a reservoir; you're the *ocean*, no matter how heavy the rain.

Sister Mary Margaret Funk, OSB, executive director, Monastic Inter-religious Dialogue Board; coordinator, Gethsemani Encounter, 1996

He considers himself first and foremost a monk. I sat through his Kalachakra Initiation Rite in Bloomington, Indiana, in 2001, and I realized that in their tradition, it's a very privileged life to be a monk or a nun, especially a monk. And he's a bodhisattva, which means that he turned down being just in nirvana and came to this realm to help other sentient beings. And he sees monkhood as kind of like sainthood in this realm, so he's raised up all of us to think highly of being a monk or a nun. It is his identity: he has no other persona; he always wears the robes. His favorite topic is "The Lifestyle of a Monk or Nun and Prayer," and he sees our role as teaching everyone to live a life that would reduce suffering in this realm and raise up everybody else.

However, he believes in democracy and he believes in separation of church and state and secularization. And that is what appeals to him about the American experiment. At our Gethsemani Encounter dialogue in 'ninety-six, he just was right at home; he lived the life right with us. One time, he went up to one of the Christian nuns and said, "Am I being too casual?"

Dr. Chaim Peri, director, Yemin Orde Wingate Youth Village, Israel; cocreator, Israel-Tibet Institute

As the result of a visit of prominent Tibetan educators to our village [Yemin Orde Wingate Youth Village, in Israel], I met the Dalai Lama for the first time at Brandeis University [near Boston, Massachusetts] in 1998. I went to Dharamsala, where I met his sister, Jetsun Pema, whom I envision as the Henrietta Szold [1860–1945, American Zionist, founder of the women's organization, Hadassah] of the Tibetan people, and I had a meeting with their education officers, including the minister of education, Mr. [Rinchen] Choegal, and we devised a program by which they would send children to Israel. I had in mind that this would be a big part of our program from now and forever. And we really brought these children. We brought twelve kids and

two educators for a three-month program here, as a pilot. Then the intifada started and this was the last one.

But one of these kids, Ngawang Loser, was stubborn enough to tell me, “I want to be a living bridge between these two nations and fulfill your dream.” He’s now at the Hebrew University, studying philosophy. His Hebrew is already impeccable; he has humility; he has a sense of mission. So we created an anchor here, not just an ambassador, but an anchor—a child who in his formative years has absorbed Israel. The Dalai Lama’s office now contributes two hundred dollars every month toward his board in Jerusalem, while we pay the tuition. This small connection must be advanced; we have to work with it, to continue it. And I’m working on long-range plans with this young man. The second time I saw the Dalai Lama was in Jerusalem, at the King David Hotel, and he expressed his satisfaction with the fact that Tibetan youngsters are coming to Israel. Holding my hand very strongly, he said, “Give strength to our children.” I felt his strength pouring into me in many ways and that has continued ever since.

Yossi Sarid, former leader, Meretz Party; minister of environment; minister of education, Israel [During their second meeting, in Jerusalem, in 1999] the Dalai Lama asked for a broadening of the program where youngsters from Tibet come to Israel. Since he is very familiar with the Jewish experience of being in exile and surviving, he probably finds this very interesting and encouraging as to how his people exist, struggle, and [will] win at last. Needless to say, I was very cooperative and later on, we made sure that more Tibetan students were able to come to our country. I met with these students on several occasions. I hope more Tibetan students will come—and not necessarily just those in exile. If it would be possible for students living in Tibet to come to Israel, they would be most welcome.

*Is It Surprising That the Dalai Lama Has Attained
Such World Renown?*

Richard Blum, president, American Himalayan Foundation; adviser to presidents Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton on Tibetan issues; husband of Senator Diane Feinstein [D-CA] When I first knew him, I never imagined that the Dalai Lama would have the esteem of the Western world that he enjoys today. Every two years we have an AHF event which is addressed by His Holiness. The tickets, priced at two hundred dollars

apiece, sell out even before notices of the event ever go out. I recall having gone to one of his teachings near San Jose. This was not user-friendly stuff. He spoke in Tibetan, with some translation. In the past, the dharma kids would come to these events but today, people attend from all walks of life and the not-inexpensive tickets for the lectures sell out. So the question is: what is there about His Holiness that has such a universal appeal? He has written that you can be a religious person and not be a very *good* person. You can have no interest in religion and be a fine person. What's important is that you are spiritual—that you care more about other people than yourself. As far as I am concerned, that's the best possible message a religious leader can ever give to anybody in the world. His religion is about kindness and compassion. He has really stuck to what he is supposed to be as the Dalai Lama.

Heinrich Harrer, mountain climber and member of the Austrian Olympic Team, 1936; invitee on the Nanga Parbat Expedition, Kashmir, India, 1939; internee of the British near Bombay on the outbreak of World War II; escapee from internment camp and arrival in Tibet, 1944; arrival in Lhasa, 1946; author of *Seven Years in Tibet* There was a Gallup poll here and he got 39 percent; he's the number-one person—the second was the Pope, with 18.5 percent of the vote, the third and fourth were two Africans, and the fifth was the Western scientist, [Stephen] Hawking. That shows the popularity of His Holiness. He gives every year one or two Kalachakras and ten thousand people—so many people are coming, admirers of his Holiness. He visited me also twice in my home; he came to Lichtenstein. I succeeded in convincing the Lichtenstein government to have three stamps made for the Tibetans. So when he came here, he stayed with the duke in his castle. That was a very wonderful thing of the government of Lichtenstein to issue these three stamps. The Chinese government protested.

Robert Ford, CBE, radio officer to the British Mission in Tibet, 1945–1947; employee of the Tibetan government as its first radio operator, 1947–1950; prisoner of the People's Republic of China, 1950–1955 When we first met—in 1945—the world was a different place and he was a little boy. I don't know what would have happened if the Chinese had not invaded. It's quite possible that His Holiness would not have achieved the world status that he has—he might have been a recluse in Lhasa. He doesn't court publicity, in a sense, and he doesn't go out of his way to seek all this: this comes, as he often says, from

his position as being the Dalai Lama, not for him, personally, but for his teaching, for his views on world affairs and what life is about.

Tsering Shakyas I'm not surprised that the Dalai Lama has become such a world celebrity. There is, obviously, this fascination of people with the Dalai Lama, created a long time ago, from the late nineteenth century, by travelers who came to Tibet. So, coupling that image and what the Dalai Lama has been able to do, it is likely that he would have become such a figure. [The reason] he has gained stature is that he really hasn't abandoned his responsibility; he hasn't said: I live in the modern world; this whole thing with the Dalai Lama is nonsense and I'll just live in California. He has stayed very much traditional in his belief system. So that adds to his weight of authority. Another thing is that he has never abandoned his community. He has said, "My responsibility first is to my community, to the Tibetan people." He says, "The future of the Dalai Lama is with his followers, what they decide, what they feel; if they feel the need for a Dalai Lama, they will create one, whether I want it or not."

The Dalai Lama's Impact on People

Patrick French I suppose the spark was meeting the Dalai Lama when I was a child. That's probably true of quite a lot of people—the reason that they become involved in the Free Tibet Movement is because they're interested in the figure of the Dalai Lama. It was one of the things that encouraged me to actually want to go to Tibet; it made me read about the history of Tibetan culture and religion. But then I got to know Tibetans who were living in exile.

At that time he was a completely alien figure as I had grown up in England in the 1970s and the eighties. So to see somebody who looked so different, who was dressed in these exotic robes and platform flip-flops, surrounded by an entourage of other Buddhist monks, he seemed extraordinary to me—really kind of glamorous and exotic.

But then I also realized, almost straight away, that he had this intense personal charisma. He has this ability to make not only each person whom he is speaking to, but each person he is with, feel, somehow, that there is an electric current going through them. And that's something that I've noticed again and again, this way that he can have an effect on people. And not only on people who have an existing religious or political or cultural interest in him. I remember once seeing him in one of the big

London hotels and there was a really hard-bitten camera crew, really cynical in that way that people who spend too much time attending press conferences can be. And I remember walking out with these guys; they had never been in the presence of anybody like *that*.

T. C. [Tsewang Choegyal] Tethong, uncle of Dr. Tenzin Tethong; aide, Private Office of the Dalai Lama; director, Tibetan Settlements, Karnataka State, South India; minister of information and international relations, Tibetan Government in Exile, 1997–2001 Back in 1959, a reporter for the *New York Times* who had a camera slung around his neck came for an interview with His Holiness. When he went in to the office, His Holiness noticed the camera and immediately identified its make. When the interview ended, the reporter began to take some pictures but he was fumbling around and almost dropped the camera. I have often seen how people get emotional in His Holiness's presence. Even for me, as one who has been very close to His Holiness, every morning, when I would report to him, I would feel his aura all the time.

Mickey Lemle, documentary filmmaker, *Compassion in Exile: the Story of the 14th Dalai Lama* [1993]; chairman, The Tibet Fund I was invited to a small, private reception for His Holiness [in Davos, Switzerland]. We were introduced and shook hands and he looked at me and I looked at him. There was a palpable sense of presence about him. Usually, when I meet a powerful person, I have the sense that he or she is looking at me, thinking: how can I use this person to enhance my power? With the Dalai Lama, I had the sincere feeling that he was looking at me, thinking: who is this person and how can I help him? Once he said to me, "My religion is kindness." And that is what you feel from him—a sense of kindness.

Annette Lantos, executive director, Congressional Human Rights Caucus; founder and chair, International Free Wallenberg Committee He has no worldly power, whatsoever; he has no armies he commands; no politburo; no secret police. But we see the tremendous impact that the Dalai Lama has in just appearing as a simple man and having people recognize that he embodies answers to the problems of the world.

Ven. Nicholas Vreeland, director, Tibet Center, New York City; holder of Geshe degree from Rato Dratsang Monastery, India I first met His Holiness in 1979, just as the monsoon was arriving in Dharamsala. I had

requested an audience in order to photograph His Holiness for a book. After a few weeks, I was granted the audience and was instructed to set up my equipment quickly so as not to take up too much of His Holiness's time. I decided that the best place to take the photograph was in his office, with him seated behind his desk. There was a window behind the desk, so the way to take the photo would be for His Holiness to turn away from his desk at an angle to the window and the desk and face the camera. His Holiness had a swivel chair, which would make it easier for him to turn toward the camera. As I was getting my light reading done, I realized it would be a very slow exposure—there wasn't much light; the skies were already very cloudy. His Holiness was going to have to hold the pose for a full minute, which is a very long time.

Suddenly, I heard this very deep voice giving instructions. And, as he approached, I also heard the far more subdued voices of his entourage. So my first impression was one of force, of authority, of strength. And there was a quality of down-to-earthiness about His Holiness's tone. And though I didn't know what he was saying, there was a matter-of-factness about the exchange. Suddenly, His Holiness was in the room and when he saw me, he laughed, in a way to make me feel welcome. I then offered him a white scarf and explained to him that I was in India taking photographs of the great lamas of Tibet who had come into exile. His Holiness sat down and I said to him that it would be necessary for him not to move for about a minute. But after forty-five seconds, he began to swivel in his chair. As a result, we went through many sheets of film. His entourage began to become anxious. Suddenly, after several attempts, His Holiness burst into roaring laughter and I did also. That took all the tension out of the situation. It was obvious that we were not going to be able to photograph him while he was seated in the swivel chair. I then asked His Holiness if he would stand against the greenish wall of his office—there was a nice, soft light on the left side of his face. I took the photo and it was wonderful. As I packed up my gear, I asked His Holiness what I might do in gratitude for being able to photograph the great lamas. He replied that I should study. And that's what I did.

Lama Lobsang Thamcho Nyima, the Eighth Incarnation of the Nyentse Lama, the spiritual and temporal head of the Nyentse lineage; escaped from Tibet in 1993 at the age of seventeen; teacher; founder, Menhang/Buddhist Medical Center, Manali, India I met His Holiness in 1997 in Dharamsala. I received the full ordination as a monk. His Holiness advised me to be a good monk and to observe

Buddhism. I had deep feelings and I told him that I would really try to follow his advice. Two years earlier, I had seen him from a distance of thirty meters when he visited South India. That gave me a great feeling; it was very emotional for me to see his face.

Adam Engle, cofounder, chairman, and CEO, Mind and Life Institute, Boulder, Colorado, of which the Dalai Lama is the honorary chairman

The first time I was in his presence was in London in the early 1980s. I remember going to a talk he was giving in the Royal Albert Hall. The program that was passed out before he actually arrived said, at the bottom, “My religion is very simple; my religion is kindness.” That really kind of blew me away. I listened to the talk and then took a teaching for the next few days. It was incredibly impressive. At first I didn’t really understand the teaching consciously, but I noticed there were some very significant internal shifts in the way that I thought about things over the succeeding year.

Tsering Shakya I met him when I was doing my book. I was trying to tell him, “I want to write history because there is a need for Tibetans to be looking at their own history, not just for the sake of trying to have propaganda material, but simply to understand in the fastest possible way what really happened in history.” He was very supportive of that idea. He often encourages Tibetans to write their stories; he tells people who have come from Tibet recently, “You all have stories to tell and you have to tell your story. We have to tell the world about our future.”

It was very difficult to respond because as a Tibetan you are so reverential that it is not an interview like any other. I personally felt it was really a complicated situation; I could not contradict him so, in a way, the interview was very tense for me, and there were many questions I wanted to ask but in his presence just couldn’t ask. For a Tibetan raised in the Tibetan community, it becomes really totally impossible to interview him in a normal way.

Pema Chhinjor, Tibetan freedom fighter; founding member, Tibetan Youth Congress; former minister of security, Tibetan Government-in-Exile

After I had visited Tibet in 1992, I had a personal audience with His Holiness to report to him on my trip. I felt very emotional in his presence, so much so that I found it difficult to express my views on what I had seen in Tibet. Tears kept rolling down from my eyes. This is natural for every Tibetan because we have so much faith in him. He is always present at the bottom of our hearts.

The more I see him, the more emotional I become. I had an audience with him when he was in Southern California in early 2004. I couldn't say *anything*; I was just weeping and weeping. While there are in the world famous politicians and great religious leaders, there is no one like the Dalai Lama. He never thinks of himself; all of the time he thinks not only of Tibetans but of all sentient beings.

Annie Warner, former coordinator of culture and communications, Office of Tibet, New York City In my experience, I have not seen anyone not have an emotional reaction on meeting him for the first time. People will have a sort of look of bewilderment in their eyes or will break into tears or will tearfully fall into a full prostration. Everyone seems to have a profound reaction at meeting him or being in his presence.

Dr. Piet Hut, astrophysicist; professor of Interdisciplinary Studies, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, New Jersey At the end of the meeting [a scientific dialogue held in Dharamsala in 1997], we were invited by the principal of a school—its students are either orphans or have parents who do not reside in Dharamsala—to visit an exhibition of science projects. Some of the children had made posters, some contraptions. While we, a group of Western scientists, were interesting to the children, they were far more interested in the fact that we had just spent five days with the Dalai Lama. To these children, we didn't come to school with the aura of being scientists, but with the aura of having talked with *the Dalai Lama*. On one poster, a student had drawn a very detailed picture of a rocket and on the rocket were not the words "USA" or "China" or "Russia," but, in Tibetan, the word "Tibet." I found this very touching—there was the hope that Tibet would one day be its own nation and join the major nations launching a rocket.

Adam Engle The first time I ever met him personally was in April 1986, when I had a one-hour audience with him in Dharamsala. The sense of presence, humility, genuineness, friendliness, caring, and compassion was overwhelming. I was quite nervous prior to the appointment; I felt that I was meeting with a great Being. At that point, he was not as well-known as he is now. He had not yet won the Nobel Prize. So it wasn't so much a "fame" thing as just being with a great person.

Orville Schell, dean, School of Journalism, University of California, Berkeley; author, *Virtual Tibet*; expert on U.S.–China relations I first met him about ten years ago [in 1994] at a quasi-public event. My first

impression was that this is a one-of-a-kind human being who instills awe and respect. You don't quite know how to categorize him. Ironically, I think that this is exactly the reaction that he struggles so hard against. He is constantly trying to get people to treat him as an ordinary mortal. They have a need to treat him as something unusually exceptional, so there is this unusual *pas de deux* that goes on when people meet him for the first time. I was painfully aware of that.

Dr. Howard Cutler, M.D., psychiatrist; coauthor, with the Dalai Lama, of the best-selling books *The Art of Happiness: A Handbook for Living* and *The Art of Happiness at Work* In my last year in medical school at the University of Arizona, I received a grant to study Tibetan medicine for a three-month period in Dharamsala. I lived in a government guesthouse where I got to know His Holiness's brother, Lobsang Samten. During my time there, it was suggested that I meet His Holiness. I really had no agenda but I was curious to meet him. I had been to Tibet and I thought he might be interested in the photographs I took there.

As I sat in a waiting room, I began to get nervous; I could feel my heart beating and I was perspiring. I was thinking: this is a world spiritual leader—the political leader of his people—he is *the Dalai Lama*. I didn't know what to expect—I imagined he would be this awe-inspiring, formal type of person. But when I went in to meet him, he came over and shook my hand and was very warm. Within about five minutes, we were sitting down and talking—one human being to another—and I forgot that he was *the Dalai Lama*.

He has a good understanding about people; he can be challenged at times; he can have incredibly complex intellectual discussions. But underneath it you feel: here is a man who means well. And people respond to that. It's not that he's talking to you because of your title or your position or wealth. He has this way of communicating where he is the same with everybody. I have noticed over the years that he treats the waiter in the restaurant with the same respect and friendliness as he might a president or prime minister.

Tenzin Gephel, Tibetan monk, Namgyal Monastery Institute of Buddhist Studies, Ithaca, New York, North American seat of the personal monastery of His Holiness the Dalai Lama His Holiness is always saying he's one of the monks—we have 175 monks and he says he's one of these monks, so we always think that we have a very special connection. Our monks have more opportunity to see him, to hear him, because the

very nature of our monastery is to make preparations for the Dalai Lama's public activities. Every day, four of our monks have to go to the Dalai Lama's palace to make special ritual prayers, in the evening. And when we have ritual ceremonies on a monthly basis, the Dalai Lama will come to participate in the ceremony.

Dr. Ronald B. Sobel I had never met the Dalai Lama before April 30, 1998, although I had been in his presence on two other occasions. The first was about twenty years ago [1984] at the annual convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis [CCAR], the organization that represents Reform liberal rabbis in the United States and Canada. There were five or six hundred rabbis in a large auditorium. I was sitting way in the back. The moment he walked into that space I could sense the humility that absolutely enveloped him and came forth from him. It is so, so rare that you sense a genuine humility and when it is experienced, one is overwhelmed, so although I could barely understand a word he said, I remained overwhelmed. But little did I know that what I experienced in that large room so many years before would be magnified when I met him one-on-one.

Professor Jonathan Mirsky, authority on China; retired East Asian editor, *The Times of London*; author; frequent contributor, the *New York Review of Books* When Tibetans meet important people, they often will give that person a white scarf, and then the more important person gives the less important person back an even better scarf. I had several of these scarves often, at various points. [On one occasion] I brought with me the scarf of the soccer team here that I support, called Tottenham Hotspur, a white scarf that says "Tottenham" on it. I held out this scarf—it was very long, about five feet long—and he said, "Oh, what is that?" and I said, "It's the scarf of the football [soccer] team I support, Your Holiness." Of course he gave me a scarf and then he said, "Oh, can I play for them?" And I said, "Well, you know, Your Holiness, your English is very good but it's not perfect. Did you say 'play' or 'pray'?" And he said, "Well maybe I could *pray* for them." And I said, "They need all the prayers they can get because they're very near the bottom of the league." So he said, "I will pray for them." And that year, suddenly, the team's fortune turned around: they went right up to the top and won the league.

Dr. Thubten Jinpa Langri, Buddhist scholar; English-language interpreter to the Dalai Lama since 1984 I grew up in the exile community in India, so His Holiness has always been a large presence, even when I

didn't see him *physically*—his photos were in the schools, we recited prayers for his long life, and everyone was aware of his presence from a very early age.

T. C. Tethong In India in 1959, we were traveling in a motorcade of five or six cars and when we stopped in a remote village to rest, all the villagers came and flocked around him. In Bombay, he went to a reception at a Buddhist temple in the middle of the day. He went in and prayed for about forty-five minutes and when he came out, the whole courtyard was filled with people. When he went to get into his car, people rushed up to greet him. This happens wherever he goes. He takes it in his stride.

Professor Abelardo Brenes PhD, professor in peace education, University for Peace; professor of psychology and researcher, Institute for Psychological Research, University of Costa Rica In 1987, I obtained the support of the University for Peace, the government of Costa Rica, and President Oscar Arias, personally, to invite His Holiness to come to Costa Rica to share with us the Buddhist approach to peace. It was going to be just a small seminar, but it took on a life of its own and evolved into a very large international conference on the true meaning of peace. It was the first time that the Dalai Lama, as a head of state, was invited by a Latin American government. It was also the first time that an interfaith ceremony was held at the National Basilica. I was tremendously impressed by His Holiness, who sensed a strong bond between Tibet and Costa Rica. Costa Rica was inspirational to him in terms of what he thought Tibet could be someday.

Rinchen Dharlo, director, Office of Tibet and His Holiness the Dalai Lama's representative in Nepal, 1978–1987; representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to the Americas, 1987–1997; president, The Tibet Fund He's aware of how much impact he makes on other people. Yet this doesn't make him proud; he always thinks of himself as a simple Buddhist monk. When he visited Costa Rica there was a huge interfaith service and it was held in a church. He was walking in the center and on his right side he had President Arias and on his left side he had the Archbishop of San Jose. People just reached over from both sides to touch the Dalai Lama because they love him. Costa Rica is a Catholic country and there's no connection between the Dalai Lama and the Christians in Costa Rica and yet—it was spontaneous—people wanted to touch him so much. He had that power. And I've also seen him in Venezuela—he went to give

a talk at the university and after he finished giving the talk, he just walked out and there were students outside and some of them managed to shake hands with him. And those who shook hands with him were sharing it with others. That surprised me. I think it's because of his love and compassion—his unconditional love.

Dr. Tenzin Tethong, nephew of T. C. [Tsewang Choegyal] Tethong; Representative of His Holiness, Office of Tibet in New York, 1973–1986; Special Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Washington, D.C., and head of the International Campaign for Tibet, 1987–1990; member, cabinet of the Tibetan government in exile, Dharamsala, 1990–1995; activist in Tibetan human rights groups, including The Committee of 100 for Tibet and the Dalai Lama Foundation, a foundation for peace and ethics; teacher of courses on Tibet, Stanford University He's quite aware of the positive effect he has on people. But at the same time, he's aware that it doesn't necessarily affect everyone—there's an aspect that, maybe, applies in almost all realms of his activities or his life—it could be a very Tibetan Buddhist kind of characteristic—that he's developed or acquired, that you accept all the realities of what's out there, which means that you do your best on all accounts, and you can be quite sure that the reaction, or the results, should be according to the good effort you put in, but that not necessarily everything will turn out the way you want. There will always be a disappointment or something that didn't work out. He's always conscious of that, so whenever he's dealing with people, he knows that if he says the right thing, does the right thing, it will have a positive result. But he is almost always aware that every now and then, or in many cases, the result won't be as one hoped for.

Tsering Shakya Dalai Lamas are made aware very early that they are different. And once you are brought up in that situation, either of two things happens: you collapse, you break down, you just can't cope with it; or you engage with it and you develop. And Dalai Lamas have been able to do that; they engage and accept this authority and are able to function. Psychologically, I cannot explain why some leaders can function and cope with it and why some cannot.

With this Dalai Lama, it goes back to very early socialization. From the very young age of five, he has been socialized in a totally different situation where he was introduced to grandeur, the charismatic quality of leadership,

that because of the aura surrounding him, you are made to feel special. You have known from a very young age that you are different from everybody else, including your brothers and your sisters. You are that *Presence*. So that naturally emerges out of how you have been raised. However, in trying to socialize like that, trying to be so often with the people—a prince can never be an ordinary person; he knows from the moment he is born that he is different—you exude confidence and charismatic authority.

Dr. Piet Hut If you compare the Dalai Lama and the Pope, the Pope achieves *his* position at a relatively old age, after a lifetime of moving through the ranks in a competitive process. The Pope gets chosen at age sixty or more; the Dalai Lama received tenure at age three. And if you get tenure at that age, you know that you don't have to spend your energy in competing; you are already at the top. This means that you can spend all of your time on fulfilling your responsibilities and trying to make the world a better place without any threat to your position. With all due respect to democracy, if the Dalai Lama had been chosen by election or had come up through the ranks, he would never have had the wall of stability around him that has enabled him to branch out in all directions.

Orville Schell How do you approach him as an ordinary human being? My view may be somewhat idiosyncratic. The problem in interacting with him is that it's never *him*; it's always the other person who is thrown into some state—either very ritualistic or very reverential, somewhat like the “deer in the headlights” syndrome. The irony is that he is so human and unpretentious, but people in his presence, unless they know him, tend to become starstruck, ecclesiastically. It must be very difficult for him because he is struggling with a barrier that is thrown up between him and other people that is hard to transcend, despite his Herculean efforts.

Annette Lantos He is the same now as he was then [in 1987]—full of smiles and good-will and love. He is a very accessible person; he establishes relations with *everybody*. He shakes your hand and bows and when he looks at you, you have the feeling that he can see into the depths of your soul. After you speak to him you have the feeling that you have known him all your life. The sense of love and peace that emanates from him is something that one rarely encounters on this earth.

Given the Fourteenth Dalai Lama's Achievements, Will His Successor Be Able to Have a Positive Impact upon People?

Dr. Howard Cutler A new Dalai Lama would not go through the crucible that so affected His Holiness. People are not going to listen to a young kid the way they listen to *this* Dalai Lama.

Dr. Tenzin Tethong I don't think he's setting up a benchmark to make it difficult for the next Dalai Lama. My sense is I don't think he's thinking that way at all; he is simply doing what he can do under the circumstances he's facing and he's also taking advantage of every occasion to do something good for the Tibetan people, or for the enlightenment of everyone. He's making his own personal contribution to better understanding between people.

His interest is in interreligious dialogue, in trying to have substantial discussion between science and spirituality. Also, in a strange way, he's trying to say that even scientists should not be closed-minded. Usually we take it the other way around—scientists as being inquiring and open-minded and others being less open-minded—but in the present context, he's also challenging scientists who are very rigid in being totally materialist, to say that they should be more open to what the human mind is capable of beyond just the physical aspects of body and mind.

*Did the Dalai Lama Define His Role, or
Did the Institution Define the Man?*

Dr. Alexander Berzin, convert to Buddhism; author; teacher; lecturer; founding member, Translation Bureau of the Library of Tibetan Works His Holiness takes his position very, very seriously, as the one person who all the Tibetans look up to and who really shoulders the responsibility for trying to help the Tibetan situation and the Tibetan people. Now, cause and effect—which one comes first—did he say, “Okay, I'll do it,” or is this something that he felt naturally and then took the role? You can't really say that with His Holiness because he's taken this role since he was four years old. How much he really realized the responsibility that he has certainly came as a young teenager, when he had to deal with the Chinese. So I think it's a more organic, natural thing with His Holiness.

Lama Surya Das He is who he is supposed to be—the multidimensional Buddha of love and compassion in human form. He is definitely a human being, and a Buddhist would never claim he's anything else. We are all equal, but some are more equal than others. He's also extremely well trained; he's been a monk for fifty-five to sixty years. That is an incredible background, the best that the whole country could offer in the country that specialized in this. Also, he's had to step up in many ways. He's been challenged: he's been thrust into world events at such an early age; he's had to bear down with all his capacities and develop all his potential. I think he's the real deal.

Dr. Ronald B. Sobel There are great, great talents in the world who are never fulfilled because the circumstances don't allow for it, or don't encourage it. So it was a happy circumstance that those who were responsible for designating the Fourteenth Dalai Lama chose this little infant. Would it have been different if it had been someone else? I don't know. Would the history of the United States have been different if John Kennedy did not have to go to Texas that November to mend political fences within the Democratic Party of the state of Texas? The *what ifs*. But what can be answered, I think, very definitively, is, given the history of the second half of the twentieth century, it was divinely fortuitous that the Fourteenth Dalai Lama is who he is.

Sir Malcolm Rifkind There are two things. First of all, he became a global figure in the 1950s, and that was the beginning of the world communication revolution. What we have seen in the last fifty years is that people who might otherwise have been hardly known outside their country, or their own people, can through television, through newspapers, through other media, become global icons.

Because the Dalai Lama was chosen as a very, very small child to be the new Dalai Lama, then in a sense he is in the same position as the son of a reigning king or a reigning emperor—in other words, he's been brought up since childhood to positions of authority and leadership. And, therefore, if that happens by good fortune to combine with natural qualities, you get a very powerful consequence. Probably as far back as he can recollect, he knew he had a position of leadership for his people. That puts him in the same position as any king or emperor in the world today, or at any other time. Sometimes people just don't have the personal qualities to use these to their best advantage. But sometimes they do. And when they do, then the results can be quite remarkable.

Patrick French When the Dalai Lama was young, there were a hundred and one different rituals around him, different regulations about how people could behave when they were in his presence—people, for example, weren't allowed to leave the room by turning their back on him, so they'd have to crouch and shuffle in reverse—and the Dalai Lama tried to stop that. But there is something so deeply instilled within Tibetans that they can never fully accept that. So no Tibetan can have an equal relationship with the Dalai Lama. What's interesting is that he tends to be quite different around Tibetans than he is around Westerners, so the laughing, fun Dalai Lama, roaring with laughter with his very distinctive laugh, that's something you don't see very much when he's around Tibetans. It's almost like he knows that he can have a certain effect on Westerners, and so he plays up to that a bit. I think he likes the informality of Westerners; you could ask him direct questions that a Tibetan would never ask and he enjoys that. But it's only one, perhaps relatively superficial, aspect of him. It's hard to know whether it's coming from him or whether it's coming from the people around him.

Harry Wu We have a very old, traditional question: Does the history make the hero or does the hero make the history? My view is both. The historical opportunity is offered to many people. If you don't have the character, you don't have the capacity, sorry, you've missed it. But, the other way, if there's no historical opportunity, even if you have such a huge character, or personality, you cannot do it. In your life, in my life, all the time there are all kinds of opportunities. But you have to make a choice, make a decision: which one is important? His Holiness the Dalai Lama is very special. I sometimes say: "This damn guy is damn wonderful!"

The Dalai Lama's Quickness of Mind

Mickey Lemle When I pitched the idea of making a movie about him, he listened and then said, "Do you think this is a worthwhile undertaking?" I replied, "Your Holiness, if I didn't think so, I wouldn't spend my time doing it." And he said to me, "That's a very American way of looking at it." It wasn't until I had spent years with Tibetan Buddhists that I realized that to them, the most important aspect of any act that you take is: "What is your motivation?" I was with the Dalai Lama once and he remarked, "If you are going to go on a peace march and have anger in your heart, stay home." So what he was really asking me was what my motivation was in wanting to make the movie. I missed it completely.

Richard Gere We very quickly got through the greetings and I offered a *katak*, and quite quickly he started to speak in Tibetan with Ngari Rinpoché. He'd been asking questions about me in Tibetan, then started speaking in English to me, and he said, "I understand from my brother that you are an actor." I said, "Yes, that's true." He thought for a second and said, "Well, would you mind telling me something? When you do this acting and you're laughing or crying, or whatever your emotions may be, is that *real*?" I kind of fell back on an "actorish" response to that and I said, "Well, of course, when they're as real as possible, the performance is more effective." And he said, "So they're *real*." And I said, "Well, I *think* so."

Then he looked me very deeply in the eye and just started laughing hysterically. The simplicity of that encounter has stayed very clearly with me for several reasons. One was his ability to very quickly hit to the core of who I was. He used my profession and the focus of who I was at that time, an actor, to teach a spiritual lesson that was quite subtle, that, in fact, emotions are not real. Even though I was conjuring up emotions, I had a belief in them and, like we do in everyday life, we have a myriad of emotions and we tend to believe they're real and definitive and come from their own side. But, in fact, they're just a magician's trick, just like an actor does in conjuring up an emotion.

He was able, by asking his brother two simple questions about me, to cut to the gist of how he could discuss something with me that was meaningful and *have* it be meaningful. So this encounter, although it appeared quite simple in the way we were conversing with each other, in fact cut to the quick to a very genuine spiritual issue for all of us.

Father Laurence Freeman When he agreed to do the [Good Heart] seminar I was delighted, and then we needed to talk about how he was going to approach it—it was a three-day event at which he was the sole speaker—so I went to see him. I had this idea that rather than him just speaking on his usual themes that we would give him more of a challenge and ask him to comment on the Gospels. He looked a little surprised at that approach; he said, "Well I don't know much about the Gospels; I don't know anything about the Gospels, really." So I said, "Well, I would help you to contextualize them and you would just comment on them as a religious feature." And so he said, "Okay!" That captured his capacity for quickness of mind and his intuition, his very clear mind and his good judgment. It was quite a risky thing to agree to and do. It wasn't impetuous, but it was spontaneous—spontaneity with wisdom, which is a rare gift—and that's a definite part of his character.

Mickey Lemle I was with him some years ago when he received an honorary degree from Columbia University. In his address after the investiture, he said, “I really *like* these honorary degrees because I receive them but didn’t have to work for them.” He never misses a chance for a dharma teaching, so he looked around at this august group of academics and said, “When I come to Western institutions of higher learning, I am concerned because a trained mind without a trained heart is dangerous, and the issue is: where in our educational systems is *compassion* taught?”

Richard Gere We still have a running argument about my photographs. I have a photographic book. The first time he saw my photographs, they were in a museum in Houston. It was my first museum show, and I was quite proud of them. The photographs I like that I’ve taken tend to be a bit expressionistic—they’re not straightforward, in-focus, portrait kinds of shots; they’re a bit soft-focus sometimes and they blur out, they grain up quite a bit—not straightforward photographs in any sense of the word.

His Holiness saw them and politely pulled me to the side—there’s press all around—and he said, “These are very poor quality.” Of course I was terribly shocked by that because I was so proud of them. But, for whatever reason, that wasn’t his idea of a photograph, and for the last fifteen years, his comment about the poor quality of my photographs has come up *continually*. He *never* lets me off the hook.

His Interests

Annie Warner He has a keen interest in the Discovery Channel. At Harvard in 2003 he was asked to name his favorite television show and replied that he liked watching animals in their natural habitats.

Rinchen Dharlo He likes to watch *National Geographic*—the animals, the different species. And he reads magazines about arms and ammunition, different types of planes. When we fly, he immediately knows how many engines the type of plane that he is flying in has; he knows almost all the details, the number of seats and everything. When he was young, he read a lot of magazines on different subjects. And his memory—once he reads, it stays there—he’s like a computer.

I really don't think he's tried to learn computers. He's getting older; his interest in mechanics and engineering was when he was young. Sometimes he tries to do that. I remember in 'eighty-eight he was staying in a hotel and the air conditioner did not work properly. He wanted the room to be cold. I entered and I tried to open the air-conditioning and he said, "Don't do it. If there was something wrong I would have already fixed it; I've already done what you have done. You'd better call the mechanic." If there's a problem, he will try to fix it himself. Ten years ago, he still used to repair watches, clocks. But these days I don't think he does that. And he loves gardening very much. He's very well-rounded.

T. C. Tethong When His Holiness returns to Dharamsala from a trip abroad, the cabinet must receive him. We would go up to his residence before he arrived to await the motorcade. One day, as I waited in the residence, I saw His Holiness's study room and on his desk were some Tibetan books that were open to specific pages. On the side of the desk were some gardening tools, and underneath I saw plant food and fertilizer.

Professor Robert Thurman Some years ago, I was with the Dalai Lama in Costa Rica. We went out to the countryside and he was wearing this kind of goofy, floppy hat and he found a plant that was the same as one he had in Dharamsala. A photo was taken of him holding a leaf of the plant and looking very pleased. He said to me, "Next life I'm going to be a naturalist."

Richard Gere Henry Luce [III] asked him at a lunch that I had put together, "What do you do for *fun*?"—I was kind of shocked that he asked him something like that—and His Holiness said, "Well, you know, I have my garden and birds and my animals" and he left it at that. It was a truthful answer; he likes puttering in his garden and taking care of his birds and the dogs. But I remember once seeing a picture of him in a horse carriage in Lapland, going across the tundra, laughing hysterically. I asked him about it later and he said, "I was having *such fun*!" I had never heard him say that before.

Orville Schell He likes to putter with his clocks. He meditates; he has an inner group of people with whom he can be frank. Yet his life is limited in many ways. He doesn't have a wife and children; he has given that up for something else—something he takes very seriously and has kept true to.

Cutting-Edge Science

Dr. Thubten Jinpa Langri Initially, his interest in science grew out of a natural curiosity and as someone who had access to mechanical objects that had belonged to the Thirteenth Dalai Lama. Also, his educational training was monastic in nature and included a good deal of debate. That is quite conducive to a scientific mode of thinking and analysis. His Holiness's interest took a deeper turn when the tremendous influence of science and technology dawned upon him, particularly the modern world's understanding of the nature of reality. And from his earliest trips to Europe and America, he was able to establish personal friendships with some major figures in the scientific world.

Adam Engle I had heard a rumor in 1983 that he was interested in meeting scientists, and I thought this was an extraordinary rumor. If it was true, I thought I might actually get to meet him. After a year, I made contact with Tenzin Choegyal, his youngest brother, at a teaching mission the Dalai Lama was giving in Los Angeles in the fall of 1984, and through his intervention, I got the authorization to go forward to set up a meeting. When we met, I wanted to see whether he was still interested in meeting with scientists, what his motivation was, and how I could fulfill his wishes and goals.

Professor Paul Davies, professor of natural philosophy, Australian Centre for Astrobiology, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia; author; winner, Templeton Prize, 1995 My first meeting [with the Dalai Lama] was at a conference organized by the company IBM; they ran annual conferences for their executives for a bit of relaxation and refreshment. These were weekend conferences that contained a somewhat eclectic mix of speakers, and they liked to have overarching themes of a challenging nature. On that particular occasion, the theme was "The Nature of Time," and the Dalai Lama and I gave back-to-back lectures: I spoke about "Time in Science" and he spoke about "Time in Eastern Philosophy." This was a rather unusual conjuncture because I spoke in the manner of a science popularizer, using an overhead projector, a lot of humor, and a few equations and diagrams. He spoke in Tibetan, which was, of course, translated, and his delivery was measured and very dignified, so we made a somewhat peculiar couple. At the conclusion of this double address, there was a recess. We went outside and the Dalai Lama took my hand—I remember this very well—and one or two of his devotees

came out, prostrated themselves in front of us, and offered him flowers. This, of course, for a humble scientist was a rather bizarre experience. And then, after a few moments of that, we ended up sitting side by side at a table of the sort that authors sit behind to sign books and we took questions from various members of the audience, and then it was a more conventional arrangement.

It was very courageous of the Dalai Lama to come to a conference of this sort, which is primarily a scientific one, and to basically present his ideas to an audience that probably, although open-minded, would have been fairly hard-headed science-and-technical people from the computing industry.

My impression was that this was a man who was continually doing a balancing act between two somewhat conflicting roles. On the one hand, he is clearly an extremely nice individual who has diverse interests and, you imagine, would like to get closely involved in a number of things. But on the other hand, he represents his country, or what's left of it, or a particular political movement, and so he's always looking over his shoulder to be politically correct. And that's a very uneasy combination of roles to undertake. My impression was also that, in some ways, he rather resembles Prince Charles, who has to do a similar sort of thing. He's got diverse interests and would probably like to spend much more time in a lab or something, talking to scientists, but the dictates of his office mean that he has to balance that against lots of other things.

Adam Engle He has a multifaceted interest in science. On a personal level, he is extremely interested in the workings of the mind and the nature of reality. He has always been interested in gadgets. In a way, he has a scientific mind; he wants to know how things work, so it is theoretical but it is also practical.

He has said that if science has disproved something that is inconsistent with Buddhism, then Buddhism has to change. He is very aware of the fact that in today's world, if Buddhism is taking positions that are unscientific, it loses credibility and relevance. So in his role as a spiritual leader, he is very interested in keeping Buddhism updated according to what science has proven and understands. He is not threatened by science *at all*.

One of his passionate initiatives is in the field of what he calls "secular ethics; ethics for the new millennium." He believes that it is great for people who have some kind of religious training to follow that training, but there are billions of people on the face of the earth who are not interested in standard religions. What can be provided for them, to help them to get

through their lives in a happier, healthier, more peaceful, and successful way? He feels that Buddhism might have developed tools and techniques to help people to improve their lives. What he has done is to challenge science to take these techniques and test them in Western labs, and then, if they are proven to be effective in some significant way, to find ways to teach them in a secular environment, outside of Buddhism.

Dr. Piet Hut To my knowledge, the other participants in the dialogue did not have a background in Tibetan Buddhism. My impression was that they went to Dharamsala with the idea of having an interesting cultural experience. They wanted to share *their* knowledge and were curious about what they would hear from the other side. As the discussions developed, they were quite surprised to find somebody who was so much on an equal level as an intellectual, in the way of debating, arguing, and discussing. They had expected to find somebody who was more focused on cultural and religious issues.

Mickey Lemle His twenty-three-year course of study that eventuated in his receiving the equivalent of a Doctor of Philosophy degree included history, science, language, poetry, and astronomy. He is a great believer in science and is fascinated by it. He understands all of the cutting-edge brain research. I once attended a Mind and Body meeting where a couple of the participants tried to simplify their language, speaking to him as if he were a fifth grader. This was a miscalculation on their part.

Professor Robert Thurman I am bothered that in some documentaries and books the Dalai Lama has been portrayed as a person who is a very cute and quaint figure, a *super saint*. Actually, he is a tremendous intellectual. His dialogues with scientists have been helpful in this respect, although if you study those dialogues, he is listening more to the Westerners than they are to him. It is like they are giving him Physics 101 and psychology lessons and telling him all the neat things they are doing in their labs and he is going: gee, aah.

The scientists assume that they are the great intellectuals but they don't understand what the Tibetan intellect and the ancient Indian philosophical, scientific, and psychological intellect is like. It is my work, and my students' work, to make it clear to people that in the Indo-Tibetan sphere you have twenty Freuds, ten Wittgensteins, and Buddha himself is a kind of mega Plato or Socrates—that you are talking to intellectual

peers here; you are not just talking to some natives who were conquered and, therefore, were inferior. They were conquered because they were superior.

Dr. Jeffrey Hopkins, author; translator and former chief English language interpreter to the Fourteenth Dalai Lama; professor of religious studies, University of Virginia

My impression is that it's something that he went out on, on his own. There's no question about it. I think it comes from a quest for truth and an application of Buddhist doctrines of compassion, and via the truth, his interest in astronomy and his total lack of interest in Tibetan astrology, which is a break with tradition. It was quite a shock to people, but here were these astronomers, telling us things about the universe that were different than what was said in Buddhist texts, and he wanted to pursue what was being said because it was done on the basis of experimental observation. And so his interest in the truth means he doesn't just want to mouth an old tradition, but he also is very wise about not giving up old traditions that have not been shown definitively to be wrong. So I think that in part explains some of his interest in science.

On the other side, he has seen that Tibetan culture, particularly with regard to medicine and deeper states of mind function, has something to offer international science. So his interest then leads to dialogue. Then, in terms of compassion, this has compelled him to notice, to register, to appreciate that other religions and systems speak of many of the same goals that Buddhism does and have very positive results for people who practice them. Thus, he has sought to set aside an overemphasis on differences in philosophies for the sake of recognizing similarities of effect on the personality. And I know that he has worked very hard to work up a message based on Buddhist principles that appeals, as he says, not just to Buddhists or people who believe in religion, but to all people. And if one knows Buddhism, one can see how these principles come from Buddhism but are not tied to it. This has become his message to the world, and the world has responded very, very favorably.

Professor Paul Davies [re the Dalai Lama's interest in astronomy] On the first occasion a lot of my discussion about the nature of time was on the subject of the origin of time, the Big Bang, the theory of relativity. He did, in his address that came after mine, address the issue of the Big Bang cosmology and he gave a way of trying to incorporate that into his existing thinking about the nature of the universe. In Buddhism, traditionally the

universe is cyclic and eternal, and this seems to be decisively opposed to the Judeo-Christian-Islamic traditions of a linear time, with an origin at some particular moment and the universe coming into existence because of a creation event. The scientific worldview, which took that onboard, basically proceeds from that assumption—that time is linear and that the universe evolved in a directional manner.

These two things seem to be in direct conflict with Eastern thought, generally, and Buddhism seems to be the opposite from the monotheistic, Western, and scientific tradition. Therefore, you'd think it would be interesting to probe those differences in a discussion with the Dalai Lama. I felt he was trying to reach a compromise by showing us that maybe Eastern thought could accommodate something like the Big Bang, being as the scientific evidence is so strongly in favor of it. But it was never possible to go beyond his rather superficial remarks on that.

At the end of the day, it's going to be observations that will balance. And so the difficulty for a spiritual leader like the Dalai Lama is that he has to uphold a certain spiritual and philosophical tradition, and he's not really free to just change his mind if the latest evidence shows that he got it wrong the first time around, whereas scientists have to do that. They have to say, "I've considered all the evidence and I favor Theory X." Then along comes a new observation, and he has to say, "Well, I guess X is no longer tenable so I'll throw my weight behind Y." But religious traditions can't do that quite so easily, and that makes the path of science and religion perilous from the religious side; it doesn't affect scientists because they can fiddle around. But some people, like the Pope, have to consider very, very carefully before they decide to take a position on a certain scientific issue in case the wind changes. Then they've got to do a U-turn, and that doesn't look very good for a religious leader.

Does He Consider That He Is Still Learning?

Mickey Lemle After I had spent some time interviewing him for my film, I asked His Holiness, "Who around you can tell you when you've made a mistake?" He replied, "Everybody. I don't like hearing it, but how else am I going to grow?"

Rinchen Dharlo He is a very good student; he is such a great scholar. His name, "Ocean of Wisdom," is so fitting for him. He's sixty-nine years old and has studied for sixty-four years—every day he studied, and he still

studies, and he still receives teachings from different Buddhist traditions. He receives oral transmissions and reads textbooks every day, not only from Buddhist traditions but also learns from other religious traditions. Whenever he meets someone, he tries to learn. I've seen him, like in 'ninety-four, when he spent five days in Gethsemani, Thomas Merton's [1915–1968, American-Christian religious figure and author] monastery in Kentucky, and every day he met priests from that monastery as well as other Christian leaders who were attending the conference. After coming back from that monastery, I saw him speaking to other people, asking them to try to learn from the Christian traditions. He always asks the Tibetan people to learn from Christian traditions like charity and social service, and he admires the Christian ministries and the way Christian brothers and sisters meet. He was so impressed and has already started bringing some changes within the Tibetan monasteries.

Father Laurence Freeman He does have limited knowledge of Christian theology. I think he's picked up a lot; I don't think he has studied it in a coordinated way. He said to me at the end of the seminar that he had learned more about Christianity through that experience than he had since his meeting with Thomas Merton back in the sixties. He had a few very powerful meetings with Merton during Merton's visit, which Merton describes, and that again gave him some new insights. The Christians were struck by his sense of reverence and the depth of his insight into them; the Buddhists, many of them Western Buddhists, were surprised to see that respect, and also to see the depth of meaning in texts that had been very familiar to them, probably in their childhood, that they hadn't explored before.

I think he liked the risk of it too. As we walked out—I was showing him to the stage for the first time—I suddenly realized what a kind of a “knife edge” he was. I think he enjoyed that challenge, the intellectual and the personal. And his curiosity was genuinely aroused about the meanings of questions that came up through the Gospels. He would sometimes turn to me as I was sitting next to him on the stage. In the beginning, the early texts we chose were very obvious: Jesus' teaching on non-violence. As we went further through the seminar, we ended up at the Resurrection, and he had some very insightful things to say about the Resurrection. He said, “This is a unique feature of Christianity”; he recognized that it wasn't rebirth, it wasn't reincarnation. And he said, “Tell me about the Resurrection.” It's a difficult concept for most Christians to express also, so I don't know how much he conceptualized it, but I think his insight is very deep and clear.

And he loves to compare; he seeks out contrasting ideas. There are times when in subsequent occasions I've been in dialogue with him and you feel this sort of common search for truth going on; you're looking at the wisdom contained in two different texts, or two different approaches, such as Resurrection and rebirth. He keeps probing and questioning, and then, when you've reached the limit of that particular foray into the truth, the common ground, he makes a joke, or he laughs—humor then takes you into the next stage of the conversation.

Orville Schell His Holiness is basically a curious and very open man. How he got to be that way is hard to say. Perhaps his experiences with someone like Heinrich Harrer did have a profound effect. But, actually, he had no other place to go. He could either have become an isolated religious recluse, or he could have chosen to confront the world; ever since he was a little boy, he was interested in the world. Then, when he was thrust out into the world, he embraced it. That speaks of some very unusual qualities. The Dalai Lama has truly changed without compromising or betraying his original principles. Yet he has allowed himself to be influenced by the outside world.

Professor Robert Thurman Once Carl Sagan asked him what he would do if an airtight experiment disproved reincarnation. The Dalai Lama thought for a moment and said, "Well, I would cease to believe in it!"

Mickey Lemle I attended a conference in Davos, Switzerland, where a woman asked every speaker, "What do you think is going to happen in the world fifty years from now?" After His Holiness addressed the audience, this lady asked him what *he* thought was going to happen in the world fifty years from now. He was silent for a few moments and then said, "Madame, I don't have any idea. I don't know what kind of tea I will have with my dinner tonight, so how am I supposed to know what is going to happen in the world fifty years from now?" and he just *laughed*. I thought to myself: when was the last time I heard a political or religious leader acknowledge that he didn't know something?