

The role and teachings of the dalai lama philosophy essay



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“ It is up to each of us to make the best use of our time to help create a happier world” 1. The mark of the 21st century embraced upon a civilization corrupted with greed for power. It originated a society that talks, walks, and breathes desire for power, and to achieve this desire it will go to any cost. It does not care how many innocent people die or how many people become homeless, all it cares about is being on top and surviving. Violence is in every corner, in every street, in every block, and pretty much in every country. To live, people are willing to kill their neighbours, more or less their own blood. Violence has engulfed all of what is in existence today. It has become a source of power, a source of desire, mankind’s aspiration. Although, majority of mankind may be corrupted, there still lie those who believe and have faith in amity. A belief that one day this hunger for power will lie behind us and the future will dictate peace and uphold a place of altruism (unselfishness). Amongst these believers of hope is His Holiness, Tenzin Gyatso. Tenzin Gyatso is one who seeks to find peace even in the darkest of days. Tenzin Gyatso is the 14th Dalai Lama and a symbol for future hope for both Buddhism and his nation, Tibet. He is recognized as the reincarnation of Avalokiteshvara, a Buddha who has chosen to be reborn in order to enlighten others. The Dalai Lama embraces a genuine model of life: a model through reason and selflessness and not through force; a model which is neither harmful nor hostile to humanity. The Dalai Lama governs without resorting to any means of punishment: he wields weapons against no one, ruling honourably and serenely with no hatred. The Dalai Lama preaches to cultivate compassion, and metta (kindness) for all beings. An in depth analysis of the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, and his philosophies illustrate the through non violence one can achieve inner peace.

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Tenzin Gyatso, more formally recognized as the Dalai Lama, is the religious Buddhist leader of the country Tibet. He is the 14th manifestation of the Bodhisattva of compassion,

Avalokiteshvara. To Tibetans, this Dalai Lama is known by his title, "Dalai" meaning ocean, and

Klein, Leslie. *Spirituality in a Materialistic World*. AuthorHouse, 2008.

"Lama" meaning Wisdom². To himself, he is Tenzin Gyatso, "a simple Buddhist monk- no more no less"³. His holiness was born on July 6th 1935 in a small village Takster to a peasant farm family of sixteen. Takster is a village in the eastern Tibet province Amdo. At the age of 2, Tenzin Gyatso was identified as the reincarnation of his precursor, the 13th dalai Lama, becoming the 14th in line of the Dalai Lamas. Born as Lhamo Dhondrub, he was renamed "rje btsun 'jam dpal ngag dbang blo bzang ye shes bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho srid gsum dbang bsgyur mtshungs pa med pa'l sde bzang po"⁴. The tulku's (reincarnated lama's) coronation ceremony occurred on February 22, 1940 in Tibet's capital, Lhasa. His education began at the age of six. At the age of 15, on 17 November 1950, he was crowned the title of "Dalai Lama", becoming Tibet's most important spiritual and political leader. At the age of 24, he was evaluated at the monastic universities of Drepung, Sera and Ganden. In Monlam Festival Prayer, Tenzin Gyatso took his final assessment at Jokhang where he was examined on the 3 subjects: logic, Middle Path, and the canon of monastic discipline. At the age of 25 he finished the Geshe Lharampa Degree, the Doctorate of Buddhist Philosophy. In 1989, the Dalai Lama received the Noble peace prize².

To understand Dalai Lama's preaching of non violence, first one must comprehend non- violence. Non-violence is one of the highest virtues that should be accepted by everyone, no matter if they plead to Buddhism or not. Non-violence means to refrain from vicious actions. One should not kill another living being. One should not hurt another living being. One should not pain another living being. One should not ahimsa (harm) another being. This is non-violence.

According to the Dalai Lama, violence is not the key, it is not the answer to anything.

2 Mullin, Glenn H., and Valerie M. Shepherd. *The Fourteen Dalai Lamas: a Sacred Legacy of Reincarnation*. Santa Fe,

NM: Clear Light, 2001

3 Mehrotra, Rajiv. *In My Own Words: an Introduction to My Teachings and Philosophy*. Carlsbad, CA: Hay House,

2008.

4 Mehrotra, Rajiv. *Understanding the Dalai Lama*. Carlsbad, CA: Hay House, 2008.

" We have two options. First, nonviolence. Second, violence- that's suicide. We have to live with the Chinese side by side. It is very essential to carry this movement of nonviolence, so that later, we can live happily. If we adopt violence on the Chinese, then Tibetans will also suffer. Some positive

outcome- quite a few Chinese became sympathetic of Tibetan people. They came to me & expressed themselves. Nonviolence is the best method” 5.

Violence cannot be overcome by more violence. By responding to violence, the result will be catastrophic. On the contrary, by avoiding violence one can only hope to diminish other's violence. A great example of this is the homeland of the Dalai Lama, Tibet. In 1950, the genocide of Tibet began with the Chinese army of the People's Republic. In 1951, the Chinese government tried to take rule over Tibet from the Dalai Lama through the seventeen-point agreement. In 1959, there was an uprising against the Chinese military; when that failed the Dalai Lama was forced to flee to India. In 1959, his Holiness resided in Dharamsala, North India where he established a government-in-exile². The Chinese captured and imprisoned naive citizens and protestors, devastating the Tibetan culture. The Dalai Lama did not retaliate to foul words, he did not speak ill of the Chinese. Instead of fighting back, the Dalai Lama preaches that one should meditate and reflect on what they might have done on their previous life that they are being tormented now. He helps people understand that if one responds by causing suffering amongst another, they are not contributing to a unity in their internal world nor to the external world. The lives they live are meaningless if it does not contribute to anything. By causing suffering they cause themselves more suffering, for in their next birth they will be reborn into a worse life. The life one lives is based on the karma, action, of one in the previous life. Thus, rather than devoting oneself to harm the Dalai Lama preaches Tibetans to abstain from armed struggle and accumulate good karma to achieve inner peace. If everyone adopts and learns the morals of inner peace, no longer will there

be people in this world who will cause ahimsa. No longer will there be violence.

As a well-known spiritual leader and political ruler, the Dalai Lama's first and foremost

5 McLennan, Scotty. "The Heart of Nonviolence: A Conversation with the Dalai Lama." WisdomPortal. com. Web. 1 Aug. 2010. .

obligation is to protect his people and nation. The Dalai Lama has never ceased his people from using violence just because of Buddhist morals, but because, "nonviolence is for us the only way.

Quite patently, in our case violence would be tantamount to suicide" 6. Some might think that by not fighting he brings upon torture to his people, but the initial purpose behind the Dalai Lama is to help his people to learn and to develop. By not fighting back he tries to show people that good does not come through war and bloodshed, by refusing to fight in the long run we secure a better future. Right now we must suffer, but the seeds to our suffering will grow a clean planet. The Dalai Lama is an idol to humanity, an advocator of non-violence. Those who do afflict harm, the enemies, are just a test of time. With time and patience, as one accumulates good karma, the birth of amity will take place, and violence will vanquish. "The enemy teaches you inner strength. Your mind by nature is very soft, but when you have troubles, your mind gets strong" 7. Enemies are the test of time, for when one is surrounded by enemies one has to make important judgements. These judgements define the inner self. If one is able to refrain from violence and overcome satanic thoughts and stay on the right path, one can achieve <https://assignbuster.com/the-role-and-teachings-of-the-dalai-lama-philosophy-essay/>

inner peace. Thus, through the process of non violence one achieves inner peace. When one is at inner peace with themselves in times of battle they make correct decisions and refuse to fight, ultimately causing outer peace.

The Dalai Lama's believes nonviolence is connected with the free understanding of individuals. The free understanding of individuals is ultimately a path leading to mental amity. Thus, non violence originates inner peace. His Holiness, the 14th Dalai Lama, believes to embark inner peace one must develop metta, (love, kindness and compassion)⁷. When we are non-violent and refuse to fight we attain metta in our hearts. When there is violence there is anger, hatred,

⁶ Bstan-'dzin-rgya-mtsho, and Sì ħ aì,, ntideva. A Flash of Lightning in the Dark of Night: a Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life. Boston: Shambhala, 1994.

⁷ Piburn, Sidney. The Dalai Lama, a Policy of Kindness: an Anthology of Writings by and about the Dalai Lama. Ithaca, N. Y., USA: Snow Lion Publications, 1990.

and attachment, but when there is no violence one is calm, and serene. With the origins of violence comes desire and greed, eventually leading to mental unrest. When we are kind and compassionate to others it makes others feel loved, and it helps us develop inner happiness. In one of his interviews, the Dalai Lama states:

“ If you give way to anger, hatred, you get lost. No sensible human being wants to loose himself or herself. Hope and determination will bring upon a

brighter future... So in order to develop human determination you need hope. And to develop hope you need compassion, love. Love and compassion are the basis of hope and determination” 8.

If one gives into anger and hatred they give in to inner strife. If one refuses to fury and forbids him or herself from fighting they develop love and compassion to bring upon a better future. One must first develop compassion and love towards others, and then will they receive love and compassion back. One must realize that nothing good comes without suffering. Rather than making others suffer, rather than raising weapons, one should be hopeful and determined. Good karma leads to a good life. When one develops compassion and love one achieves inner peace.

Without inner peace we remain longing for desire. The Dalai Lama believes that if everyone achieves calmness, compassion, and love for others eventually one day there would not be a single person left that will cause brutality upon another. When everyone has achieved this state of happiness no longer will there be armed conflict, poverty, destruction, and prejudice.

The Dalai Lama is a role model of non-violence, and believes inner peace can only be achieved through non violence. The Chinese have put Dalai Lama and his people through a lot of agony, yet he still prays for their wellness. He believes that rather than drawing upon weapons, if he holds back he will attain peace with the Chinese. That one day they will see that violence only leads to deaths; through non-violence they can reach a compromise.

Tibetans refuse to fight, they decided to listen to his Holiness, and abstain

from harming (ahimsa) another being. Through non-violence and compassion inner happiness and peace will develop, and likewise, through

8 Bstan-É¼dzin-rgya-mtsho, and Sì ĩ à,, ntideva. For the Benefit of All Beings: a Commentary on The Way of the Bodhisattva. Boston: Shambhala, 2009

inner peace outer peace will develop. Without inner peace one will always remain worried, disturbed or unhappy. The Dalai Lamas preaching's about non-violence and metta to achieve inner peace is Tibetans hope and determination for the resolution of the Chinese Genocide. In his Dentsik Monlam prayer the Dalai Lama articulates: " the violent oppressors are also worthy of compassion/ Crazed by demonic emotions, they do vicious deeds/ that bring total defeat to themselves as well as to others" 9. This prayer was written by the Dalai Lama when he was extremely ill and all around him was bloodshed caused by the Chinese Military. The Dalai Lama wanted his people to realize that liberation can only be achieved non-violently via altruism (unselfishness) and metta (kindness). Altruism and metta can only be achieved via non-violently. Thus through the non violent approach one achieves peace of mind. The Chinese Military will stop if the Tibetans do not respond. Violence can only grow when you nurture to it, by not giving it violence you forbid it from growing.

According to his Holiness, the spirit of non-violence is the basis for achieving inner peace. But why should one achieve inner peace? To achieve inner peace is a step to achieving liberation. The first of the 5 Buddhist precepts is the vow to refrain from killing. That one should neither hurt nor harm

(ahimsa) another being, but rather practise compassion and kindness (metta) towards them. To reach the ultimate goal of Buddhist path, Nirvana, and break through samsara, the cycle of life, one must be peaceful. To achieve enlightenment and to see things for what they really are, panna, one must reach tranquility of the mind. This calmness of the mind can only be achieved through meditation, and inner peace, not violence. The actions we take affect everyone around us, not just us, so how can you believe to be liberated when you bring harm upon others. Thus, in order to achieve inner peace and deliberate ourselves from suffering, we need to focus on others, and refrain from violent actions.

9 Bstan-É½dzin-rgya-mtsho, Dupchok Gyaltsen. Rabjampa, and Peter Gold. Words of Truth: a Prayer. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1993.

“ We can never obtain peace in the world if we neglect the inner world and don't peace with ourselves. World peace must develop out of inner act... As long as the weapons are left alone in storage they cannot do any harm. A human being must use them.” 7.

Resolution through conflict does not guarantee a solution every time. “ Outer disarmament comes from inner disarmament. The only true guarantee of peace lies within ourselves” 6. In a time of conflict, we become attached to our views and forget that everything is impermanent. Our thoughts become too clouded, and we become too ignorant. When one is no longer ignorant one achieves bodhi, total awakening.

Any being who understands inner peace, and subsides in a non violent

conduct is evidentially contributing to the universal peace of all beings and <https://assignbuster.com/the-role-and-teachings-of-the-dalai-lama-philosophy-essay/>

the exile of violence. “ 2. com/title/Non-violence” Non-violence means 2. com/title/co-operation” co-operation where it is possible, and 2. com/title/resistance” resistance where it is not” 10. Through Non violence one is able to control their emotions and stay happy. Through non-violence one is able to love, be compassionate and be metta towards others, as well as live in unity with humanity. Ultimately altruism, self consciousness, and amity through equal justice and fair-play lead to non-violence. Non-violence helps one acknowledge their internal awareness pertaining to greed, desire and hatred, and their outer awareness pertaining to how their internal awareness will affect the world. This awareness is ones inner peace. His Holiness, Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama has become a worldwide symbol for peace, a teacher of non violence, an inspiration for billions. According to the Dalai Lama the first inner awareness is that suffering exists and the way to liberate from it is through hope and compassion, not violence. Through non violence we attain inner peace, through violence we attain inner discord. Hence, the 14th Dalai Lama raises no weapons, faces no wars, and preaches for non violence to achieve inner peace, for “ hatred never ceases through hatred in this world; through non violence it comes to an end” 10.

10 Sulak, Sivaraksa. Seeds of Peace: a Buddhist Vision for Renewing Society. Berkeley, CA: Parallax, 1992.