



Photo: Nancy Jo Johnson

ĐỨC ĐẠT LAI LẠT MA: VẤN ĐÁP VỚI OPRAH

Tuệ Uyển chuyển ngữ

http://www.thuvienhoasen.org/D_1-2_2-64_4-12346_15-2/

OPRAH: Có phải Đạo Phật là con đường đi đến hạnh phúc?

ĐỨC ĐẠT LAI LẠT MA: Mặc dù thế một số người nào đây lại có ấn tượng rằng Đạo Phật nói quá nhiều về khổ đau. Nhằm để trở nên giàu có, người ta phải làm việc thật cần mẫn trước tiên, do vậy người ấy phải hy sinh rất nhiều thời gian nhàn rỗi. Tương tự thế, người Phật tử đang tự nguyện hy sinh những thú thái tức thời vì thế họ có thể đạt đến niềm hạnh phúc miên viễn. Và nhằm để phát triển năng lực ý chí thì phải hy sinh, chúng ta trước nhất phải nhận thấy rằng dành tất cả thời gian và năng lượng của chúng ta để theo đuổi những thoả mái vật vất có nghĩa là cuối cùng chúng ta sẽ khổ đau. Đây chỉ là tất cả những hệ quả tích cực và tiêu cực. Điều rất quan trọng là tỉnh thức rằng có những hệ lụy lâu dài cho mỗi hành vi.

OPRAH: Mặc dù ngài tin tưởng rằng Đạo Phật là con đường đưa đến hạnh phúc, nhưng ngài khuyến khích những người khác duy trì tín ngưỡng của chính họ. Đúng thế chứ?

ĐỨC ĐẠT LAI LẠT MA: Đúng như thế. Tôi luôn luôn nhấn mạnh rằng thật an toàn hơn và tốt đẹp hơn để tiếp tục theo đuổi tín ngưỡng riêng của mỗi người. Những tôn giáo quan trọng khác đã hàng nghìn năm tuổi và có truyền thống lâu dài.

OPRAH: Ngài có tin rằng người ta có thể là một Ki Tô hữu nhưng vẫn có thể thực hành Phật Pháp chứ?

ĐỨC ĐẠT LAI LẠT MA: Vâng, tôi nghĩ như thế. Có những kỹ năng của Đạo Phật, chẳng hạn như thiền quán, mà bất cứ người nào cũng có thể tiếp nhận. Và, dĩ nhiên, có những giáo sĩ và nữ tu Ki Tô đã sử dụng những phương pháp của Phật Giáo nhằm để phát triển sự hy hiến, từ bi, bác ái, và khả năng để tha thứ của họ.

OPRAH: Bây giờ ngài có thể nói về những gì về ngài không? Lần đầu tiên khi ngài được khám phá ra như một Đạt Lai Lạt Ma, ngài có cảm thấy điều gì ấy đặc biệt về ngài không?

ĐỨC ĐẠT LAI LẠT MA: Không.

OPRAH: *Không có một bộ phận nào của ngài mà luôn luôn biết ngài là khác biệt không?*

ĐỨC ĐẠT LAI LẠT MA: Đôi khi, tôi thật cảm thấy như thế, vâng, tôi có thể cảm thấy một ảnh hưởng nào đấy từ những đời sống tiền kiếp. Vào những buổi sáng sớm, khi tôi vẫn còn đang mơ ngủ chập chờn, tâm thức tôi rất trong sáng. Và khi tôi ở trong trạng thái huyền ảo ấy, tôi có những thoáng hiện của ký ức từ những kiếp sống trước mà trong ấy tôi xác định với những thứ, trong vài trường hợp, từ một đến hai thế kỷ trước. Một lần tôi có cảm giác rằng tôi có thể đã ở Ai Cập khoảng sáu trăm năm trước.

OPRAH: Ngài có cảm thấy rằng ngài khác biệt với hầu hết những con người khác không?

ĐỨC ĐẠT LAI LẠT MA: Không, không, không.

OPRAH: Vậy thì giống như mọi con người khác, ngài là thầy của chính ngài có phải không?

ĐỨC ĐẠT LAI LẠT MA: Vâng.

OPRAH: Nhưng ngài không là thầy của ai khác.

ĐỨC ĐẠT LAI LẠT MA: Điều ấy cũng đúng.

OPRAH: Lớn lên, ngài có thấy thiếu vắng thời thơ ấu như những đứa trẻ bình thường không?

ĐỨC ĐẠT LAI LẠT MA: May mắn thay, tôi có những bạn chơi đùa, mặc dù họ hầu hết đã trưởng thành.

OPRAH: Ngài có bao giờ muốn có một gia đình hay con cái không?

ĐỨC ĐẠT LAI LẠT MA: Không. À, khi vào khoảng 15 hay 16 tuổi, tôi có một sự quan tâm nào đấy. Điều ấy là tự nhiên. Nhưng rồi thì một số người bạn nô đùa của tôi là tu sĩ rồi sau này trở thành cư sĩ, và họ đã nói với tôi về những phức tạp của việc gánh vác một đời sống gia đình. Dĩ nhiên, có thể có những niềm vui lớn lao trong việc có một gia đình, nhưng cũng có nhiều rắc rối.

OPRAH: Tôi vừa đọc thấy rằng ngài đã dành nhiều giờ trong một ngày cho thiền quán. Những lợi ích nào của thiền quán cho những người thậm chí không phải là Phật tử?

ĐỨC ĐẠT LAI LẠT MA: Thiền quán lợi ích cho tất cả mọi con người bởi vì nó liên hệ trong cái nhìn nội quán. Người ta không cần phải là tín hữu để nhìn vào bên trong chính mình một cách cẩn trọng hơn. Thật xây dựng và lợi lạc để phân tích cảm xúc của chúng ta, kể cả từ bi và cảm nhận ân cần của chúng ta, vì thế chúng ta có thể trở nên trầm tĩnh hơn và hạnh phúc hơn. Thù oán, ganh tỵ, và sợ hãi che dấu và làm chướng ngại niềm an lạc của tâm thức. Khi chúng ta sân hận hay không tha thứ, thí dụ thế, nổi khỏ tinh thần là tức thời. Điều tốt hơn là tha thứ thay vì đầu độc niềm an lạc của tâm hồn với cảm giác bệnh hoạn.

OPRAH: Trông ngài vô cùng an lạc và vui tươi. Điều gì làm cho ngài có niềm hạnh phúc như thế?

ĐỨC ĐẠT LAI LẠT MA: Tôi không tự đặt mình quá nghiêm trọng! Điều ấy làm cho tôi an lạc.

OPRAH: Đối với ngài, ngày toàn hảo là gì?

ĐỨC ĐẠT LAI LẠT MA: Không bao giờ có một ngày toàn hảo. Không có sự toàn hảo trên thế giới.

OPRAH: Vậy thì điều gì làm nên một ngày tốt đẹp - một ngày khi mà ngài thật sự cảm thấy vui tươi và cười thật nhiều?

ĐỨC ĐẠT LAI LẠT MA: Tôi thật sự thích làm vườn và đùa nghịch với máy móc. Và khi tôi có thời gian rỗi rảnh, tôi dành một ít để đọc và học hỏi - chính yếu từ những kinh luận Tây Tạng, cũng như

đọc một số đề tài mà tôi thích như từ bi và vị tha. Trong những ngày ấy, khi tôi có thể dành một ít giờ để đạt được một sự thông hiểu nào đấy, tôi cảm thấy toại nguyện. Tôi cảm thấy giống như tôi có thể hiện thực việc sử dụng lợi lạc đời sống của tôi.

OPRAH: Có phải ngài làm việc thật cần mẫn và du hành thật nhiều bởi vì ngài muốn mang sự chú ý đến những gì đang xảy ra cho những người Tây Tạng không?

ĐỨC ĐẠT LAI LẠT MA: Không nhất thiết như thế. Mới sáng này, tôi đã đọc một tờ báo nói những thứ như " Đạt Lai Lạt Ma đã thăm sáu thành phố nhằm để giải thích sự đàn áp của Trung Cộng ở Tây Tạng." Điều đó sai. Tôi không bao giờ đến bất cứ nơi nào mà tôi không được mời trước. Và theo thiệp mời, nếu tôi cảm thấy rằng có khả năng để thực hiện một sự cống hiến nào đấy cho nhân loại, tôi sẽ đồng ý làm theo thay vì mệt mỏi.

OPRAH: Ngài sẽ buồn khổ nếu Tây Tạng không được độc lập trước khi ngài qua đời chứ?

ĐỨC ĐẠT LAI LẠT MA: Nếu tôi chết ngày hôm nay, tôi sẽ có một số quan tâm nào đấy cho Tây Tạng. Nhưng tôi biết rằng cá nhân tôi đã làm tối đa những gì mà tôi có thể sử dụng sự hiện hữu của tôi cho người khác. Thế nên tôi không có gì phải hối tiếc.

OPRAH: Không?

ĐỨC ĐẠT LAI LẠT MA: Đúng thế.

OPRAH: Ngài có bao giờ phải tha thứ cho chính mình về bất cứ điều gì không?

ĐỨC ĐẠT LAI LẠT MA: Tôi đã từng tự tha thứ cho mình vì những việc bất ngờ xảy đến, như vô tình giết chết một con côn trùng. Thái độ của tôi đối với những con muỗi và rệp giường không thích thú hay hòa bình cho lắm!

OPRAH: Ngài có bao giờ phải tha thứ cho chính ngài vì bất cứ một lỗi lầm to tát nào không?

ĐỨC ĐẠT LAI LẠT MA: Tôi đã làm nên những sai sót nhỏ mỗi ngày. Nhưng các lỗi lầm lớn? Dường như không có. Tôi đã từng

thăm tra việc phụng sự của tôi đến người Tây Tạng và nhân loại, và tôi đã thực hiện tối đa mà tôi có thể làm trong đời sống của tôi.

OPRAH: Câu hỏi cuối cùng: Mỗi tháng tôi có thực hiện một đề tài trên tạp chí gọi là "Những gì tôi biết chắc." Những gì ngài biết chắc?

ĐỨC ĐẠT LAI LẠT MA: Vị tha là cội nguồn hạnh phúc nhất. Không có nghi ngờ gì về điều này.

Ân Tâm Lộ ngày 19/06/2011

<http://ecards.showticks.com/dalailama/DAL866/index.html>



Oprah Talks to The Dalai Lama

The renowned spiritual leader tells why material things can't satisfy the soul, why compassion can, and the startlingly simple secret to having no regrets.

He calls himself "a simple Buddhist monk"—a man who rises at 4 A.M. and spends hours each day in prayer and meditation. Yet his nonviolent efforts to free his country, Tibet, have made His Holiness the Dalai Lama an international symbol of peace during the past four decades. In the 46 countries the Dalai Lama has been invited to visit, thousands of people have flocked to hear him speak on what he believes is his most meaningful message—that compassion toward

others is the surest path to happiness.

Born Lhamo Thondup in 1935 in the Tibetan village of Taktser, he was first recognized as the 14th Dalai Lama—the reincarnation of the 13th Dalai Lama—at the age of 2. (Several signs led a group of monks, who had been on a two-year search for their next leader, to the toddler.) The boy was taken to a nearby monastery for a year and a half and then moved to Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, with his family when he was 4. There, tutors prepared him to one day assume spiritual and political guidance of his country.

In 1950 the Dalai Lama was forced to take on that role at the age of 15, two years ahead of schedule. In an act of unprovoked aggression, China invaded and overtook Tibet. The Dalai Lama's peaceful attempts to regain his country's autonomy were to no avail. In 1959 tension between the Tibetans and the Chinese became so intense that, on the heels of violent outbreaks he had tried to prevent, the Dalai Lama fled for asylum in nearby India. More than 120,000 Tibetans have since followed. It is there, from the city of Dharamsala, that His Holiness has led the Tibetan people for 42 years.

It has not been a silent exile. During his early years in India, the Dalai Lama put forth a democratic constitution for a future free Tibet, based on Buddhist principles and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations. In Washington, D.C., at the 1987 Congressional Human Rights Caucus, he proposed a plan calling for the designation of Tibet as a zone of peace and for an end to the massive transfer of ethnic Chinese into his country. In 1989 he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. He has written more than 35 books, including *The Art of Happiness* (Riverhead Books), which has been a best-seller in the United States since 1998.

I met with His Holiness during one of his many trips to Washington,

D.C., a trip that also included his visit with President Bush at the White House. About a dozen Buddhists in colorful Tibetan attire waited in the hallways of the hotel where the Dalai Lama stayed, hoping for a chance to hear him speak. In our time together, we talked about everything from whether he harbors any regrets to what he considers a good day—and how every person can find the secret to a joyful life.

Oprah: Though many Americans have read your book about happiness, some still don't understand how to achieve it. How can someone attain true happiness in a culture that emphasizes materialism?

Dalai Lama: Even when a person has all of life's comforts—good food, good shelter, a companion—he or she can still become unhappy when encountering a tragic situation. Physical comforts cannot subdue mental suffering, and if we look closely we can see that those who have many possessions are not necessarily happy. In fact, being wealthy often brings even more anxiety. On the other hand, those who don't have a life filled with luxury may have a home filled with compassion, based on their choice to be content and to practice self-discipline. Even when we have physical hardships, we can be very happy.

Oprah: So happiness begins in our minds?

Dalai Lama: Yes. That's why mental happiness is more important than physical comfort. Physical comfort comes from the material. But material facilities cannot provide you with peace of mind.

Oprah: That's right.

Dalai Lama: When you are discontent, you always want more, more,

more. Your desire can never be satisfied. But when you practice contentment, you can say to yourself, "Oh yes—I already have everything that I really need."

Oprah: What I took away from *The Art of Happiness* is that compassion is the key to tranquility and peace of mind. But how can you be compassionate toward others when you yourself are suffering?

Dalai Lama: When a person is in a miserable situation, then, yes, it *is* difficult to develop genuine compassion toward others. That's why I find it difficult to say to poor people, "Please have compassion toward millionaires." That's not easy. And yet even the rich have their own kind of suffering, anxiety, doubt, and fear. So in many cases, wealthy people aren't happy! And once those with material wealth encounter small difficulties, their amount of mental suffering is sometimes bigger than it is for those who have faced such difficulties every day.

Oprah: Is Buddhism a path to happiness?

Dalai Lama: Certainly—though some people get the impression that Buddhism talks too much about suffering. In order to become prosperous, a person must initially work very hard, so he or she has to sacrifice a lot of leisure time. Similarly, the Buddhist is willing to sacrifice immediate comfort so that he or she can achieve lasting happiness. And in order to develop the willpower it takes to sacrifice, you must first realize that spending all your time and energy pursuing material comforts means you will eventually suffer. It's all about positive and negative consequences. It's very important to be aware that there are long-term consequences [for every action].

Oprah: Though you believe that Buddhism is a path to happiness,

you've encouraged others to remain in their own faiths. True?

Dalai Lama: That's right. I always emphasize that it is much safer and better to keep one's own religious faith. The other major religions are thousands of years old and have long traditions.

Oprah: Do you believe that someone can be a Christian and still practice Buddhism?

Dalai Lama: Yes, I think so. There are techniques of Buddhism, such as meditation, that anyone can adopt. And, of course, there are Christian monks and nuns who already use Buddhist methods in order to develop their devotion, compassion, and ability to forgive.

Oprah: What function does religion serve in our lives?

Dalai Lama: It helps us to develop compassion, caring, and, I think, a sense of purpose.

Oprah: And what is our purpose here on earth?

Dalai Lama: To help one another.

Oprah: So the whole reason we are on this planet is to serve each other?

Dalai Lama: That's right.

Oprah: Can a person be good without practicing religion?

Dalai Lama: Yes. And he or she can also be happy.

Oprah: Is it possible for everyone to be happy?

Dalai Lama: It is possible—absolutely. And it is worthwhile for one to make an effort to achieve happiness. Just as the purpose of a plant is to grow, so it is that the main purpose of every human being is to survive and to grow until death. As far as mental development is concerned, we should *never* be complacent. We can develop our minds infinitely—there is no limitation. Many of us are discontent with how many possessions we have, but we're content when it comes to our spiritual development. That is the mistake we make.

Oprah: That's big! If we all understood that our sole purpose is to help others, wouldn't that change humanity?

Dalai Lama: Yes, and understanding that begins with changing our attitude. We must realize that it is best to focus on our oneness, to reemphasize what is the same about each of us rather than dwell on what is different. Yes, there are differences between us. But it doesn't make sense to emphasize that, because my future and yours is connected with everyone else's. So we have to take seriously our concern for all of humanity. When we focus on our individuality, humanity inevitably suffers. And once humanity suffers, each one of us will also suffer.

For example, a few minutes ago there was a fire alarm in this building. I responded immediately—not because this building is part of my body but because I am here, in it. That's why I have to take care of it. Similarly, whether we love humanity or not, we must realize that we are part of it. My future depends entirely on the future of humanity, and so I am compelled to take care of humanity. That is why being compassionate is actually in my own best interest. And a symptom of my own peace of mind is that I can share comfort with others around me.

Oprah: Doesn't practicing gratitude also affect our lives in the same way that compassion does?

Dalai Lama: That's very true. When you practice gratefulness, there is a sense of respect toward others.

Oprah: True. Can we talk now about what it's like to be you? When you were first discovered as the Dalai Lama, did you feel that there was something special about you?

Dalai Lama: No.

Oprah: There wasn't a part of you that had always known you were different?

Dalai Lama: Sometimes, I do feel that, yes, I may feel some effect from previous lives. In the early mornings, when I am still half asleep and half awake, my mind is very clear. And when I am in this special twilight state, I have had glimpses of memory from past lives in which I identify with those from, in some cases, one or two centuries ago. I once had a feeling that I might have been in Egypt 600 years ago.

Oprah: Do you feel you're different from most humans?

Dalai Lama: No, no, no.

Oprah: So like every other human, are you your own master?

Dalai Lama: Yes.

Oprah: But you are the master of no one else.

Dalai Lama: That's true, too.

Oprah: Growing up, did you miss having a regular childhood?

Dalai Lama: Fortunately, I had playmates, though most of them were grown-ups.

Oprah: Have you ever wanted a family or children?

Dalai Lama: No. Well, when I was around 15 or 16, I had some interest. That was biological. But then some of my older playmates who were monks later became laypeople, and they told me about some of the complications of leading a family life. Of course, there can be great pleasure in having a family, but there are a lot of problems, too.

Oprah: I've read that you spend many hours a day in meditation. What value does meditation have for even non-Buddhists?

Dalai Lama: Meditation is valuable for all of humanity because it involves looking inward. People don't have to be religious to look inside themselves more carefully. It is constructive and worthwhile to analyze our emotions, including compassion and our sense of caring, so that we can become more calm and happy. Hatred, jealousy, and fear hinder peace of mind. When you're angry or unforgiving, for example, your mental suffering is constant. It is better to forgive than to spoil your peace of mind with ill feelings.

Oprah: You seem to have a lot of joy. What makes you happy?

Dalai Lama: I don't take myself too seriously! That makes me happy.

Oprah: What is a perfect day for you?

Dalai Lama: There's never a perfect day. There is no perfection in the world.

Oprah: So what would make a *good* day— a day when you really have fun and laugh a lot?

Dalai Lama: I really like gardening and playing with mechanical things. And when I have leisure time, I spend some of it reading and studying—mainly Tibetan Buddhist texts, as well as readings on my favorite subjects like compassion and altruism. On those days when I can spend a few hours getting some understanding, I feel fulfilled. I feel as if I have made good use of my time.

Oprah: Do you work so hard and travel so much because you want to bring attention to what is happening to the Tibetan people?

Dalai Lama: Not necessarily. Just this morning I read a newspaper that said something like "The Dalai Lama visited six cities in order to explain the Chinese oppression of Tibet." That's wrong. I have never been anyplace where I was not first invited. And upon invitation, if I feel that there is potential for making some contribution to humanity, I will comply in spite of being tired.

Oprah: Will you be unhappy if Tibet has not gained its independence before your death?

Dalai Lama: If I were to die today, I would have some concern for Tibet. But I know that I have personally done as much as I can to use my existence for others. So I have no regret.

Oprah: None?

Dalai Lama: That's right.

Oprah: Have you ever had to forgive yourself for anything?

Dalai Lama: I've had to forgive myself for small incidents, like accidentally killing an insect. My attitude toward mosquitoes and bedbugs is not very favorable or peaceful!

Oprah: Have you ever had to forgive yourself for any big mistakes?

Dalai Lama: I make small mistakes every day. But major mistakes? It doesn't seem so. I've examined my service to the Tibetan people and to humanity, and I've done as much as I can in my life.

Oprah: One last question: Every month I do a column in the magazine called "What I Know for Sure." What do you know for sure?

Dalai Lama: Altruism is the best source of happiness. There is no doubt about that.

Read more: <http://www.oprah.com/omagazine/Oprah-Interviews-The-Dalai-Lama/7#ixzz1Zzfv4dQu>

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A Conversation with His Holiness

As I am sure you are all aware, Oprah Winfrey has recently been in Australia and recorded shows for the farewell season of her long running and extremely successful talk show, The Oprah Winfrey Show.

Oprah interviewed His Holiness in 2001 for her magazine O and this month we would like to share some of this intimate interview with you as part of our ongoing series, A Conversation with His Holiness.

Oprah: Is Buddhism a path to happiness?

Dalai Lama: Certainly-though some people get the impression that Buddhism talks too much about suffering. In order to become prosperous, a person must initially work very hard, so he or she has to sacrifice a lot of leisure time. Similarly, the Buddhist is willing to sacrifice immediate comfort so that he or she can achieve lasting happiness. And in order to develop the willpower it takes to sacrifice,



you must first realize that spending all your time and energy pursuing material comforts means you will eventually suffer. It's all about positive and negative consequences. It's very important to be aware that there are long-term consequences for every action.

Oprah: Though you believe that Buddhism is a path to happiness, you've encouraged others to remain in their own faiths. True?

Dalai Lama: That's right. I always emphasize that it is much safer and better to keep one's own religious faith. The other major religions are thousands of years old and have long traditions.

Oprah: Do you believe that someone can be a Christian and still practice Buddhism?

Dalai Lama: Yes, I think so. There are techniques of Buddhism, such as meditation, that anyone can adopt. And, of course, there are Christian monks and nuns who already use Buddhist methods in order to develop their devotion, compassion, and ability to forgive.

Oprah: Can we talk now about what it's like to be you? When you were first discovered as the Dalai Lama, did you feel that there was something special about you?

Dalai Lama: No.

Oprah: There wasn't a part of you that had always known you were different?

Dalai Lama: Sometimes, I do feel that, yes, I may feel some effect from previous lives. In the early mornings, when I am still half asleep and half awake, my mind is very clear. And when I am in this special twilight state, I have had glimpses of memory from past lives in which I identify with those from, in some cases, one or two centuries ago. I once had a feeling that I might have been in Egypt 600 years ago.

Oprah: Do you feel you're different from most humans?

Dalai Lama: No, no, no.

Oprah: So like every other human, are you your own master?

Dalai Lama: Yes.

Oprah: But you are the master of no one else.

Dalai Lama: That's true, too.

Oprah: Growing up, did you miss having a regular childhood?

Dalai Lama: Fortunately, I had playmates, though most of them were grown-ups.

Oprah: Have you ever wanted a family or children?

Dalai Lama: No. Well, when I was around 15 or 16, I had some interest. That was biological. But then some of my older playmates who were monks later became laypeople, and they told me about some of the complications of leading a family life. Of course, there can be great pleasure in having a family, but there are a lot of problems, too.

Oprah: I've read that you spend many hours a day in meditation. What value does meditation have for even non-Buddhists?

Dalai Lama: Meditation is valuable for all of humanity because it involves looking inward. People don't have to be religious to look inside themselves more carefully. It is constructive and worthwhile to analyze our emotions, including compassion and our sense of caring, so that we can become more calm and happy. Hatred, jealousy, and fear hinder peace of mind. When you're angry or unforgiving, for example, your mental suffering is constant. It is better to forgive than to spoil your peace of mind with ill feelings.

Oprah: You seem to have a lot of joy. What makes you happy?

Dalai Lama: I don't take myself too seriously! That makes me happy.

Oprah: What is a perfect day for you?

Dalai Lama: There's never a perfect day. There is no perfection in the world.

Oprah: So what would make a *good* day- a day when you really have fun and laugh a lot?

Dalai Lama: I really like gardening and playing with mechanical things. And when I have leisure time, I spend some of it reading and studying-mainly Tibetan Buddhist texts, as well as readings on my favourite subjects like compassion and altruism. On those days when I can spend a few hours getting some understanding, I feel fulfilled. I feel as if I have made good use of my time.

Oprah: Do you work so hard and travel so much because you want to bring attention to what is happening to the Tibetan people?

Dalai Lama: Not necessarily. Just this morning I read a newspaper that said something like "The Dalai Lama visited six cities in order to explain the Chinese oppression of Tibet." That's wrong. I have never been any place where I was not first invited. And upon invitation, if I feel that there is potential for making some contribution to humanity, I will comply in spite of being tired.

Oprah: Will you be unhappy if Tibet has not gained its independence before your death?

Dalai Lama: If I were to die today, I would have some concern for Tibet. But I know that I have personally done as much as I can to use my existence for others. So I have no regret.

Oprah: None?

Dalai Lama: That's right.

Oprah: Have you ever had to forgive yourself for anything?

Dalai Lama: I've had to forgive myself for small incidents, like accidentally killing an insect. My attitude toward mosquitoes and bedbugs is not very favourable or peaceful!

Oprah: Have you ever had to forgive yourself for any big mistakes?

Dalai Lama: I make small mistakes every day. But major mistakes? It doesn't seem so. I've examined my service to the Tibetan people and to humanity, and I've done as much as I can in my life.

Oprah: One last question: Every month I do a column in the magazine called "What I Know for Sure." What do you know for sure?

Dalai Lama: Altruism is the best source of happiness. There is no doubt about that.

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